

## 5 The Role of the Local Authorities

### 5.1 Local Authority Involvement

We see the role of the local authority partners as contributing from their practical expertise to the formulation, focussing and direction of research and helping develop the outputs and tools from research by applying them in the case studies and other relevant projects.

The main benefits to the local authority partners will come from the detailed study and analysis of the practical problems they face, which may not resolve all the issues but which will assist them to find practical solutions. The project will also give them the opportunity to study some of the issues in greater depth themselves and to work with other authorities to develop and spread best practice. Thus enabling them to facilitate change and introduce improved processes and procedures.

As indicated in Section 2 we have identified, with our 16 local authority partners, some 35 case studies that could usefully illustrate and inform our research. Three of our local authorities have offered case studies which cover all of the key stages in strategy development and offer projects and processes that will be current throughout the four years of our research programme. Those local authority partners are referred to as “super sites”. They are Bristol City Council, Surrey County Council and Merseytravel.

With the encouragement of the local authorities, we have grouped the case studies into four clusters, which will be managed by the local authorities themselves, and will provide an opportunity for the members of a cluster to learn from one another, as well as from our research. The clusters will also be a research resource for the project team to learn from practical experience. Two of the clusters map directly onto our two broad areas of research; (analytical support tools and decision making processes), the other two apply that research to two main areas of policy in which the local authorities have particular interest:

- development projects and
- sustainable transport modes.

Some of the case studies in each cluster will be “laboratory” case studies, which we will use intensively in our research, others will be “comparator” case studies for use by the clusters as part of the learning and dissemination process. Further details of the 35 case studies are given below and in Annex 1.

Each local authority has provided a pro forma specifying the value of the data, models and expertise that they will make available to the project, and the minimum number of person days which they will provide. The total value of the data, models and expertise and time input is up to £2.5M.

Inevitably, given the scale of these activities, the local authorities cannot guarantee that all of these case studies will be implemented in precisely the form currently envisaged, or to the timetable currently planned. However the risks of non-delivery of these case studies is small, and any changes, or delays, in implementation will themselves be of interest to the research. The consortium can also be flexible in the use of case studies in support of the various tasks.

The arrangements for managing and maintaining the relationships between case studies and research projects are detailed in section 7.5.2.

Through the case studies the local authority partners will contribute information and relevant data to underpin the research projects. As well as data, they will provide practical experience of the development and application of transport and land use policies, strategies and projects towards a more sustainable urban environment, thus providing a grounding in the realities of the issues facing them.

## **5.2 *Expectations of the case studies***

### **5.2.1 Organisational Behaviour and Barriers (Project A)**

It is intended to undertake an initial questionnaire survey of all our selected case study areas to understand the structures, processes and barriers, and to gather baseline data in conjunction with the other Projects. More in-depth interviews and focus groups will be carried out in a smaller number of case study areas based on these initial findings.

The case studies provide a variety of decision-making settings, in which we will need to understand the structures of the organisations and intra- and inter-organisational networks. Our case studies include Local Authorities (viz. unitaries, metropolitan boroughs, and county councils), Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) and one regional body.

The case studies will be important in providing us with information on how decisions their organisations work, including the role of officers, members, consultants, public and private sector delivery agencies, regional bodies, and central government offices. The success of this will depend on how much potentially-sensitive information some volunteer case study authorities are willing to provide us with on working arrangements and practices.

Case studies used as laboratories in the other Projects (B – G) will feed into Project A and give more detailed data on how strategies and schemes are developed and delivered by local authorities in partnership with other stakeholders. The case studies will have a feed-back role through the cluster groups, particularly Cluster 2 on decision-making processes and techniques.

The initial questionnaire survey will be modular in design, and relevant sections will be targeted to authority respondents identified through the primary contact in each authority. Local authorities will have the opportunity to consult and suggest changes to the questionnaire before the final version is circulated for completion. Two to three authorities will also be involved in piloting, and will be able to gain exemption from the survey-proper, should they so wish. Later surveys will be based on case studies providing us with information on the effectiveness of the other Projects' input into working practices, where appropriate. All results will be fed back to investigators and Local Authorities through the Virtual Knowledge Park, and ultimately a written report will be produced.

#### **Timing**

The direct contact stages of Project A with case studies will be September 2004 for the initial survey questionnaire, and follow-up surveys in 2005 and 2008. The focus and method (and therefore exact timing) of these re-surveys will be based upon the most efficient and effective data gathering method decided upon by the investigators and local authorities, to meet our research objectives at these stages within the resources available for Project A.

## **5.2.2 Improved Tools for Option Generation (Project B)**

All local authorities contributing case studies will be asked (in the Project A survey) about their current practices regarding option generation (when do they do this?), and their views about the need for new/improved tools: What are their requirements? When would they use new tools? And how? They will also be asked to identify examples/situations that might be followed in more detail.

At the review stage, it would be useful to include any completed strategies and schemes, to document the processes that were carried out. But, for the bulk of this project, we need to work with local authorities on 'live' projects, where the tools we develop can be applied in practice. Authorities do not always generate distinct options for all their plans and schemes, so we need to identify cases where this is an explicit objective – we do not want to add to the burden of local authority tasks.

We would be looking initially for two case studies (one strategy, one scheme), around which we could build prototype tools. We will need to work closely with both authorities, with the teams responsible for developing options and consulting stakeholder groups. We will require access to relevant base data, and will need to discuss any constraints on the generation of options. There will be a degree of interactive working – proposing approaches and ideas and getting feedback. The 'testing' the tools is likely to involve local authority staff directly in this process.

Once this work is completed, we will be able to give other authorities a clearer idea of what is involved. We would set up the tools for implementation (which may involve local authority training and the involvement of stakeholders) and ask for an assessment of how the process has been influenced by the tool, and its value for stakeholder engagement.

Finally, we would invite other case studies to comment on the tools and advise on preferred forms of documentation and dissemination.

All the case studies could contribute to our understanding of current approaches to option generation and related public engagement. The three super sites will provide the opportunity to assess current approaches to option generation in greater detail, and will each contribute one or more case studies. Blackpool and Essex have also expressed a strong interest in applying new option generation techniques. In total we will be seeking three sites covering examples of strategies and five cases of projects/schemes. Other case studies in the Development and Sustainable Modes Clusters will offer comparator case studies, and we hope also to be able to test our proposals in the context of the work of the SOLUTIONS consortium.

### **Timing**

The intensive tool development stage will run from April 2005 to March 2006; other case study applications will take place between April 2006 and June 2007.

## **5.2.3 Improved Indicators for Sustainable Transport & Planning (Project C)**

All our local authority participants are concerned about the inadequacy, and undue demands, of the current procedures for specifying and using indicators. All have to use them as part of their case studies, and we will take the opportunity to learn from that experience. Where the case studies are at a sufficiently early stage to influence the indicators used, we will work with the local authorities to apply and test our proposed set. Surrey, for example, are very interested in developing quality of life indicators for the next round of Local Transport Plans, which are consistent with their

Community Plan. Annex 1 provides an initial indication of the potential laboratory and comparator case studies.

All local authorities contributing to DISTILLATE will be asked (in the project A survey) about the indicators which are currently used. The questionnaire will explore the number and consistency of indicators derived from different backgrounds (e.g. sustainability and LTP targets) and used for different purposes (e.g. APR monitoring and appraisal). It will also examine the confidence authorities have in the quality of indicators which are monitored and modelled. This will form an appreciation of particular areas of concern that require further attention in the case studies. We anticipate that all local authorities would consider using the outputs of Project C and will contribute to the review of these outputs as they evolve.

### **Case Study Stage 1**

Shortly after the questionnaire stage, we would seek to conduct short interviews with those responsible for monitoring at each of the volunteer case study sites and to conduct a more detailed audit of current indicators. This will examine issues including relevance, cost-effectiveness, measurement processes, reliability, durability and statistical robustness. Case study sites would be asked to supply supporting data for the project team to analyse in more detail. Participation in Stage 1 does not commit authorities to participation in Stages 2 and 3.

### **Case Study Stage 2**

The above process will lead to a specification for a new set of indicators that can be used through the subsequent stages of the DISTILLATE project. At this stage we would be looking for around 4 to 6 case studies with which to apply the new suite of indicators as part of their on-going work. It is appreciated that the indicators cannot, at this stage, replace any agreed LTP and Best Value indicators. However, the project team will support this process by providing additional analysis. Some case studies would examine indicators across the policy spectrum, others a more limited set. Case studies could have modelling and measurement capabilities for some indicators.

### **Case Study Stage 3**

Where it is clear from initial investigations that the preferred indicators are difficult to measure, we will investigate and, as resources permit, test new means of doing so such as the application of Information and Communications Technology for data collection and Geographic Information Systems for data processing. When data gaps are identified we would look for 2 to 3 sites that are interested in collaborating on this.

### **Timing**

The Stage 1 audit will run from September 2004 to December 2004. The Stage 2 application of the indicators will run from May 2005 to October 2007. Stage 3 investigations of new indicators will start after May 2005 with timing flexible to meet the needs of local authorities.

## **5.2.4 Improved Effectiveness in Organisational Delivery (Project D)**

This project is likely to be the most difficult for case study partners to decide whether or not to take part, there are political – with a small p – sensitivities, but it is also potentially a richly rewarding project option. We have designed it so that partners can opt in to any one of the main research parts (D2 or D3) without necessarily taking part in the other. Further, as we are aware of the potential for sensitivities, partners may choose to have their research data anonymised if they so wish.

Project D1 will sift through the data from our case study partners in order to categorise institutional and organisational barriers; partners do not need to opt in to D1 as this is using Project A1 data, but for any further research involvement we will first recheck all A1-generated data with our contact person to confirm veracity but also to ascertain sensitivity. D2 and D3 will be carried out as appropriate and *as agreed* with the main contact person.

Researching potential resolutions to obstacles to effective development and delivery can be carried out using a comparative methodology; in other words we can use similar cases and similar situations from the literature and other data, from transport and from farther afield, to find where such barriers have been overcome. This is likely to be a central method for D2 activities. For Project D2 we will want three or more cases to look at in depth, preferably the three supersites but we need at least one LA and one PTE, and preferably one scheme and one strategy case study. The input from the case study partner would be primarily in the role of providing and cross checking data.

Alternatively, or additionally, we may arrange to carry out further intensive fieldwork within an agency or authority to gain deeper understanding of its organisational culture and the opportunities and obstacles it presents. We could, for example, track a scheme and/or strategy through all the chain of events involving various other players to see how linkages are manipulated and power and influence change from player to player between different stages. This would be the focus of a potential D3 activity. For this option the case study partner would need to allow us more access to their organisation. This *could* be wrapped in with a secondment.

Project D4 will be the testing of outcomes and suggestions for wider applicability and this will take place with the clusters and in workshops and so will include all DISTILLATE partners. Thus no particular further input is needed from case study partners.

### **Timing**

Project D1 will start towards the end of 2004 after Project A1 reports. Case studies for projects D2 (and also D3) will be decided upon in agreement with contact persons by early 2005 with an aim of carrying out focussed research (and fieldwork, if appropriate) throughout 2005 and into 2006. Findings will be tested with clusters during 2006 and 2007 and best practice guidelines for better and more effective working will be rolled out from early 2006 onwards.

## **5.2.5 Improved Mechanisms for Funding and Phasing of Funding (Project E)**

Through Project A, information will be collected from all the participating local authorities to identify funding mechanisms used for projects and the broad impacts of funding arrangements on the phasing of implementation. We will also ask local authorities to recommend project case studies that will be particularly interesting with regard to funding and implementation. From the responses, we will identify projects to be used as case studies within Project E. These projects will have been recently completed and operational.

The main thrust of the work will commence with an overview of the selected case study projects followed by detailed examination of project plans, implementation schedules and project funding sources. Further in-depth examination of the issues arising will take place with the relevant individual local authority actors on (a) financial and (b) implementation regimes and their impact on scheme performance. It is intended that this will be accomplished through focus groups with local authority personnel. A key element of this task will establish the range of financial methods used in practice, how they are chosen and the extent to which their impact on implementation is taken into

account at the planning stage. A framework of analysis will be developed to enable comparative analysis of different funding and implementation regimes and how these regimes affect project outcomes.

It is intended that a selection of up to eight laboratory case studies (including the supersites – Bristol, Merseytravel and Surrey) will be used. In order to provide an insight into the delivery of different project types it is important that a range of project types and scales is investigated, from large-scale housing developments through to smaller-scale soft measures. Local authorities not contributing case studies to Project E will be asked to validate the findings from the selected case studies at a workshop during Year 3 of the project. The findings will be amended on the basis of this verification exercise, and recommendations will be established incorporating the outcomes.

The major output is the production of a toolkit for local authorities addressing effective delivery of transport and land-use projects. For this, close involvement and the advice and suggestions of, in particular, the case study cities used in this project, will be required.

### **Timing**

The initial case study information collected in E1 will proceed as part of A1, whose completion is scheduled for Q3/2004, with the other elements (from literature, etc) proceeding in parallel. The main part of the work will commence with Task E2 running from Q4/2004 to Q2/2005, and task E3 taking place through Q3/2005. E4 will commence in Q4/2004, with an initial output scheduled for the end of Q1/2006 for input to the other projects. E4 will be revised, in 2007 to take account of the results emerging from the other projects; the toolkit will subsequently be updated.

## **5.2.6 Enhanced Analytical Decision Support Tools (Project F)**

This Project will work closely with the case studies in Cluster 1, and in particular with the models being developed in Nottingham, Stockport, Strathclyde (STM) and York (STEER). The case studies in Merseyside, Surrey and Newcastle will be used as comparators. The role of these case studies will be to provide detailed information on possible modelling issues including local authority requirements and the use of data if available. In addition we envisage some new model development case studies for Leeds (SATURN, STM and MARS) and Bristol (TPM). For Leeds we will be able to look at modelling needs at different levels of decision-making i.e. (local, metropolitan and regional levels). In addition to filling in the general questionnaire from project A about model requirements, the following level of involvement is envisaged for the above case studies:-

**Strathclyde** – to discuss in detail any future requirements in terms of modelling which can/could be implemented in the current STM. To supply existing data if required (it is difficult to say at this stage whether any new data will be required).

**York** – to support the modelling work on the Fulford Road scheme and similar modelling work aimed at reducing network congestion across the City; and to discuss modelling needs in both specific and general terms for York and the York area.

**Bristol** – to discuss modelling needs in general and comment on new developments in TPM.

**Leeds** – this is a new modelling development case study. It is difficult to say at this stage the level of involvement but initial discussions about modelling needs at a general level will be required. Comments on applicability of any future results.

**Nottingham** – Initial discussions about general modelling requirements, plus in-depth discussions about modelling WPPL and possible access to MVA's model to observe how this was done previously. In the future possible data on before and after responses to WPPL.

**Stockport** – Initial discussions about modelling needs in general, possible follow-up discussions about how useful our modelling approaches would be.

The aim of the start-up meetings would be to identify research interests, clarify possible levels of support, identify other agencies/consultants who may be affected and discuss possible links with other projects within DISTILLATE.

For comparators we envisage a couple of meetings during the project to compare modelling approaches and issues being tackled. Other case studies are welcome and may also emerge from the Project A surveys.

### **Timing**

Initial discussions should ideally take place in Autumn 2004. Further inputs to be decided at these meetings.

## **5.2.7 Enhanced Appraisal Tools (Project G)**

All local authorities contributing case studies will be asked (in the Project A survey) about whether the issues covered by the sub-objectives above are of current interest to them, whether there are any other appraisal related issues of concern and whether they would be willing to work with us given concerns about confidentiality. They will also be asked more detailed questions relating to the issues covered by the sub-objectives.

Once this initial survey has been completed, it will be followed up with more in depth interviews with interested local authorities. This will form part of the initial information gathering and link establishing part of the project. We expect to be in close communication with a small number of local authorities (maximum 3) who are actively engaged in work which is relevant to the project and which the project can study intensively. We will also be interested in looking at past work which has been carried out. These case studies will be used to explore the issues (either from the sub-objectives or as a result of the initial surveys).

All the supersites and Nottingham will be laboratory case studies. Comparators will be drawn from Yorkshire and Humber, Bath, Stockport, Strathclyde, Newcastle, Sheffield, Essex, Blackpool and West Yorkshire PTE, thus offering a wide range of potential types of scheme on which to test the newly developed approaches. We have also discussed the potential for testing our revised appraisal procedures as means of assessing the new technologies developed in FUTURES and the support for disadvantaged groups developed in AUNT-SUE.

The subsequent activity of the project will be to study the issues raised and to develop ways of addressing them using newly developed approaches. Once these approaches have been developed, these can then be tested in case studies with local authorities.

The final stage of the project will be to assess the success (or otherwise) of the new approaches, this may involve allowing other local authorities to comment on what has been done.

### **Timing**

The initial interaction with local authorities will take place in 2004. The follow up will take place in the first half of 2005, leading up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop. The development of new approaches will take place from the middle of 2005 to March 2007. The work will be brought together from April to the end of 2007.