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David Bonn asks whether we can manage demand to enjoy the summer reduction in traffic during other parts of the year

Schools and Universities were largely on holiday so traffic took their traditional profile change. Going to work was almost a pleasure but we knew this wouldn't last for long.

Recognising the journey time benefits in the summer makes me wonder if there a way we can get people to change their travel patterns at other times of the year when we, however reluctantly, accept slower, overcrowded journeys as being the norm? It's interesting that the use of Travel Demand Management (TDM) is seen as a key management tool for the recent major sporting events we have in this country such as the Olympics & Commonwealth Games. Why then can't we use Travel Demand Management as a significant tool to support the easing of congestion throughout the year leading to a gradual but permanent change in travel behaviour?

The benefits resulting from the use of a culture changing approached rather than the deployment of infrastructure may be difficult to convince the money people but we are at time in the management of journeys where we need to recognise that behavioural change must be driven forward and we need to understand how best to achieve that change, to understand better what is effective and what is not.

In many ways we don't have enough empirical data to demonstrate that TDM delivers effective and sustainable results over the longer term. My view is that we have reached the point where a major scheme should be implemented on a city wide basis to demonstrate the effectiveness (or otherwise) of TDM over a longer period?

If we identify a suitable city, instrument it initially to gather base data we will then have the data we can compare against. This base data can also be used from day 1 to better manage traffic in the city. Over time we will see the impact of the different approaches implemented as part of the TDM scheme on traveller behaviour.

Having delivered many ITS schemes in a variety of forms both at an Urban and a National level I strongly feel that the infrastructure only approach of many current ITS projects will not deliver the step change we need in travel behaviour.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of TDM as an element within a wider scheme we need to identify those groups whose travel patterns we want to see changed and to then stay changed.

To do this there will need to be serious consideration of the potential impact, the effect on business, the nature of the messages and how we will deliver the messages effectively.

We need to identify the win win solution for all parties, we can't simply create network capacity for another traveller group to then fill the released capacity to then have the same result of journey time congestion. We can't for example focus on freight alone nor can we focus on commuters alone, we need to view each group as part of the overall scheme and influence them accordingly. The content and delivery channels for these messages need careful consideration.

We will also need to engage practically with the city transport authorities, both local and national, to support activities on a wider multi-modal scale as part of the overall TDM scheme.

Given the necessary scale of such a scheme this will not be a quick scheme nor will it be a cheap scheme if we want it to deliver tangible benefits and meaningful data. It can't be

seen as an academic exercise on its own nor can it be a modelling exercise as we need to do real engaging and messaging to determine what is effective and what isn't.

The elapsed time of the project would need to be a few years to enable the before, during and long-term impact to be measured, recognising that things are changing

around us all the time and the impact of these other changes will need to be factored into the analysis of the TDM driven results. This will require some carefully thought out analysis.

With the current desire for a City to be seen as "Smart" we need to ensure that the way we support travellers making their journey choices is Smart. The time is right for us to confirm what many of us suspect, TDM should be a key element of the decision influencing process of travellers.

Cultural change should be one of the deliverables of any mobility solution these days and that is perhaps an area where the traditional "engineering" approach requested by clients and delivered by providers would benefit from embracing new ideas as part of the overall solution.

If we introduce the potential health benefits achievable and necessary given the increasing concerns about the nation's health the cost benefit analysis of delivering cultural change becomes much less of an issue. Perhaps the health issue is a topic in itself for the next edition.

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