

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN DfT TRANSPORT STATISTICS

### 1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to inform members of the Committee about recent developments in Department for Transport (DfT) Transport Statistics.

1.2 If you require any further information about any of the points covered in this paper, you are invited to contact:

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Or, if they prefer, members of the Committee are welcome to raise at the meeting any points which they feel are likely to be of interest to others.

### 2 Major drivers underlying the development of transport statistics are:

- DfT's Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets,
  - to reduce road casualties, in particular in disadvantaged communities;
  - to reduce congestion,
  - to improve use and quality of rail and local public transport
- overarching strategies for sustainable transport: DfT's Ten Year Transport Plan
- the development and monitoring of Regional Transport Strategies
- supporting Local authorities in monitoring Local Transport Plans;
- strategies on social exclusion and neighbourhood renewal, in particular in support of the recommendations in the Social Exclusion Unit report on transport and social exclusion, *Making the Connections* (February 2003);
- National Statistics standards, particularly those on quality and efficiency;
- International considerations, particularly EU legislative requirements.
- responding to and exploiting developments in data sources and IT.

### **3 Major development tasks**

#### *3.1 Road accident statistics*

The Department implemented changes in data collection in January 2005 following the Quality Review of Road Accident Statistics including the collection of information about foreign vehicles involved in accidents, whether the accident happened when the driver was in course of work and contributory factors to accidents which were reported by the police at scene. The first results from the new variables were published in September 2006. See below link.

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/quality/reviews/downloads/NSQR45.pdf>

The Department continues to work with the police on developing a new approach for collecting information about road accidents and casualties needed for police operational purposes and for statistics capable of being implemented on hand-held, digital devices.

The Department will also continue the ongoing project of to match our injury road accident data with Department of Health Hospital Episodes Statistics data in order to better understand the actual level of under-reporting of casualties from accidents that occur on British roads. See below link.

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_rdsafety/documents/page/dft\\_rdsafety\\_611755.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_611755.pdf)

#### *3.2 Roads and road traffic*

The Quality Review of Road Traffic and Road Length statistics that commenced in 2004 has been completed. The report on it will be sent to Ministers soon and then to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for approval with publication scheduled by the end of 2006.

The National Road Maintenance Condition Survey (NRMCS) in England and Wales currently includes visual surveys of defects at sample sites on local roads. In future local road conditions will be reported on nationally using SCANNER machine survey data. The surveys will provide consistent and comparable information for monitoring road conditions at both national and local level. In England, Best Value Performance indicators for classified roads must now be based on the SCANNER survey data. The way forward on unclassified roads is still under discussion, and further research will be required to inform this. Whatever the way forward on machine surveys of unclassified roads, there is a good deal of work to be done on the development of national reporting from the SCANNER data. The first stage will be a research project to consider how the locally collected data can be fitted to, and analysed on, a national network.

The Department has developed new measures of congestion. On the Highways Agency (HA) strategic road network, there is a new PSA target focusing on improving the reliability of journey times (reducing delays associated with the ten per cent worse journeys). On urban roads, DfT published a new PSA target in July 2006 based on limiting increases in average person journey times per mile in each of the ten largest urban areas in England. Work is also on-going to develop and quality assure existing sources of journey time information such as induction loops, automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS), and explore the potential of other telematic technologies such as mobile phones

The Department (including the Highways Agency) is currently developing a data framework which aims to provide links between dispersed roads related data, owned and managed by individual application owners within DfT, HA and Local Authorities (LAs). This should allow data sets to be more readily accessed and interrogated in a coherent and consistent way. In doing this, the Roads Information Framework (RIF) needs to ensure that certain standards, including those relating to quality, data definitions, referencing systems and methods are met.

Benefits to RIF should include:

- provision of a better analytical base
- analysis across highway authority boundaries
- consistency in the recording of data that would support travel planning
- presumption that procurement efficiencies can be realised by working with other agencies in the design and supply of data management systems.

The HA have taken the lead on the RIF work to date. This includes the demonstrator projects which showed there was a need to, and benefits from, 'sorting out' the data. DfT, working with the HA and LAs, now hope to build on the work carried out by HA to extend the remit of RIF across all road authorities.

### 3.3 *Bus and coach statistics*

The Department has continued to implement a number of the recommendations of the National Statistics (NS) Quality Review of Bus and Coach Statistics with regard to the annual survey of Public Service Vehicle Operators. This year's annual bulletin was published on Thursday 21 September. See below link.

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft\\_transstats\\_612535.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft_transstats_612535.pdf)

The most significant change in methodology was the application of uplift factors to the entire time series for bus patronage, to compensate for the identified problem of under-recording of passenger journeys on buses when non-cash fares are used. The uplift factors were developed in partnership with an independent transport consultancy firm, and followed a survey recording the policy of major bus operators with regard to the on-bus recording of non-cash fares. Uplifts were applied to time series data back to 1985/86. Although the number of passenger journeys was increased overall for all years, there was shown to be very little effect on long-term trends.

A new survey has been commissioned, monitoring on-bus conditions by the use of a 'Mystery Traveller'. This has now been carried out for the first quarter of 2006/07 by an independent market research company on behalf of the Department. It is based upon a similar survey that was already in place in London, commissioned by Transport for London. Methodology for the survey continues to be refined.

As last year, finance data will be published separately, in a supplementary bulletin on the DfT website, at the end of November. In addition to the finance data that was included in last year's supplementary bulletin, this year's publication will also contain the results of the Department's new Concessionary Bus Fares survey of local authorities, collating information following the implementation across England of free off-peak bus fares for the elderly.

### 3.4 *Rail statistics*

Over the past year data collection for the National Rail Travel Survey has been completed. This survey has now covered every rail station in GB for a typical working day, and the data processing is well underway to build a complete database of rail travel. We hope to publish a report on the survey, with some key headline results by the end of the year, and a more detailed publication next spring. The survey data includes actual origins and destinations, purpose of travel, mode of access to the stations and demographic information. It will be a crucial tool for rail planning.

In conjunction with this, we have launched a project to look for a better system of managing rail passenger counts, which are now available in ever-increasing volume with electronic counting systems being installed by many operators.

### 3.5 *National Travel Survey (NTS)*

A weighting strategy has been developed for the NTS and has been applied retrospectively to data back to 1995. A report comparing weighted and unweighted trend data for 1995 to 2004 was published in

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September. This showed that, on the whole, weighting the data did not affect the overall trends in travel although users should be aware that there is now a discontinuity between 1994 and 1995, particularly for travel data which has been weighted to account for drop off in recording during the travel week as well as for non-response. For the first time, results in the annual NTS statistical bulletin for 2005 were based on weighted data. All figures from 1995 onwards which are published or released in future will be based on weighted data.

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_transstats/documents/page/dft\\_transstats\\_612465.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/page/dft_transstats_612465.pdf)

A thorough review of the NTS travel diary has been undertaken by the NTS contractors, NatCen with a view to improving the quality of travel data and reducing the burden on respondents. This is currently being piloted and, subject to the findings of this pilot, will be introduced in 2007. The main change planned for the 2007 questionnaire is the introduction of a new set of questions on road accidents, which are intended to monitor levels of under-reporting of accidents to the police.

Two NTS-related research projects have been carried out this year. The first was a review of the potential to use 'new technologies', such as GPS and online diaries, to improve data collection on the NTS. The second was a study to investigate the feasibility of carrying out follow up surveys of NTS respondents. Both these projects are nearing completion and reports will be published on the DfT web-site shortly.

### 3.6 *Road freight*

A new annual statistics bulletin Road Freight Statistics 2005 was published for the first time on 28 June. It is being published to bring together, in one publication, results of the Department's main road freight series. It replaces the separate annual reports previously produced for individual surveys. See below link.

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft\\_transstats\\_611943.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft_transstats_611943.pdf)

Road Freight Statistics 2005 included the final results of the survey of company-owned vans. The survey ran for three years from 2003 to 2005 and has now been discontinued. In future, further information will be obtained by means of ad hoc surveys at regular intervals. It is currently anticipated that the next survey (covering both private and company-owned vans) would be needed in 2008.

The Department publishes a quarterly statistics bulletin containing information about the numbers of goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe (the RoRo survey). This is now produced as a web-only publication. In addition, the fourth quarter bulletin (ie the bulletin including latest full calendar year data) includes a commentary and full range of charts. In other quarters, basic tables only continue to be published.

The last edition of the Focus on Freight was published in June 2003. It included data up to 2001. A new edition will be published in December 2006. As far as possible it will include data up to 2005.

### 3.7 *Maritime statistics*

The current maritime freight and passenger data collection system was introduced in January 2000 to meet the requirements of an EU Maritime Statistics Directive. A quality review is planned for Spring 2007 to re-assess user needs for this information and to review data collection and analysis methodologies.

Better information on seafarers and trainees is needed for policy and for the maritime industry to monitor the current supply of UK seafarers and likely future trends, to ensure that there continues to be a viable UK based maritime industry both at sea and on-shore. Improvements have been made to data collection and analysis arrangements and an annual report is now published giving the results of this work. The second annual report giving results for 2005 was published in May 2006. The report gives past trends and current estimates of numbers of UK seafarers by department (engine, deck officers, cadets, ratings etc), and also age profiles and projections of numbers of UK officers over the next 15 years. The latest report "UK Seafarers Analysis 2005" is available on the DfT web-site and the next report will be published in May 2007. See below link.

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft\\_transstats\\_611680.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft_transstats_611680.pdf)

A second edition of Focus on Ports was published by the Department in January 2006 to inform a ports policy review which was launched with the publication of a consultation paper in Spring 2006. Focus on Ports, which is available on the DfT web-site, gives comprehensive statistical information about commercially active ports in the UK and includes information on traffic trends since the 1960s by cargo type e.g. containers, road goods vehicles and trailers, and by broad commodity group e.g. crude oil, oil products, ores, coal, iron and steel, agricultural products. See below link.

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft\\_transstats\\_611028.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft_transstats_611028.pdf)

### 3.8 *Environment statistics*

The Department is continuing to work with statistical colleagues in Defra, DTI, ONS and Netcen (who produce the emissions statistics) on methodological improvements in the data they publish. The Department was involved in the establishment by DTI of regional and local road transport energy consumption estimates. These are currently available for 2002, 2003 and 2004. Estimates of regional and local carbon dioxide emissions from road transport have been published by Defra for 2003 and the 2004 estimates will be published this autumn. The aim of these datasets is to provide nationally consistent carbon dioxide emission estimates at local authority and regional level.

### 3.9 *Public attitudes surveys*

The Department has continued to make use of the ONS Omnibus survey to inform the development of specific policies, to enhance our understanding of travel patterns, and to test questions prior to inclusion in the National Travel Survey (NTS). Recent topics investigated using the ONS Omnibus have included attitudes towards train services, attitudes towards air travel, awareness of bus concessionary fares and involvement in road accidents. The survey is also being used to track attitudes towards congestion/road pricing and climate change. Trends in attitudes to transport issues also continue to be monitored using the British Attitudes Survey (BSAS). As a result of the ongoing internal review of the use of attitude statistics by the Department, use of the BSAS has been expanded, with the Department's questions now being asked of the full sample of 3,300 adults each year. The Department has also commissioned a study to explore the feasibility of undertaking follow-up attitude surveys with NTS respondents. See below link.

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_transstats/documents/divisionhomepage/031560.hcsp](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/divisionhomepage/031560.hcsp)

### 3.10 *Sub-National Transport Statistics*

The Department publishes Regional Transport Statistics, containing Welsh and Scottish data, plus English regional and sub-regional data for many key series. For the first time, data for Northern Ireland will be included for a number of series. English transport authorities continue to report on key indicators in their local transport plans. A revised set of mandatory indicators are being introduced for the 2nd round of Local Transport Plans, commencing in 2006/07. See below link.

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft\\_transstats\\_610429.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft_transstats_610429.pdf)

### 3.11 *Neighbourhood Statistics (NeSS)*

Data on road casualties and licence holders are available through NeSS. The Department's contractors are currently working on producing 2005 accessibility indicators. In addition the Department is currently discussing with ONS the extent to which this information will be made available through NeSS.

### 3.12 *Transport Trends*

Transport Trends was updated in January 2005, and included, as in the previous year, statistics on the Department's PSA targets and government's sustainable development indicators most relevant to transport. The Department will be updating and publishing a new version in February 2007. See below link.

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft\\_transstats\\_035650.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/downloadable/dft_transstats_035650.pdf)

### 3.13 *Electronic dissemination*

NS publications continue to be available free of charge on the Internet. The Department's web-site has remained largely unchanged this year pending a move to a new design, new content management software and a new ISP in January 2007.

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