

# A REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT TRAVEL

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL ENGAGING THE PUBLIC SECTOR

MAY 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

forward thinking 

The text 'forward thinking' is written in a white, lowercase, handwritten-style font. A small, realistic sunflower with a dark brown center and yellow petals is positioned above the letter 'i' in 'thinking'.

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## 1 FOREWORD

1.1 JMP was delighted to be commissioned by the Office of Government Commerce ('OGC') and the Sustainable Development Commission ('SDC') to undertake a review of government travel and we applaud the establishment of the Sustainable Travel: Engaging the Public Sector ('STEPS') programme.

1.2 The issues of climate change and the United Kingdom's obesity epidemic pose threats to the economy, our society and quality of life. The evidence is now clear and there is no room for complacency. Government, business and citizens all have a part to play in delivering solutions.

1.3 Travel is widely recognised as one of the most difficult areas from which to reduce carbon emissions and embed sustainable practice, but government should not view sustainable operations and travel as an insurmountable challenge.

1.4 JMP has been impressed by the commitment of civil servants, suppliers and other stakeholders and there is already some evidence of sustainable business operations and travel across the government estate. There is however, an enormous opportunity for government to do a lot more and catalyse action across the wider public and private sector.

1.5 To achieve sustainable operations and travel government needs to fully understand its sphere of influence and the impacts of its operations, policies and programmes. This will require a conceptual shift in the way services are delivered to citizens and the way travel is managed. If government tinkers around the edge this will result in only one thing - more of what we have now.

1.6 This report provides government with advice on the measures that can be taken to deliver more sustainable operations and travel. There is a business case for sustainability and implementation will require strong leadership, conviction and actions that deliver and reflect collective responsibility.



**GORDON BAKER**

Chairman

JMP Consultants Ltd

## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Government has many commitments and policies relating to sustainability and sustainable travel. JMP was tasked with mapping out the key issues for sustainable travel in the central government and executive agency estate in England.

2.2 Government uses the entire transport network to deliver its objectives. To a lesser extent it also uses alternatives to travel such as video-conferencing and audio-conferencing. We found that department's travel patterns varied depending on a range of factors, including but not limited to: the department's or unit's business objectives; the location of the estate; estate facilities; organisational culture; travel and flexible working policies; and the location of customers.

2.3 There appears to be a policy vacuum with a lack of leadership and management of sustainable travel in government's own operations. As a result we found public sector officials and suppliers were unsure of government's sustainability policy or travel targets.

2.4 Departmental travel is managed by a number of business areas but there appears to be no overarching management structure or team responsible for managing business travel, staff commuting or visitor travel. This means that management information on travel is hard to source, limited in scope and of questionable quality.

2.5 There was little evidence to suggest that government understands the total financial, social or environmental impacts of employee business travel and commuting. The pockets of best practice that were identified appear to be more a case of 'good luck' or strong localised leadership rather than being part of a deliberate government wide strategy with clear departmental objectives.

2.6 Sustainability performance is measured through the Sustainable Development in Government ('SDiG') return which monitors performance against the Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate ('SOGE') targets. The current SOGE targets focus solely on carbon emissions from the use of administrative vehicles.

2.7 Sustainability cannot be delivered in isolation. Travel is a derived demand and an employee will only travel, whether on business or the commute, to deliver an objective. Government needs to take a holistic approach and appreciate how its operations, policies and programmes affect the need for travel, and the travel choices of staff and visitors. Sustainable operations and travel will require government to fundamentally change the way it delivers its services, designs its estate and manages travel.

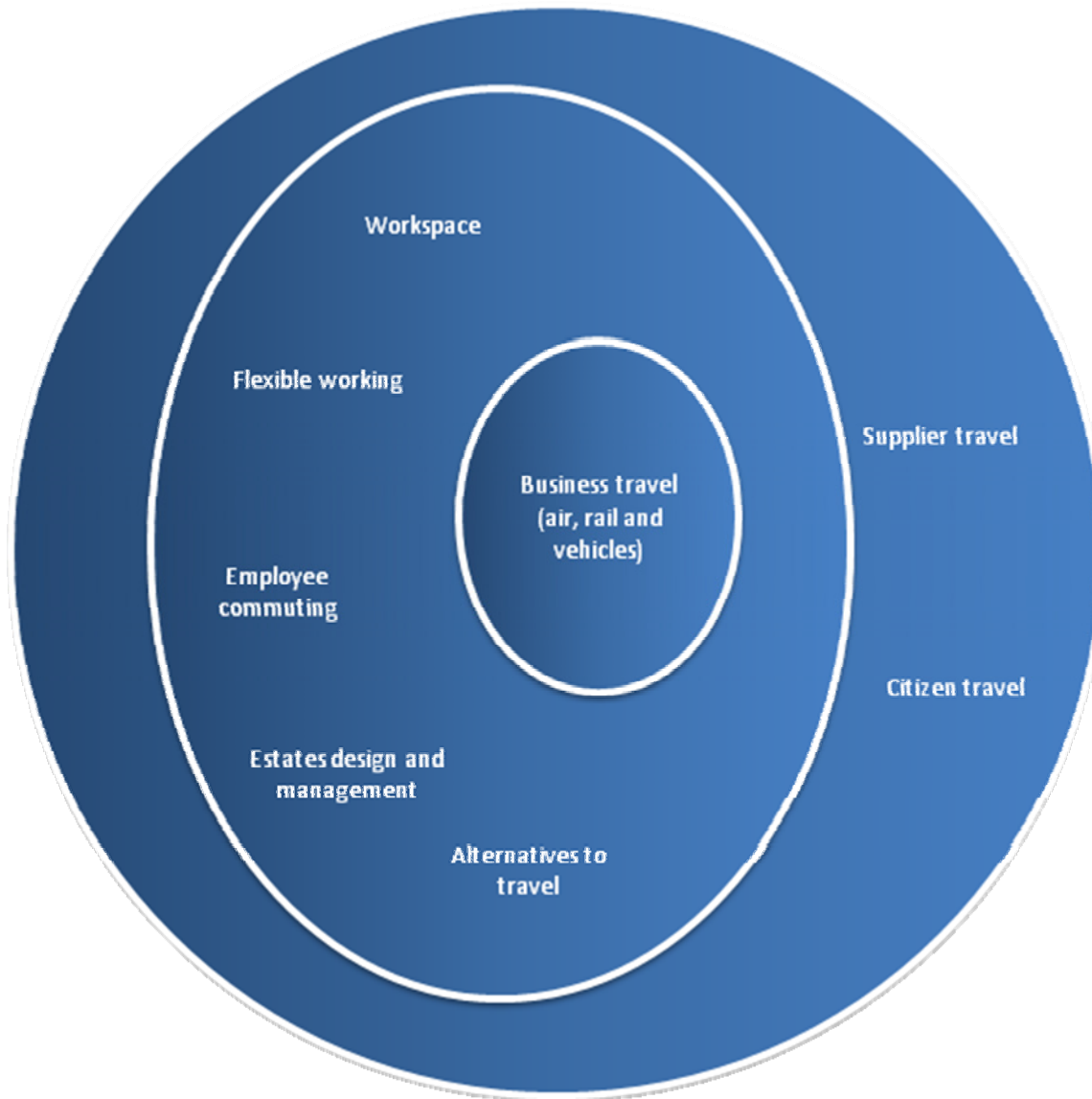
2.8 As a first step, government needs to expand its sphere of influence from administrative vehicles to consider all modes of business travel, employee commuting, visitor travel and working practices. This will enable government to understand the relationship that exists between travel and its operations, policies and programmes. The sphere of influence that government should operate in is outlined in Figure 2.1

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*'Work is what you do, not a place you go. The next generation of workforce will know that and be ready and able to work anywhere. Work has migrated beyond the conventional boundaries of time and space into a wider environment and those who manage the government estate need to be prepared'* Sir Gus O'Donnell, Cabinet Secretary and Chair of the Home Civil Service, *Working Beyond Walls*

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Figure 2.1 Government's Sphere of Influence



2.9 It is essential that government is able to account for the total financial, social and environmental impacts of business travel, staff commuting and visitor travel. This will in turn enable government to identify where changes to operations, policy and programmes will have the greatest sustainability impacts.

2.10 The review of the SOGE targets is the perfect opportunity for government to expand its sphere of influence and establish performance measures that reflect national policies and the total impact of its operations. This report calls on government to develop a clear vision and strategy, build capacity and capability, and catalyse action through incremental change.

#### DEVELOPING A CLEAR VISION AND STRATEGY

2.11 Government needs to move away from business travel management and focus on the delivery of operations. To achieve sustainable operations and travel government needs to devise a strategy and establish structures that ensure its policies are disseminated and embedded across the estate.

**Government should ensure that its own operational and travel policies align with national policy.**

2.12 It is unclear how national policies on sustainability, transport and health are being embedded and measured within government's own operations. The public sector is uniquely placed to influence the way that public servants, suppliers and citizens use travel and access services. The total mileage travelled by the public sector organisations is not known, but it is likely to be significant. For example, the National Health Service (NHS) accounts for 5% of all UK road mileage (ref 1).

2.13 The adoption of sustainable operations and travel in the public sector will have a far wider range of benefits than may be immediately apparent. If government could reduce the need for travel, and the distance travelled by employees on business travel and the commute, the pressure on the transport network would be reduced. This would realise financial savings, reduce the need for further investment in transport and increase the overall asset value of transport infrastructure.

2.14 The adoption of sustainable and active travel policies will also result in a healthier nation, reduce the UK's dependence on imported oil, support both national and international commitments to reduce green house gas emissions and the Department for Transport's ('DfT') Smarter Choices Strategy. Government should assess the potential scale of benefits that might be generated through relatively small incremental actions at an individual and departmental level being supported by high volume take-up.

**Government should identify a policy lead for sustainable operations and travel.**

2.15 It is unclear which department is responsible for devising and delivering government's sustainable travel strategy. We found that officials and suppliers were uncertain of the sustainability impacts of travel, travel targets or performance to date.

2.16 The policy lead, which could be the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) or the DfT, would be responsible for: devising a vision for sustainable operations and travel; embedding national policy objectives within government's own operations and travel policies; developing performance management indicators to chart progress; and providing guidance to departments, suppliers and other stakeholders.

2.17 The policy lead would be able to discharge responsibility for the delivery of the vision to other departments and would work with the OGC to measure government's performance.

2.18 The vision and government's performance should be regularly compared by the policy lead against the wider public and private sector, both nationally and internationally. When successes are implemented and demonstrable, these should be shared both locally and globally.

**Departments should appoint a Mobility Communications Manager**

2.19 Business travel management involves a wide range of stakeholders from procurement, human resources ('HR'), finance, fleet management, information technology and estates. These stakeholders also influence estate location, staff commuting, visitor travel, travel policy, HR policy and flexible working. We found that business travel was managed in isolation, and commuter and visitor travel was rarely considered by departments.

2.20 The domain of the Mobility Communications Manager would stretch beyond the walls of the government estate and include responsibility for business, commuter and visitor travel; and flexible and remote working. The Mobility Communications Manager would ensure departmental policy and delivery objectives are joined up and support the move towards sustainable operations and travel.



## **BUILDING CAPACITY: THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS**

2.21 Government and employees need to have the capability, capacity and skill set to implement the vision.

***The Mobility Communication Manager should account for the total costs and impacts of all modes and types of travel.***

2.22 We found that departments were unable to provide information on the financial cost of travel or environmental impacts. The total cost of travel is greater than the cost of a ticket or fuel. There are additional operational and financial costs to consider such as administration, booking and payment fees and subsistence costs. There are also social and environmental impacts to take into account including health, wellbeing, safety, green house gas emissions and local air quality.

2.23 The Mobility Communications Manager would be responsible for accounting for the total financial costs, and the social and environmental impacts of all modes and types of departmental travel. Government needs to fully understand and account for the financial costs and sustainability impacts of travel when formulating policy and its delivery.

***Government should improve management information and reporting to support the move towards sustainable operations and travel.***

2.24 Government can only manage what it measures. We found that many departments were unable to provide basic information on their travel profile and when management information was available it was hard to source, limited in scope and of questionable quality.

2.25 The importance of high quality management information systems when devising and implementing sustainable operations and travel policy cannot be underestimated. Government needs robust and granular data on all modes and types of travel to understand the need for travel, staff travel choices and the financial, social and environmental impacts of these decisions.

2.26 Government should engage with internal stakeholders and travel suppliers to design management information systems that aid the procurement and management of travel. This in turn will enable government to develop operations, procurement and travel policies that meet business and sustainability objectives.

***Government should prioritise action and identify where interventions in the travel category could deliver the greatest sustainability gains.***

2.27 Government uses many different modes of travel and numerous suppliers to deliver its business objectives. It is not clear if the business travel category has been reviewed to identify where changes to operations and travel policies could achieve the greatest, or quickest, sustainability gains. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that the sustainability impacts of staff commuting, visitor travel or the travel supply chain have been identified, assessed and included in any overarching sustainability analysis.

2.28 If government fully understood the sustainability impacts of different modes and types of travel it could prioritise action and design interventions to encourage sustainable behaviour. For example, government could assess whether focusing on the types of vehicles staff use on business, encouraging active commuter travel or influencing the travel supply chain would deliver the greatest sustainability returns.

2.29 The opportunity for sustainable operations and travel may be influenced by the private sectors' appetite for sustainability, the availability of "in-reach" technologies and the support of suppliers. Government should ensure that any external factors that could influence the delivery of sustainability in its own operations are identified and assessed.

**Government should establish performance indicators for social and environmental sustainability.**

2.30 The current SOGE travel target focuses on reducing carbon emissions from the use of administrative vehicles. We found little evidence of environmental or social sustainability reporting or targets for other types of business travel or employee commuting. Government will not realise its ambition for sustainable operations and travel if performance indicators focus solely on carbon emissions from its administrative vehicle fleet.

2.31 Government needs to consider sustainability impacts of travel holistically and establish performance indicators for all modes and types of travel, and their social and environmental impacts.



**Government should examine how it can influence the behaviour of staff travelling on business or the commute.**

2.32 To achieve significant cuts in carbon emissions from transport will require widespread behavioural change. Government is currently attempting to communicate the benefits of sustainable travel to stakeholders through mass marketing, but could use tailored messages to target groups that may be more responsive to changing their behaviour.

2.33 Changes to operations or travel policies will only make a difference if they are embraced by decision makers, line managers and employees. Government should investigate how it can more effectively engage with employees and use marketing campaigns to change the behaviour of employees at work, and also in their personal lives.

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*'I find it inconceivable to think of a world where we have reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 80% by 2050, and where we have not got more people walking and cycling' Dr Tim Crayford, Chief Medical Officer, The Department for Transport*

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**CATALYSING ACTION**

2.34 There is an opportunity for government to achieve sustainable and lower carbon travel by making changes to its operations today. At the same time this will increase government's capability and capacity to deliver change in the future.

**Government should take action now through 'quick wins' and 'first steps' to evidence the benefits of sustainable operations and travel.**

2.35 Some stakeholders are questioning government's commitment to sustainable operations and travel. By acting now government will be able to demonstrate that it is taking sustainable operations and travel seriously.

2.36 Government has a responsibility to the taxpayer to "pick the low hanging fruit". By taking action on 'quick wins' and 'first steps' government can expect to achieve financial saving and reduce carbon emissions. Government can also use the success of 'quick wins' and 'first steps' as a springboard for further action. We have recommended a number of 'quick wins' and 'first steps' which are summarised in Table 2.1. Further information on our recommendations can be found in Section 4, Findings (see Main Report).



**Table 2.1 Recommendations for the executive summary**

Quick Wins	First Steps (within 12 months)	Medium Term (within 24 months)	Longer Term (24 months +)
<p>1. The OGC should provide advice on how operational and administrative mileage can be separated. The SDC should identify departments that are reporting ‘administrative’ and ‘operational’ emissions in the SDiG return.</p> <p>3. Buying Solutions Guidance Note should provide further guidance on the types of data that should be captured to identify opportunities for sustainable operations and travel. The Guidance Note should also highlight where management information is likely to found.</p> <p>4. Departments should re-issue travel policy to staff.</p> <p>5. New members of staff should be made aware of travel policy during their induction.</p> <p>8. Buying Solutions Guidance Note should be enhanced with ‘model text’ on commuter travel plans and monitoring.</p> <p>11. HM Treasury to confirm if The King Reviews recommendation on travel plans in the public sector has been accepted.</p> <p>12. DfT, Defra and the OGC should engage with the National Business travel Network to seek advice on travel plans.</p> <p>13. The OGC, Defra and the SDC should learn from departments that have established air travel reduction target.</p> <p>14. The OGC and Defra should engage with ITM’s Project ICARUS and WWF-UK.</p> <p>20. Buying Solutions Guidance Note should include information on its travel database. The database should be made available to other departments.</p> <p>27. The OGC should clearly communicate the mandatory product standards that exist for travel services and vehicles.</p> <p>28. The OGC should communicate how it is driving a low carbon resource efficient supply chain.</p> <p>29. Buying Solutions Guidance Note should reference mandatory product standards.</p> <p>32. Buying Solutions Guidance Note should be expanded to include information and ‘model text’ on duty of care.</p>	<p>6. Buying Solutions should review the success of ‘sign up’ to the Government Air Programme. If this supports collaboration and sustainability future contracts should have ‘sign up’ clauses.</p> <p>7. Defra should develop a cross government publicity campaign for sustainable travel. The campaign should include business travel, commuting and flexible working.</p> <p>9. DfT should lead on travel plans and establish a reporting framework to enable departments to monitor the uptake of sustainable travel.</p> <p>10. The review of the SOGE targets should investigate whether performance measures on commuting would encourage sustainable operations and reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>15. Defra and Buying Solutions should identify the total number of flights between domestic airports and investigate whether trips could have been switched to rail travel or video-conferencing.</p> <p>17. The OGC should invest further resource in the Grey Fleet initiative and offer ‘hands on’ support to departments.</p> <p>19. OGC and DfT should work with the Energy Saving Trust to develop a cross government smarter driving programme.</p> <p>22. Policy teams should work more closely with the OGC and Buying Solutions to ensure sustainability criteria is embedded in travel contracts.</p> <p>23. Departments should work collaboratively when procuring travel services.</p> <p>24. The OGC should undertake a study specifically on how travel data is collated by departments.</p> <p>25. OGC should work with departments to ensure that SOGE data is accurate. If data is inaccurate the SDC should be provided with revised data.</p>	<p>2. Defra, DfT and the Cabinet Office should develop a cross government travel policy.</p> <p>16. The OGC should engage with the GCDA and devise a government wide fleet management policy.</p> <p>18. HM Treasury should ascertain the issues and reasons why departments do not follow HM Treasury guidance for Private Use and Acquired Car Schemes.</p> <p>21. Defra should mandate the collation of management information from all forms of travel.</p> <p>31. Buying Solutions should investigate the feasibility of issuing tenders for travel services that include alternatives to travel, such as video-conferencing and tele-presence.</p> <p>33. The HSE, DfT and the Cabinet Office should collaborate to devise a cross government travel safety policy.</p> <p>35. The OGC should assess how the High Performing Property strategy could support wider public sector sustainability and carbon reduction targets/initiatives.</p>	<p>26. The government estate should be benchmarked by the OGC to assess the extent to which sustainable travel principles are embedded within the government estate strategy.</p> <p>30. Defra should work with the OGC to ascertain the most efficient replacement cycle for vehicles in terms of life cycle carbon emissions.</p> <p>34. DfT should investigate techniques of changing traveller behaviour.</p>



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