



Short term skills shortages in delivering local transport responsibilities

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Executive Summary

The past five years have seen a significant change of emphasis and scale in transport delivery. A different policy agenda, new legislation and devolution of responsibility for delivery have placed substantial requirements and expectations on local authorities. From this has arisen a major concern that local authorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland may not be adequately resourced in terms of staffing levels and skills to deliver. In light of this concern the County Surveyors Society commissioned a survey of its member authorities to identify the nature and extent of skills problems facing local authorities and to draw out possible measures for addressing these problems. This report presents the findings of this study.

Separate to this CSS study, the profession-wide Transport Planning Skills Initiative has been assessing specific concerns for transport planning across public and private sector employers. It too has conducted an employers' survey. The findings from the CSS survey reinforce its value as a complementary exercise to the TPSI activities, which focuses only on transport planning. Across the transport delivery functions in local authorities, transport policy and planning accounts for about 9 per cent of staffing; highways management and maintenance accounts for well over half. Nearly one in every twelve local authority posts associated with transport delivery is vacant. Staff shortages in transport policy and planning are significant but vacancies among highways staff exceed the total of vacancies in all other functions.

Across functions it is felt that, since the introduction of Local Transport Plans (or equivalent), the number of vacancies has increased alongside problems of staff retention, with concern that in some cases overall abilities of staff have deteriorated in relation to the range of tasks now facing them. Since the change of regime it is not generally considered that the range of technical skills required for transport delivery has changed. However, in contrast there is widespread agreement that the expansion in the scale and breadth of activities required for delivery of local transport has increased significantly the need for transferable skills; these are generally needed by staff in technical areas as well as those in transport planning and management. Demands for both technical and transferable skills are heightened by the growing number of small but sometimes complex and even controversial local schemes which require careful design and management to deliver. While the relevant professional institutes maintain valuable programmes of activities for personal development and accreditation, none of them are directly addressing the immediate problems identified.

These shortages have had a significant impact on the ability of CSS member authorities to actually deliver transport schemes, their principal effects falling on the development of plans and projects and on the implementation of projects. The causes are complex but essentially reflect pressures to meet deadlines, so that 'silo working' (focusing on individual job outputs) becomes more common, reducing the strategic thinking that current policies call for. Team work suffers and non priority work gets left out. A further consequence of the skills shortage is evidence of some overall decline in staff morale. This too reflects increased pressures on existing staff from a larger programme, and also questions over personal worth; this is frequently linked to perceptions of individual salary levels, both in absolute terms and also in relation to colleagues and those in equivalent positions in the private sector.

Private sector consultancy work is also seen as more flexible and varied and includes a much higher element of 'flagship' schemes that can attract especially the better graduates. In contrast new graduates, and many school leavers, often look on local authorities as staid organisations, with a poor image, where there is much less opportunity for interesting work, personal development or staff training. The private

sector is able to back up salaries with flexible employment packages, which may include company cars, health and other insurance schemes, profit sharing and support for professional institute fees and activities. Local authorities are generally not in a position to compete with this on anything like equal terms. Generally local authority salary levels are judged to be 10-15% below the industry norms.

The short term skills problem is added to by anticipated longer term problems. Many local authorities have a higher proportion of older staff – a combined effect of constraints, until recently, on recruiting younger staff plus the tendency of many middle aged staff with family commitments to be less mobile. This pattern means that authorities face a potentially significant loss of staff over the coming years, and most of these, whatever their status, will have considerable experience which cannot easily be replaced.

A range of initiatives across local authorities to address problems of staff recruitment and retention is evident:

- A third of authorities are reviewing their advertising of vacancies both to address the issue of poor local authorities' image and to target prospective candidates more effectively.
- A quarter of authorities make use of consultancies to fill significant vacancies. While these can offer real benefits in a good partnership, concern exists that employing consultants to address the short term problem could further strengthen their ability to offer attractive and well-paid jobs, thus adding to the longer term staffing and skills problems for local authorities. Additionally, many private sector agencies supporting local authorities are identified as themselves having significant problems of skills shortage, despite their more flexible position. Concern is also expressed that consultants' work can vary in quality and that in-house staff time is still required for effective monitoring.
- A quarter of authorities also make use of agency staff, usually as a stopgap measure, but in general agency staff tend to offer lower quality and commitment and do not add to the permanent skills pool.
- Most authorities recognise the importance of training and about half of them have identified specific initiatives to improve training and continuing professional development for staff. These initiatives tend to be linked to programmes to recruit young people (school leavers as much as graduates) and develop them along a broadly guided career path. Such programmes appear to be particularly rewarding; but they do require commitment of resources (staff time and funding) over the medium term to prove fruitful.
- Some authorities are investigating or pursuing payment of market supplements in various forms in relation to both new and existing staff. However, there is some concern that use of supplementary payments in certain cases can cause a general loss of morale among other staff.

Some of these initiatives have provided a useful measure of success at the local level, and they justify further development across local transport authorities. However, as even the successful authorities recognise, such initiatives on their own fall far short of solving the very serious problems which local transport authorities face in recruiting and retaining enough skilled staff to carry out their transport delivery responsibilities.

Authorities stress that, in spite of the welcome increase in funding for transport delivery, this has created a demand for more staff resources and hence much higher staff costs – something that Government has not addressed. The poor or non-existent image of the transport profession is seen as a major constraint on gaining new staff and the Government's "wavering commitment to transport" is considered to be reducing

confidence in the profession and hence reducing potential interest in entry. There is a general view that the real benefits of careers in transport should be promoted on a national basis, especially among young people, on similar lines to the campaigns to bring people into nursing and teaching.

The study reveals overall that the skills problems facing local authorities are serious and immediate. Effective delivery of integrated transport is being significantly compromised. The very nature of the problems limits the time, energy and resource that can be committed to addressing them. Consequently, while a number of examples of initiatives to address the problems have been identified, collectively they are falling short of achieving a satisfactory level of impact.

A number of recommendations are put forward. The first is for the establishment of a local authorities' forum to coordinate good practice in relation to staff recruitment, development and retention. This might include common actions such as a centralised job advertisements/applications website for all local authorities in a given region. The second recommendation is that a strong case should be presented to central Government for real changes in the regulatory, planning and funding regimes within which local authorities undertake their transport responsibilities: Government backing and support is essential to the successful resolution of the skills problem. A further recommendation is that comprehensive system of career development should be established throughout local authorities, perhaps in partnership with other bodies involved in transport delivery, as well as academic and professional bodies. The final recommendation is that other European experience should be reviewed for possible alternative means of addressing the skills problem, perhaps including exchanges of staff.

1. Introduction

Five Years ago in its 1998 UK White Paper on transport¹ (complemented by a separate White Paper for Scotland²), the Government set out a new policy framework for the delivery of a better transport system. This framework remains the basis for the Government's approach to transport. In the White Paper a major role was identified for local authorities, to whom Government delegated responsibility for implementing many of the measures and new initiatives proposed. This was supported by a raft of changes in regulations and guidance, in particular through the Transport Act 2000 (for England and Wales) and the Transport Scotland Act 2001 (for Scotland).

For authorities in England and Wales, outside London, Government established the Local Transport Plan (LTP) as a formal mechanism for development of specific plans and five year programmes for their implementation³, with production of an Annual Progress report (APR) each year. Funding for these is awarded to each local transport authority by Government each year, albeit with a three-year indicative budget. In Scotland the non-statutory Local Transport Strategy plays a similar role. Government accepted that increased funding was needed over a consistent longer term period, with clear aims for its allocation, and this was set out (for England) in the 10-year Plan.^{4 5}

In parallel significant changes were made to the spatial planning regime, especially through substantial revisions of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) 11⁶, 12⁷ and 13⁸ (for England, with broadly similar changes for Scottish and Welsh planning guidance), which contain substantial sections on transport policies and procedures. Further change will almost certainly follow from the new spatial planning structures proposed in the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Bill.

The Government's aims were necessarily geared to real change only in the long term. However, there has been growing public concern over perceived failures to achieve any real change over the period during which the present Government has been in office. In addition, local projects involving a change in approach have on occasion proved controversial, leading to delay in their implementation and hence problems for achieving change in a coordinated fashion. In autumn 2002 the current Secretary of State for Transport responded to this by stressing (in press interviews and a statement to Parliament) that he expected local transport authorities to deliver their responsibilities.

While the local authorities welcomed generally the new opportunities for dealing with transport issues, they also realised that this substantial change of emphasis could raise significant problems in practice: especially if they did not gain the resources to meet the

¹ Department for the Environment, Transport & the Regions (1998) **A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone** The Stationery Office, London

² Secretary of State for Scotland (1998) **Travel Choices for Scotland** The Stationery Office, London

³ Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions (2000) **Guidance on Full Local Transport Plans** Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions, London

⁴ Department for the Environment, Transport & the Regions (2000) **Transport 2010 – the 10 year Plan** Department for the Environment, Transport & the Regions, London

⁵ In February 2003 news emerged that the requirement on local authorities to produce LTPs was likely to be repealed. This is now confirmed as the case for the 14 local authorities outside London judged to be 'excellent' performers in the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment. (LTT 20/2/2003)

⁶ Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions (2000) **Planning Policy Guidance Note 11 Regional Planning** Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions, London

⁷ Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions (2000) **Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 Development Plans** Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions, London

⁸ Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions (2001) **Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 Transport** Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions, London

increased responsibilities. As the new system came into effect during 2000 and 2001, it became clear that this broad issue was one of real concern. In particular, authorities identified a potentially grave problem over staffing to plan, implement and manage workloads that have increased in both scale and breadth. Not only were shortfalls in staff numbers often a problem, but the new approach required existing experienced staff to have a broader range of personal and professional skills than they had previously needed.

In consequence the County Surveyors Society (CSS)⁹ decided to undertake a study into the issue among its member authorities. The study's aim was twofold – to identify the nature and extent of skills problems facing local authorities in delivering strategies for improved transport and to draw out possible measures for addressing these problems. In October 2002 the CSS Strategic Planning and Regeneration Committee (SPARC) commissioned the University of the West of England's Unit for Transport & Society to carry out the work. The central focus of this was to be a survey among CSS member authorities, complemented by a review of related initiatives and issues. An e-mailback questionnaire survey was carried out during January and early February 2003. Non-responding authorities were subsequently followed up by telephone, leading to further questionnaires being completed. These were complemented by short telephone interviews in some cases. [Appendix 1](#) describes the development and operation of the survey in more detail. [Appendix 2](#) contains the survey documents, i.e. the covering letter and the questionnaire itself. Overall 41% of member authorities returned a completed questionnaire, and a further 16% provided information by telephone in a short structured interview, giving a total return of 57%.

An initial draft report was presented to the SPARC Committee meeting at Wells on 5 March 2003, and comments on this by members of the Committee were taken account of in the final phase of work. The draft final report was circulated to SPARC Committee members in May 2003 and then presented to the CSS Annual General Meeting in London on 10 June 2003, and feedback from these incorporated into this final report.

Two other surveys covering local authority transport staffing and skills were carried out in autumn 2002. Both, however, focused specifically on staff responsible for transport planning, in contrast to the CSS aim of covering the entire spectrum of local authority responsibility for delivering transport policies. They were carried out by the Transport Planning Skills Initiative and the Commission for Integrated Transport; their context and aims are reviewed in Chapter 2.

This report sets out the findings from the CSS study. Its overall structure and contents are as follows:

- [Chapter 2](#) sets out a review of current initiatives in transport skills, looking at activities by professional institutes, Government and industry bodies, and the Transport Planning Skills Initiative.
- [Chapter 3](#) looks at the pattern of local authority transport responsibilities in Great Britain, and outlines the form and scale of transport activities by CSS members, based on principally the factual part of the survey.
- [Chapter 4](#) considers the problems being encountered by local authorities in delivery of transport policies, based on the results of the questionnaire and telephone

⁹ The CSS aims to represent the interests of its members, drawn from Strategic Transportation and Waste Disposal authorities throughout the United Kingdom, by responding to European and Central Government initiatives and consultations, by promoting initiatives aimed at influencing government policy, and through the development and dissemination of best practices.

surveys. The major part of this looks in depth at the problems and issues over staff numbers and skills.

- Chapter 5 reviews the various way in which the problems identified have been addressed by CSS members, reflecting information given in the questionnaire and telephone surveys. It offers some practice based guidance on what can be done, and the effects (good and not so good).
- Chapter 6 addresses other and wider topics which CSS members raised in the survey in relation to staff numbers and skills.
- Chapter 7 sets out some recommendations for measures, both short and medium term, which CSS might take to address the skills problems that persist.

A note of thanks is due to all those officers of CSS member authorities who took the trouble to complete and return questionnaires, discuss relevant issues on the telephone, or do both. Without them the material in this report would not exist, nor would the commentary and recommendations based on it.

2. Current initiatives in transport skills

2.1 Context

Education and training have always been seen as of considerable importance in the transport and related professions, as in other fields. In recent years there has been a growing emphasis on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) throughout professional communities, under which encouragement is given to all practitioners to undertake activities on a regular basis which will update and especially widen their knowledge. This complements the Government's aims of "lifelong learning"¹⁰, under which it is a national aim that everyone, whatever their occupation or formal educational level, should be encouraged to develop continually their knowledge and their capabilities.

The same concerns over education, training and skills appear to exist across most other countries in Europe, and are being addressed within relevant programmes of the European Union (such as LEONARDO¹¹).

"Lifelong learning" is in part aimed at personal development of each individual, in terms of their quality of life and citizenship. But it has a particular focus on developing "job skills" in the broadest sense, so that the individual becomes more employable and the economy benefits from a workforce of adequate size and expertise. This objective has been complemented by Government's creation of numerous sector skills councils¹². These are aimed at coordinating both longer term development and addressing more immediate problems.

Government recognised the issue of transport in its December 2002 review of the 10-year Plan¹³. Paragraph 7.70 states

"Many years of under-investment and short-term planning have left the transport industry short of many of the skills we now need. Recruitment difficulties and skill shortages are therefore a significant risk factor in the successful delivery of the 10 Year Plan. "

The scale of staffing needed, across planners, managers, engineers and especially operating staff is identified, and a number of current initiatives within the transport field are set out. These are outlined in the following paragraphs, together with some wider initiatives which address transport. Available material on experiences elsewhere in Europe is also noted as of interest.

2.2 Initiatives within the transport community

Four major professional institutes have a substantial membership within the transport community: the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), the Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT), the Institute of Logistics & Transport (ILT) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). All of them have established processes for gaining full professional (chartered) membership, which involve courses of education and periods of identifiable experience. All now require members to have a career plan and to undertake a certain level of CPD activities; although the extent to which this is a formal

¹⁰ Department for Education & Skills (2002) **Delivering Results: A Strategy to 2006** Department for Education & Skills, London

¹¹ <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/leonardo/compacc.html>

¹² Department for Education & Skills (2001) **Meeting the Sector Skills and Productivity Challenge** Department for Education & Skills, London

¹³ Department for Transport (2002) **Delivering Better Transport: Progress Report** Department for Transport, London

requirement differs between them. They all run, at both national and local level, regular programmes of lectures, discussion seminars, visits, publications, and other activities designed to bring members together and to disseminate current policies and practices. Furthermore, the institutes all promote the value of their field and the benefits of working in it.

These all have an important part to play in improving the numbers and skills of professional staff in transport and related fields. The institutes are also taking an increasing interest in technicians and support staff. However, none of them have specific work in hand to directly address the present short term skills gap in transport delivery. Discussions with senior managers of the institutes identified their positions as follows:

Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) The ICE has an active programme in the transport field, including a journal, lectures and seminars. Employment in transport engineering and planning is a valid basis for proceeding to Chartered Engineer status for those with a suitable qualification. However, the focus remains on civil engineering and related technical processes. The ICE has no specific initiative aimed at addressing short term skills shortages in transport delivery. It is a founder member of the Transport Planning Society (TPS), for which it provides the administration, and plays an active role within the Transport Planning Skills Initiative (TPSI).¹⁴

Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT) Previously the Institution of Highway Engineers, the IHT has broadened significantly its coverage, but membership and activities remain strongly focused on highways infrastructure, technical analysis and related processes. It has no specific initiatives aimed at addressing short term skills shortages in transport delivery. IHT is a founder member of TPS and plays an active role within the TPSI.¹⁵

Institute of Logistics & Transport (ILT) The ILT is currently in the course of a major reorganisation, covering its approach to education and training, CPD, and activities. Following the merger between the former Chartered Institute of Transport in the UK (CIT.UK) and the Institute of Logistics (IoL), ILT has focused rather more on logistics and on technical elements of transport, and in practice the overall focus on transport management and development has declined. It does have a Forum (formerly Special Interest Group) in Transport Planning. It has no specific initiatives aimed at addressing short term skills shortages in transport delivery. ILT is a founder member of TPS and plays an active role within the TPSI.¹⁶

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) The principal focus of RTPI membership qualifications and activities is in the field of land use planning, effectively involving a significant focus also on related areas, such as economic and social planning. Transport is an area which is seen as of increasing importance. RTPI is currently in the course of a major reorganisation, following its merger with the National Housing & Town Planning Council (ROOM), aiming to broaden its focus. This includes a review of its approach to education and training, CPD, and activities. It has no specific initiatives aimed at addressing short term skills shortages in transport delivery. RTPI is a founder member of TPS and plays an active role within the TPSI.¹⁷

¹⁴ <http://www.ice.org.uk>

¹⁵ <http://www.iht.org.uk>

¹⁶ <http://www.iolt.org.uk>

¹⁷ <http://www.rtpi.org.uk>

In 2002 the ICE published a report¹⁸ on skills shortages and the needs for development across all the built environment fields, prepared in cooperation with other major institutes. Transport was seen as an important component in this. The report identified the need for action in six main fields:

1. Coordination between the Institutions
2. Promotion of the professions in schools
3. Targeted professional development for quality professionals
4. Best working practices
5. Project procurement practices
6. Regular monitoring of trends

It emphasized the need for effective cooperation between Government, employers and professional bodies and the importance of adequate resources for the tasks.

During the 1990s concern grew that the professional bodies did not fully cater for the interests of (younger) professionals working especially in transport planning. This led to the foundations of the Transport Planning Society (TPS) in 1997, with the support of ICE, IHT, ILT and RTPI; its administration is carried out, under an agreement, by the ICE. TPS aims to provide activities and networking for everyone who works in the development of transport, through regular meetings, primarily in London, a young professionals' bursary scheme and other activities. It does not provide qualifications of any kind. TPS at present remains small – it has about 500 individual members and two dozen corporate members – but it is seeking to expand its membership and activities significantly. It has increased membership, and developed regional centres of activity outside London, but its ability to pursue initiatives is constrained by its very limited budget and lack of paid officers. The TPS Committee initiated, launched and now coordinates the TPSI.¹⁹

Transport Planning Skills Initiative (TPSI) The TPSI²⁰ was launched in April 2002, with support from Government, the four main transport institutes, and a range of other bodies, including several universities and larger consultancies. Its principal aim is to provide a clear focus for a programme of action to increase the number of transport planners, with the range and depth of skills essential for the effective delivery of the Government's Ten Year Transport Plan, and its implementation locally through Local Transport Plans, regional strategies and individual modal agencies. Its work, scheduled to finish in summer 2003, is set within a ten point action plan, as follows:

1. Diagnosis and review
2. Quantification of needs
3. Publicity and communication
4. Careers advice for new entrants
5. New training needs
6. Work experience
7. Financial support for students
8. Career development and training
9. Qualifications
10. Action plan management

For nine of the ten areas a task force has been established to develop the components of the work – objectives, target groups, participating organisations, proposed actions,

¹⁸ **Skills for the Built Environment: Team Effort** Institution of Civil Engineering, London

¹⁹ <http://www.tps.org.uk>

²⁰ <http://www.tps.org.uk/activities/tpsi.htm>

timetable, resources required, financial support needed – and to undertake the agreed work. (The tenth task is led by the project manager.)

TPSI expects to achieve a comprehensive review of the numbers and shortfall of those employed in transport planning, their qualifications and skills levels. Its recommendations are likely to focus primarily on the needs for additions and changes in qualifications, education and CPD programmes among transport planners. Its focus has been specifically on those professionals responsible for developing and managing programmes for transport development, notably within regional and local transport strategies, and for implementing those programmes. It does not cover those in fields such as engineering design and transport operation (a point specifically identified in the introduction to its employers' survey). During October to December 2002 TPSI carried out (as part of task 2 of its Action Plan) a survey of employers, addressed to the transport planning managers of both consultancies and local transport authorities. There was close liaison between the TPSI Management Committee and the UTS study team over this, and both agreed that the two surveys were complementary. The results of the TPIS employers' survey are not yet available.

In March 2003 the Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) published the report on its Local Authority Survey, carried out in autumn 2002²¹. This survey consisted of self completion questionnaires sent both to members with a transport portfolio and to officers responsible for transport planning in 148 English authorities. Responses were received from 72 members (49%) and 67 officers (45%). The main part of the survey and report is concerned with policy and regulatory frameworks, funding, progress in implementing plans, and political and public attitudes. However, the report also covers (in its chapter 6) staffing and skills. Three main aspects are considered:

- Staffing shortfalls Widespread shortfalls are identified, especially of senior staff (over a third of respondents estimating shortfalls of 30%) and among staff skilled in consultation and marketing. These are particularly hindering development and implementation of new schemes.
- Recruitment and retention Authorities are finding it hard to recruit staff, because of constraints on salary levels, poor image, and competition from consultants. Some recruitment and training programmes are in hand to address this. Retention of staff is also a problem: especially for new grant supported initiatives, where staff are often on short term contracts.
- Use of consultants Many authorities are using consultants, especially for operational services. The use of consultants seems likely to increase, especially for scheme implementation and also for public consultation.

Proposals are in hand by transport operating groups to create two Sector Skills Councils in transport operations, for the passenger transport and road haulage industries respectively. Both would focus primarily on providing training and development of front line staff, including drivers; but they would also cover management and planning staff interests. The passenger transport proposal, being put forward by Transfed, has now been lodged as an Expression of Interest, and could lead to creation of a Sector Skills Council by the end of 2003 if approved by the Sector Skills Development Board. The road haulage proposal is being developed by the Road Haulage & Distribution Training Council.

²¹ <http://www.cfit.gov.uk>

2.3 Other relevant British initiatives

No other body has focused specifically on transport. There are a few initiatives which have addressed skills shortages in wider fields which have some relevance for transport development.

The Construction Industries Council (CIC), which represents the interests of all construction industries, has reviewed training needs for the industry as a whole but has not considered the needs of local authorities or any specific sector. CIC does consider that the overall needs of the local authority transport sector should be examined fully. It is currently (mid 2003) consulting on possible revisions to NVQs in Transportation at Levels 3, 4 and 5.

The related Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) has also not looked specifically at the transport sector, but it has examined in some depth the technical skills needs, both short and medium term, for the construction industry as a whole. Its last report²² set out five year forecasts of additional numbers, based on a low economic growth rate, for the whole range of skills in construction, from semi skilled and trade skills up to professionals. These foresaw the need to increase the numbers of professionals and technicians by about 2% per annum each year. The report saw the need to raise overall skills levels, pointing out that, in terms of trade skills at least, other European countries had higher levels of skills across the workforce. Although the emphasis was on overall construction, the analysis of regional skills needs identified a significant numbers of major transport projects, in hand or planned, as contributing to the total demand for construction.

Shortages of experienced staff, especially engineers, has also caused serious problems for the railway industry in recent years (as evidenced for example in various editions of MODERN RAILWAYS²³). This is also discussed in Network Rail's Business Plan Summary of 2003²⁴. However, it is a matter of possible concern that the latter document identifies one of the two main initiatives in this field for Network Rail as:

“.. recruiting engineers from other industries, such as highway engineering, and providing them with appropriate skills through conversion programmes.”

2.4 Other European experience

The European Union is also addressing the questions of staffing levels and especially skills, through relevant programmes such as LEONARDO²⁵ (vocational training, including transport). However, the powers and responsibilities of local authorities in other European countries reflect a situation which differs notably from that in the UK. Despite wide differences between the various countries, there are some marked commonalities between the main countries of continental western Europe, including:

- firm national strategies for both transport and spatial (land use) planning, subject to approval and review by the parliament
- far higher spending on transport, especially investment in infrastructure, guided by national and regional strategies
- strong and sometimes directive city and regional planning

²² CITB Skills Foresight Report - February 2002

²³ MODERN RAILWAYS Ian Allan Group, Hershaw

²⁴ Network Rail (2003) Business Plan Summary Network Rail, London

²⁵ <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/leonardo/compacc.html>

- substantial autonomy for city and regional authorities in policy development and especially in implementation, albeit often secured by medium term contract agreements between national, regional and local public authorities

In contrast, a Dutch government report of 2000²⁶ described the UK as having the most centralised system of public administration in western Europe.

Discussion with Dutch contacts, in both central government and provincial services, indicates that the Netherlands has no serious problems with staffing and skills shortages in development and implementation of transport policy. No information has so far been obtained on other countries, but the broad impression exists that the main countries likewise have no real problems of this nature.

²⁶ **A thematic comparison of transport policy approaches in Europe** Transport Research Centre, Ministry of transport, Public Works & Water Management, Rotterdam

3. The form and scale of CSS members' transport activities

The pattern of transport and related responsibilities across Great Britain is something of a patchwork quilt:

- Within London the major responsibilities lie with the Mayor, Greater London Authority and Transport for London, with the London borough councils carrying out local highway and transport functions within their own area.
- In the five metropolitan city regions of England, a passenger transport authority on which all the metropolitan district councils are represented, plans and manages public transport (under the management of its passenger transport executive), but highway functions remain the responsibility of the metropolitan districts.
- For the rest of Great Britain, one local authority is responsible for transport and related functions in each geographical area:
 - In England some non-metropolitan areas have a unitary authority, but the majority are two-tier, and the upper tier county council acts as the transport authority (some public transport and local highway functions may be shared with district councils, but former joint agency arrangements are mostly being withdrawn).
 - In Wales there are single tier unitary district councils.
 - In Scotland there are single tier unitary district councils except that passenger transport planning and management in the Strathclyde region is in the hands of a passenger transport authority.

While local transport authorities are now responsible for preparing transport strategies and spending programmes through the Local Transport Plan²⁷ (Local Transport Strategy in Scotland), decisions on priorities and especially funding are made annually by the relevant national authority (Secretary of State for Transport in England, Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament).

CSS members are for the most part drawn from the non-metropolitan authorities across England, Wales and Scotland. (Transport for London and two metropolitan districts are also members.)

In Northern Ireland transport and related functions are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Department of Regional Development's Roads Service, and are carried out through divisional offices in the main counties. The offices are members of CSS.²⁸

Indicator figures from responding CSS authorities show a wide range of authority sizes:

- The average area encompassed is about 270,000 hectares. Averages by country are England (counties) 270,000; Scotland 470,000; Wales 100,000. There is a wide range of sizes; some authorities (one English county, two Scottish authorities) are twice this size, while others (urban unitaries such as Bristol and Cardiff) are very small. Northern Ireland has a total area of 1,335,400 hectares.
- The average population is about 420,000. Averages by country are England (counties) 410,000; Scotland and Wales 165,000. The range runs from around 100,000, for some Welsh and Scottish unitary authorities, up to 1,000,000 for some English counties. The total population of Northern Ireland is 1,685,000.
- On average responding authorities in Great Britain are responsible for about 3900 kilometres of road network. The range is between 1000 kilometres, for the

²⁷ This is now set to change – see previous footnote 5

²⁸ Because of the different status and size of the Roads Service, statistics from it have not been included in data analyses and summaries, but they are reported with other results.

geographically small unitary authorities, up to around 8000 for county councils (and, exceptionally, 12,000 for Devon). By country it averages about 3900 kilometres for English counties, 2200 kilometres for Scottish authorities, 2000 kilometres for Welsh authorities. (Published national data show the overall average length of roads as England 2500, Scotland 1550, Wales 1450; the CSS authorities have longer road lengths because they are larger than urban authorities.) The Northern Ireland Roads Service is responsible for 25,000 kilometres of roads, including trunk roads.

These figures, which are thought to be broadly representative of the pattern of CSS member authorities as a whole, indicate that all local transport authorities have very significant responsibilities. Four hundred thousand citizens, who are also clients for services, and four thousand kilometres of core infrastructure form substantial permanent commitments.

This is reflected in spending. Because of the complexity of local authority accounting, and possibly different bases of responding, precise figures are not available, but some useful indicators have emerged from the responses:

- Annual staffing costs for the departments responsible for transport and related functions average over £4 million, with a range between about £1 million and £8 million. English counties spend over £4 million, Scottish and Welsh authorities about £2 million each.
- Current (revenue) expenditure averages about £15 million per annum, and capital expenditure averages about £12 million. In both cases the figures are dominated by spending on highways, both maintenance (especially revenue expenditure) and capital; other functions receive relatively small portions of spending.

Capital spending relates mostly to new projects. Taking the typical figure of current expenditure on highways for each responding authority as about £12 million, and allocating this across the typical figure of 3900 kilometres of highway, the average spending per kilometre of highway is about £3000 per year.

The significance of highways management and maintenance is reflected in staffing levels. The responding authorities differ, sometimes substantially, in the structure of their relevant departments, but broadly indicative authority averages emerge and are shown in [Table 3.1](#).

The main feature that stands out from [Table 3.1](#) is the dominance within transport delivery of staff in highways functions (management and maintenance). Overall they account for 60% of the total, whereas transport policy and planning staff and public transport staff each amount only to 9% of the total. A similar pattern holds for the English counties and Wales, but for Scottish authorities highway staff account for an even higher proportion, 75%. In the Northern Ireland Roads Service, highways staff similarly account for 59% of the total.

Most authorities in England and Wales make use of partner organisations for some services. Effectively this is out-sourcing. The costs of the services are covered by the revenue budget, and this will also include the staffing element provided by the partners. (Thus the authority pays for the staff employed on the activities but the people in question are not part of its staff complement.) The main partnership arrangements held by English authorities are term contracts with highways engineering consultants for provision of highways maintenance, and in some cases highways management and design functions. In a few cases the contractor is a separate service of the authority. These contracts are usually substantial. Similar arrangements are in force for some

Welsh authorities. In contrast, Scottish authorities make relatively little use of contract partners, while the Northern Ireland Roads Service does not use them at all.

Table 3.1 Average staffing levels per responding authority by staff grade and job function

<i>Grade / Function</i>	<i>Average for all British LAs **</i>	<i>English Counties</i>	<i>Scottish</i>	<i>Welsh</i>	<i>Northern Ireland RS **</i>
Total Staff	170	220	105	112	505
By grade:					
Manager / Team leader	30	40	14	20	81
Other Professional	53	64	33	37	146
Technician / Assistant	64	84	41	47	234
Support staff	23	32	18	8	44
By function:					
Transport policy & planning	15	20	5	11	25
Highways – management	47	53	38	47	50
Highways – maintenance	55	73	38	24	250
Public transport	16	24	9	7	0
Development planning	9	11	3	5	125
Development control	13	14	6	10	48
Economic development	10	15	4	4	0
Regeneration	6	10	2	4	7

**** Note**

The Northern Ireland Roads Service data are not included in the British figures. Public transport and Economic development are the responsibility of other Northern Ireland agencies.

4. Delivering transport responsibilities: staff skills problems and issues

This chapter examines in some detail the nature of the problems faced by CSS members with staff and skills shortages in transport delivery. It reflects primarily the responses to the central group of questions in the questionnaire (9 – 20 inclusive), complemented by some telephone follow-up and relevant material obtained from other sources. While every effort is made to focus on the various specific factors, and indicate their relative importance, it is clear that the challenges faced by CSS members reflect a mix of such issues. The scale and complexity of these problems explains the range of solutions being adopted by member authorities (see Chapter 5).

The chapter covers the main issues in turn. It tries to identify the scale and nature of any problems, reviews their impact and considers how and why they have arisen. It also seeks to indicate relationships between different problems.

4.1 Vacancies

The level and pattern of vacancies varies across authorities. Overall, vacancies reported amounted to 7.9% of all posts, nearly one for every twelve posts. The average numbers per authority overall and the percentages of vacancies for the main grades and functions respectively are shown in [Table 4.1](#)

Table 4.1 Average staff vacancy levels per responding authority by staff grade and job function

<i>Grade / Function</i>	<i>Total staff</i>	<i>Vacancies</i>	<i>as %</i>
Total Staff	170	13.5	7.9
By grade:			
Manager / Team leader	30	1.4	4.7
Other Professional	53	4.7	8.9
Technician / Assistant	64	6.3	9.8
Support staff	23	1.1	4.8
By function:			
Transport policy & planning	15	1.4	9.3
Highways – management	47	4.0	8.5
Highways – maintenance	55	3.5	6.4
Public transport	16	1.2	7.5
Development planning	9	0.6	6.7
Development control	13	1.3	10.0
Economic development	10	1.0	10.0
Regeneration	6	0.5	8.3

Note

These averages are for British authorities, excluding data for the Northern Ireland Roads Service

This brings out two main factors. First, although managers and team leaders are needed, the main shortages in terms of grades, for both numbers and proportions, are among the main group of professional and technical staff responsible for most of the work on local transport development and delivery. Second, whilst this shows that shortages in the transport policy and planning function are proportionally significant, the vacancies among highways staff exceed the total of vacancies in all other functions.

The overall range of shortfall ran from one authority with no vacancies up to one with almost one in five posts unfilled. Geographically there is no simple pattern. On overall averages the Welsh authorities have slightly less vacancies than the English or Scottish authorities. Listing the (responding) authorities by level of vacancies, from highest to lowest, puts most of the Welsh ones in the bottom half of the list. But otherwise this listing shows an unclear picture, with more remote rural authorities having both the highest and lowest vacancy levels. Nor is there any relationship to size of authority with large and small authorities at both ends of the list. It is probable that vacancy levels reflect a complex mix, which may include factors such as the range of work, the attractiveness of the area (or its main city), the approach and structure of the authority, the cost of living in the area, and the priority given by the authority to addressing staffing and skills issues.

The Northern Ireland Roads Service has an overall vacancy rate of 9.9%, entirely relating to technicians and assistants. This includes both highways functions and transport policy and planning functions.

Technically, there will always be vacancies, due to staff movement: however, the overall scale of existing vacancies, and their severity in some cases, shows problems beyond this. What are considered to be the main causes? The overall message that emerged from many respondents was that increasing activity had led to additional work and some more posts, and therefore faster turnover; and in seeking to fill the consequential vacancies they did not obtain sufficient good applications from potential occupants for the posts; in some cases very few people applied. Nearly one third of respondents quoted specific examples of attempts to fill vacancies where serious problems had occurred. A common pattern for these examples was that the number of expressions of interest was moderate but that the number of actual applications was very small. Where short term assistance was obtained from agencies, the temporary staff employed had on occasions proved unable to handle the duties of the posts effectively.

Two main categories of staff by grade were identified as being of particular concern in the shortfall:

- For about one third of respondents there is concern over the shortage of senior staff, such as principal engineers or others, who had experienced relevant responsibility in local authority work. There is considered to be a serious shortfall of people in this category, and good available staff are able to command a premium (a point expanded on later).
- Many respondents were worried about shortfalls of new graduates. Gaining a share of graduates is important in filling more junior posts, especially with a specialist technical content, while adding to the number of career grade staff available for development.

Vacancies arise largely because of the normal processes of staff turnover. Older members of staff retire, and these are likely to include a good proportion of senior staff with valuable experience. Staff move on, to other local authorities or to private sector organisations, and balances are also changed by staff moving internally. This process has been accelerated by the present Government's major change in transport policy and its implementation. These changes have led to considerably increased workloads and this has created the need for some growth in staff numbers. However, it has also created more opportunities, especially for more experienced staff, with private sector companies and some major public authorities; this had probably created more mobility generally in the sector. The new policies have also led to new types of post (e.g. travel plan officers).

Compared to the situation before the current set of transport delivery processes focused on the LTP (or equivalent) were introduced, respondents' views on change were as follows:

- Half considered that the number of vacancies had increased, the other half thought that the situation had not changed.
- One authority thought that the problems of staff retention had lessened; of the rest, half thought that they had worsened; half thought they had remained the same.
- Two authorities thought that the overall abilities of staff had improved, one quarter that they had worsened, the remainder that they had remained the same.

These views should of course be seen in the context of a much increased workload for local authorities.

4.2 The nature of the skills gaps

The level of vacancies clearly forms one aspect of the problem in delivery of transport. The other aspect lies in the mix of skills available among current staff. Three elements of this were covered by the survey: the extent of change in the skills needed, the adequacy of skills among current staff, and the key skills now seen as forming problem areas.

The majority of respondents did not consider that the changed regime (focused on LTPs or their equivalent) had affected the range of technical skills required by staff. There was one exception to this: several respondents emphasized the growing need for expertise in transport and travel demand analysis and modelling, while some references were made to wider appraisal techniques. However, there was widespread agreement that the expansion in the scale and breadth of activities required for delivery of local transport had significantly increased the need for what were termed transferable skills. Most respondents considered that a much wider range of skills was needed among staff. Areas mentioned particularly in this respect were:

- an increased awareness of political and community issues
- strategic awareness – *“seeing and taking account of the bigger picture and joined up thinking”*;
- public consultation – *“public facing”, “customer focused”*;
- liaison and negotiation with stakeholders and partner organisations;
- project management;
- understanding and assessing behavioural change;
- abilities in presentation (to fellow professionals and council members); and
- greater understanding of integrated transport and modal shift.

With the move from large capital schemes to a myriad of smaller schemes (traffic management, public transport, etc.), the ability to develop and manage a range of projects in complex conditions was identified as of growing importance. This applied to all staff but was seen to have particular resonance for highway engineers responsible for design and implementation of such schemes:

“The change of emphasis away from building large scale road improvements towards managing the existing network has necessitated a shift in highway engineering resourcing levels. However, the technical skills of a road design engineer are not necessarily directly comparable to those of a traffic engineer.

Small engineering schemes also tend to be more labour intensive and require more staff to spend an equivalent level of capital budget.”

“In recent years there has been switch in need for design skills in traffic engineering, especially traffic signals, facilities for walking & cycling, and environmental improvements, away from design of large scale road schemes. Staff have also had to develop better skills in giving presentations to public meetings and entering into meaningful consultations with [the] public.”

A few unitary authorities (in Wales and Scotland) suggested that their smaller size was a disadvantage in acquiring and retaining a suitable complement of skilled staff: especially when compared to their (much larger) predecessor authorities or many existing (larger) English authorities. With fewer people in each function they also had much less scope for assembling staff in project teams or seconding them to other functions, even on a part time basis. This added to pressures on staffing to meet their transport delivery obligations and constrained their ability to offer more attractive jobs or enough personal development.

Respondents' assessments of their current staff skills range were surprisingly mixed. Some considered that their staff generally lacked the necessary range of skills, especially transferable skills, and felt that most staff still worked within the constraints of their defined (technical) work area (in line with the more conventional approach of local authorities). Others felt that their staff were generally now quite well equipped with the new range of skills, though they emphasised the need for staff to continue with their professional development. Within this there was general agreement that the rising levels of activity were adding to the pressure for all staff to have a wider range of skills, and any lack exacerbated weaknesses in this area. The loss of experienced older staff added to such problems. New younger staff generally lacked experience in the relevant areas but were seen to have the potential to learn transferable skills and a more innovative approach.

Although the focus is on wider ranging transferable skills many respondents also identified the shortages they were experiencing in particular technical skills. The major focus was on the widespread need for highway engineers. This covered all aspects of highways work, but design and implementation of traffic schemes and highways development control featured strongly. Some specialist skills, such as transport modelling and economic appraisal, are also highly valued and generally scarce. Even where most of the responsibility for engineering has been passed to a contractor, highway engineers are still needed for scheme management, highways development control, and other 'client side' functions. Vacancies in this group can lead to serious delays in progressing programmes of work or involve significant cost in replacing them (e.g. by use of consultants). These problems are exacerbated by the larger number of small but sometimes complex and even controversial local schemes now forming part of LTP / LTS programmes; these need careful design and management by staff having both highway engineering and 'softer' skills. Authorities also need to be able to determine that their contractor has sufficient skilled staff in these areas:

“It is essential that the client retains an effective core of intelligence applicable to the work it is paying for; in some areas this has become difficult.”

Shortages of town planners are also seen as having an impact on delivery of transport plans and projects.

The views of respondents on the key skills which need to be held by staff within their department if their transport functions are to be carried out effectively covers a range of

both technical and transferable skills. The range of skills areas identified (in no order of priority) were:

- Transport policy / strategy formulation
- Transport planning / development
- Public participation / consultation / community planning
- Liaison and negotiation with stakeholders
- Transport operations / rail and light rail schemes
- Traffic engineering / scheme design
- Traffic management assessment, design and implementation
- Traffic signalling and control
- Economic appraisal of schemes
- Transport / travel demand analysis and modelling
- Development control (including highways)
- Project management (including risk / change management)
- Monitoring and performance review
- Preparation and presentation of reports, to varying audiences (politicians, professionals, public)
- Wide experience of integrated transport
- Marketing and communication

The Northern Ireland Roads Service commented on the importance of transport planning skills and experience in developing and implementing local transport measures relevant to the size of towns in Northern Ireland, i.e. medium and small towns, pointing out that training courses tend to focus on larger towns and metropolitan areas. This may have resonance among a good number of British authorities with similar geographical characteristics.

4.3 Impact of the skills shortage

Respondents' views on the main impact of vacancies and skills shortages varied across the six areas specified in the questionnaire:

- About half considered that the shortages have a serious effect on the preparation of plans and projects and on the implementation of projects. It is unclear whether this reflects a full understanding or whether the first two areas, being output driven, have a higher focus in the minds of managers in the current climate.
- Nearly half considered that staff and skills shortages are having a serious impact on staff morale (a measure of the level of concern over staffing).
- Only a quarter considered that there is any impact in the other areas specified: relationships with the public; relationships with partner and stakeholder organisations; and use and retention of funds.

More specific points made by respondents about the impact of vacancies and skills shortages included:

- Shortages of staff in key technical positions (traffic modelling, traffic management, development control) have delayed progress, especially of larger schemes, even when approved and with funding committed.
- Lack of development control staff has on occasions led to acceptable schemes proposed by developers being seriously delayed.
- While the morale of individual staff remains varied, there has been some overall decline in morale, reflecting increased pressures on existing staff from a larger programme, questions over personal worth (especially where colleagues leave for

- higher paid jobs) and a lack of support from stretched management, especially for new entrants. All these can potentially reduce performance.
- Generally relationships with the public have improved in the new approach. However, on occasion they have been weakened by the inability of staff to handle all liaison effectively because of stretched resources. Poor standards of scheme implementation have also worsened public perception.
 - Pressures to meet deadlines mean that 'silo working' (focusing on individual job outputs) becomes more common, reducing the strategic thinking that current policies call for. Team work suffers, and non priority work gets left out.
 - The 'full business case' for schemes is often not thought through, and solutions tend to be brought forward before the issues are fully understood.
 - With more pressures on less experienced staff, especially in highways engineering, poor design and specification of schemes have sometimes occurred, leading to delay, costly changes, and worsened public image.
 - Time and target pressures constrain the time available for staff training and CPD.
 - Pressures to achieve current plans and schemes reduce the real time for forward planning. This is accentuated by the annual funding basis, under which schemes may be brought forward rapidly to meet budget availability.
 - Because of pressures on time or lack of experience, existing forms of contract have tended to be used as a basis of scheme implementation where revised conditions might have proved more effective.
 - Where liaison with stakeholders has slipped because of staff shortages or inexperience, joint schemes have been delayed through lack of coordination and leadership. This has affected public transport, community transport and regeneration projects.

4.4 Causes of vacancies and skills gaps

The issue of salary levels has been widely debated, and this formed the topic of a specific question in the survey. There was strong general agreement across all respondents across the UK that salary levels form a major factor in staff and skills shortages, with half of all respondents making specific comments about it; the topic was also raised as a key issue elsewhere in responses. Some respondents suggested that the broad local authority salary levels for jobs within the engineering and construction fields is about 10-15% lower than the overall industry rates: this specific figure was repeated by a number of respondents. This can cause serious problems for local authorities, as they generally have fixed staff pay structures; a situation that also brought frequent comment. In consequence they are sometimes simply unable to fill some posts, crucial ones on occasions. This applies particularly to more senior positions, where there is a shortage of people (as discussed earlier). Potential candidates in these groups can command a premium, but generally local authorities cannot simply increase the salary to meet the identified 'market rate' for the particular job. On occasions they may decide to do this (see Chapter 5), but then, because they also face fixed budgets, the extra staff payment made in particular cases means that economies must be found elsewhere, through reductions to other parts of the staff or training budget, or even by cuts in the amount available for actual projects.

To identify how CSS member authorities would actually rate specific positions, two detailed posts were set out in the appendix to the questionnaire and respondents were asked to say what salary they would pay for each. One was specified as a Senior Transport Planning Officer, the other as a Highway Projects Engineer. In principle both positions required an experienced professional, but by implication the former post carried slightly more responsibility and needed a little more width in the experience.

This appeared to be generally reflected in the salaries proposed. The overall average²⁹ for all responses was £26,400 for the first post and £25,400 for the second; a difference of about 4%. The averages for English counties were £26,600 and £25,600 (4% difference); for Scottish authorities £26,400 and 25,900 (2%); and Welsh authorities £25,800 and £24,400 (4%). The averages reflect a wide range: between £21,200 and £32,500 for the first post and between £19,700 and £30,000 for the second. The Northern Ireland Roads Service suggested a range centred on £27,500 for both. The highest figures for the first post (£29,000 and above) were quoted primarily by authorities in the South East and East Anglia, while more remote rural authorities in Scotland and the South West were among the lowest (around £22,000). However, listing the authorities by salary quoted did not produce any apparent pattern. Nor did it show any relationship to the listing of authorities by level of vacancies (discussed earlier).

Respondents were keen to emphasise that, although adequate salary levels remain a fundamental problem, they do so within a much wider picture concerning staff shortages and skills matters as set out below.

Pressure on salaries reflects a serious shortage in numbers of staff available, both for more senior staff and also for experienced staff. There are also serious shortages across some specific technical fields, notably highway engineering (as considered earlier). Furthermore, for some technical skills (e.g. transport modelling) there appears to be a particularly narrow pool of expert people. This situation follows the major increase in activities and funding created by the current Government policies, which contrasts with the many years of restrained local authority activity and limited funding for projects. Several illuminating phrases were used to define the implications of this very significant change:

“Downsizing and a moratorium on recruitment [were normal in the 1990s] ... We missed a generation.”

“Overall funding increases accelerated at such a pace that in has not been possible to develop the skills base to achieve budget spends.”

“LAs [were] ill prepared for the demands placed on them by the government’s new transport agenda.”

Local authorities still have to operate within a structured framework of budgets, guiding their spending on current and capital programmes and on staff salaries and overheads. Although the 10-year Plan has led to much higher levels of funding for transport programmes and projects, approvals for local authority spending are still given primarily on an annual basis by the Secretary of State for Transport (in England) and by the Welsh and Scottish national administrations. This matches decisions on grant support for local taxes, which influences overall budgets and staffing levels. A reduction in the total funds available from Government and from local tax income can lead to posts being shed, especially senior posts (because they are more highly paid and hence cutting them out offers larger savings). In Northern Ireland most spending is carried out by the Roads Service, and by other national agencies (Translink for public transport).

Government has also brought about two very significant changes in the administration of local government in recent years, in two respects. First, the move to the cabinet system, replacing the former committee system, has required staff to change their style of working. It has strengthened the need for communications and political awareness skills among staff bringing forward policies and projects. However, the loss of executive

²⁹ Note that in this analysis the mid-point figure was taken where ranges were offered, and all figures were rounded to the nearest £100.

committees has significantly reduced the opportunities for younger staff to be directly exposed to decision making and to engage in communication with key members of the authority. Second, there are now a large number of corporate / national performance type initiatives, which are widely perceived by staff as additional to their main work. These have tended to displace time available for developing new initiatives and ideas or undertaking CPD. Both have thus come in at the same time as the evolution of the new transport strategies, thereby adding to the impact of change on local authority staff resources.

In contrast, the private sector is generally in a better position to gain and retain staff and optimise their employment and rewards. The increasing involvement of consultants and other private sector companies in managing local highways and transport functions over recent years has enabled them, as several respondents pointed out, to offer suitably high salaries geared to the demands of particular professionals they wish to employ. Commercial companies can also adjust salaries (up or even down) rather more quickly to match current economic circumstances. They are able to back up salaries with flexible employment packages, which may include company cars, health and other insurance schemes, profit sharing, and support for professional institute fees and activities. Local authorities are generally not in a position to compete with this on anything like equal terms.

In addition the private sector is seen by respondents as able to offer a more attractive package in terms of job responsibility and interest. Based on their growing range of work areas, consultants can offer an appealing range of responsibility and experience. For some of the larger companies, their profile and public image is itself attractive. This can be of particular value to younger professionals, especially new graduates, to whom it offers scope to develop their experience and skills range quite rapidly. Respondents pointed out that consultancy work includes a much higher element of 'flagship' schemes. These will attract especially the better graduates. By implication this makes it harder for local authorities to secure a good share of high quality graduates.

In any case, new graduates often look on local authorities as staid organisations. Indeed, the perception of local authorities is generally poor among most people: they have a serious image problem, which cannot be easily overcome. This is evidenced in a lot of media coverage, especially at local level, which tends to present local authority actions in a negative fashion, and rarely explains the context of decisions. The very low levels of voting in local authority elections is perhaps both a symbol of poor interest and a cause of weak engagement of local people in local activities. For most young people, whatever their level of qualification, local authorities appear to offer where much less opportunity for interesting work or personal career development.

The problems hold good even where local authorities are able to take initiatives to fill posts and develop staff. Some respondents felt that good training schemes might on occasion lead younger staff to move on to positions with other more attractive organisations – especially consultancies - once they had developed appropriate skills through the training given them.

A number of respondents identified loss of staff through movement to another local authority. This will happen anyway over time through normal staff turnover, but it may be emphasised by shortages of people in some fields, heightening the competitive element. Examples quoted included staff in English county areas moving to district councils, who were able, it was suggested, to offer slightly better salaries in some fields (e.g. development control) for posts carrying lower responsibilities. The evolving fields of economic development and regeneration were identified particularly as having

substantial salary and retention problems, accentuated by the mobility and turnover of staff.

The age profile of the local authority staff base was identified as a background factor. Many local authorities have a higher proportion of older staff: the combined effects of constraints, until recently, on recruiting younger staff plus the tendency of many middle aged staff with family commitment to be less mobile. This pattern means that authorities face a potentially significant loss of staff over the coming years, and most of these people, whatever level of position they occupy, will have considerable experience which cannot easily be replaced.

Geographical factors were also identified, with two playing an important role. For some authorities in the South East, Avon and the West Midlands, the strong economies of their city regions means that house prices and living costs are high, and salary levels have to reflect this. In contrast, one or two authorities in more remote locations – South West England, parts of Scotland - suggested that their distance from larger centres, where there is more opportunity for career development through job moves and professional meetings, placed them at a disadvantage in gaining new skilled staff.

As mentioned earlier, size of authority was also identified as a problem by a few respondents, especially in Scotland and Wales. Smaller authorities are seen to be at a disadvantage compared to larger bodies (public or private) because they have little room to be flexible, and so in most fields they cannot compete well on salary levels, variety of job experience or scale of training. However, a couple of Welsh respondents considered that their authority's small size allowed them to work in a more flexible and effective style.

4.5 Situation with partner agencies

Those respondents whose authorities are working in joint arrangements with other agencies reported similar problems among their partners. For private contractors a few respondents said that they were not aware of staffing problems, but most thought that their contracting agencies did have significant problems, despite their more flexible position. Partner agencies were understood to have difficulties in recruiting in particular fields, mostly technical: traffic engineers, development control staff, highway design engineers and transport planners. These reflect similar problems experienced by member authorities themselves, and are primarily caused by the general shortage of staff in these categories. They appear to affect particularly work in the more pressured areas of the country (e.g. the South East). Some larger contractors can offset this by moving work to offices in other parts of the country; but some examples were cited where even this did not overcome all problems caused by staff and skills shortages. Concerns were also expressed that work outsourced to contractors was not always well done because their staff too lacked some skills (both technical and transferable, such as project management).

In fact the key issue for local authorities who out-source large amounts of work to partner agencies (a particular feature of English practice) is that, if the partner suffers from general staffing problems that prevent its delivering the service required by the commissioning authority, then that authority has in practice an interest in the staffing issue which is as strong as if it affected positions within its own establishment.

Staff do move between authorities and contractors: sometimes this involves positive development from a local authority perspective (see Chapter 5), but examples were also quoted of contractors recruiting staff from a local authority and immediately offering back the service they were providing!

5. Staff recruitment and retention

This chapter looks at how CSS members are currently addressing the problems described earlier. It reflects mainly responses to questions 21 and 22 of the questionnaire, with some amplification gained from telephone follow-up discussions. The questions themselves were open, and a variety of approaches for staff development, retention and recruitment were described by respondents. These initiatives fall into a number of discrete areas, and the chapter reviews these areas in turn. Each section considers the various steps being taken, and the issues arising. A number of case studies are provided, to show how particular authorities have acted and what they have found: these are strictly illustrative, and not intended to be exhaustive.

While some initiatives were recorded by unitary authorities, the majority of schemes described (including those set out here as case studies) came from English counties. It appears that they are generally in a better position to do this because of their much larger (average) size and the resultant economies of scale offering more leeway to consider and develop such initiatives.

While the actions taken by authorities varied in their priority and depth, respondents generally appeared well aware that such initiatives need to be considered on a coordinated basis. For example, brighter or more focused advertising of vacancies is unlikely to give positive results unless the preferred type of candidate is carefully considered, together with possible effects on existing staff, and good training is made available. This principle should be understood as a key theme in this chapter.

Individually these various items of good practice demonstrate that CSS members are actively seeking to overcome problems of staff shortages and skills gaps, and that they have achieved real successes in some aspects. Nonetheless the overall problem remains severe, as earlier chapters of this report bear out. Adopting good practice in staff recruitment and development is thus important for local transport authorities; but it is not of itself sufficient to ensure that an adequate core of skilled staff remains available for all of them. Chapter 6 reflects this in picking up some wider issues.

5.1 Improve advertising / promotion

About a quarter of respondents described how they had carefully reviewed their recruitment advertising. The changes made as a result had two main objectives: to address the issue of poor local authorities' image, and to target useful candidates more effectively. The principal measures which they had adopted included:

- improving the style of the advertisements to appear more attractive – results generally unclear
- concentrating advertising more within the sub region rather than at national level, particularly important for recruiting within the South East, where living costs are high – thought to be valuable
- broadening the advertising coverage, e.g. also advertising community travel plan posts in travel trade journals – not thought to have proved successful
- developing on line application systems, on the authority's Web site (usually done for positions in all departments) – considered useful in widening vacancy advertising and simplifying applications for candidates.

Advertisements need to focus on the positive elements of working for local authorities. For example, at present most graduates, and even some school leavers, face a serious problem with debts incurred during their education, and so a job offering a qualification,

a stable position and reasonable income could be attractive. Full advantage should be taken of this window of opportunity in promoting employment with local authorities.

Essex CC has an on-line recruitment job advertisement and applications process. Candidates can choose to apply on line, download a form to fill in and return, or email a request for a form. It applies for all County Council jobs, and runs in parallel with conventional advertising. (The process is managed by Capita for the authority's Human Resources department.) It simplifies and widens recruitment.

Hampshire CC has reviewed recruitment processes to make them easier and faster for applicants. It has introduced a recruitment microsite to make information on all current vacancies accessible. The system is also used to attract expressions of interest in working for the County Council; all such applications are logged, and passed on to relevant divisions; candidates may then be considered for vacancies arising, or possible opportunities. This has been very successful for highway management and maintenance staff. It has been less successful in some other areas (highways design engineers, ITS staff); although these are ones where there are general recruitment problems anyway.

5.2 Use agency staff

About a quarter of respondents said that they were using agency staff to tackle shortfalls of staff. This ensured that a position was actually filled – sometimes essential if work needed to be done urgently to implement a project – but it was usually seen as a stopgap measure. In general, agency staff tended to offer lower quality and commitment. Furthermore, using agency people did not add to the permanent skills pool. However, on occasions competent agency staff could be taken on to the permanent establishment where this was appropriate.

5.3 Use consultancies

A quarter of respondents specifically referred to the use of consultancies to fill significant vacancies. In particular a number of authorities use small firms or independent consultancies on a similar basis to agency staff; sometimes with a standing arrangement for their employment from time to time. This should be seen against the context in which some significant areas of work are outsourced to consultants anyway (considered in Chapter 3 above). Where this outsourcing operates as a full partnership, this may offer broader scope for developing staff skills. Other benefits may include joint advertising of posts, with candidates being offered the opportunity to work for either organisation.

However, concerns were expressed in two respects. First, consultants' work can vary in quality (as referred to in Chapter 4), and in any case their use can occupy quite a lot of in-house staff time for effective monitoring. Second, if employing consultants is not done on a genuine partnership basis, it could further strengthen their ability to offer attractive and well-paid jobs, thus adding to the longer term staffing and skills problems for local authorities.

Northamptonshire CC has established a partnership with Atkins for engineering and services, from 2001 for 5-8 years, worth £200 million. It gives the authority access to the whole range of Atkins resources, thus widening the expertise available in practice. This is a valuable long term deal. It still requires effective management from the 'client side'.

5.4 Local authority partnerships

A few examples were quoted of partnership arrangements between local authorities to carry out transport work. It is particularly the case in Scotland, where the unitary authorities have established four main regional groups to carry out strategic transport work; e.g. Aberdeenshire belongs to the NESTRANS (North East Scotland) group. This offers much wider and hence more attractive work for transport and related staff; it also provides the group's member authorities with more "strength in depth" in handling issues and projects at a regional level.

5.5 Move staff / change structures

There was general recognition of the inflexibility posed by local authority staff structures. However, only a few respondents indicated that they were trying to operate flexible staffing policies within this. These changes involved limited internal reorganisation, and usually focused on moving staff to higher priority areas to fill vacant posts, often at the expense of activities seen to be of lower priority. This is feasible within the normal conventions. While this was seen to offer benefits, it was recognised that such changes needed to be handled carefully; they could add to pressures in the areas from which staff had been moved, and they could also bring about wider imbalances or tensions.

If this approach is handled in a coordinated fashion, and combined with training, it does offer considerable scope for development of individual staff and the whole department, albeit at the cost of short term diversion ("short term pain for long term gain"?).

Warwickshire CC has on occasion seconded staff from one section to another, notably to fill gaps in regeneration and economic development. Members of staff involved are encouraged to see this as offering an opportunity for widening their career development, and some have made good use of this element. Such moves have usually been accompanied by targeted training. In addition the transport planning and policy group takes graduate engineers on 6 month placements as part of their development towards becoming chartered. In recent years secondment and peripatetic appointments have been used in highway maintenance to overcome staff shortages, and at times of any reorganisation. These measures have had mixed results – 'hit and miss' – some provide positive benefits overall, some do not.

5.6 Recruitment of school leavers and graduates

Several respondents emphasised that, with greater difficulties in securing experienced staff at all levels, they are now putting a lot of effort into recruitment of school leavers and of graduates. Graduates recruitment can include a range of disciplines beyond those conventionally employed, such as aeronautical engineering and marketing: people qualified in these areas can be developed to cover appropriate transport

planning and engineering, thus freeing up highway engineers for the more specific highway functions. There is undoubtedly a growing awareness that, with the competition for experienced staff at most levels, taking on new young staff and developing them is both necessary and potentially rewarding. Young people taken on through this are usually allocated to specific divisions and given training (perhaps including day release). Graduates tend to be obtained through national advertisements, but school leavers are, understandably, mostly recruited locally. In one or two cases authorities have developed Modern Apprenticeships linked to NVQs. No respondent was able to offer specific indicators of results, because this comprehensive approach is relatively new (perhaps within the last two to four years); however, most voiced satisfaction with the staff gained.

West Sussex CC has focused graduate recruitment on universities in its sub region: Brighton, Sussex, Guildford, Portsmouth, Southampton. This includes use of contacts and targeted leaflets. This is a recent initiative and it is hard to judge specific results so far.

Essex CC is sponsoring graduates through university. Currently there are three sponsored, all in relevant degrees (including geography as well as engineering). They receive support payments and are also employed in the department during their vacations. On completion of their degree they join the authority's staff in a career grade post, which can lead to further development. There is a formal agreement, under which they would pay back all or part of their support funding to the authority if they did not remain in employment for a minimum period (normally two years). This is a fairly recent initiative but one that appears likely to prove useful in gaining good staff.

Cornwall CC is taking on both graduates and school leavers. A recent general advert for good graduates brought in about 140 applications, with various degrees (geography, environment, mathematics). After interviews, a number were taken on and allocated to various tasks in transport policy work. These people are intended to utilise transferable skills in order to free up existing technical/skilled staff to concentrate on specific delivery of programmes. They are given appropriate training for the tasks they are working in, including day release in some cases. For school leavers the focus is on people with reasonably good A levels and an aptitude for the work. They are employed in lower level support roles, for which they receive appropriate training, mostly internal, but with some external courses if they have the aptitude. All of these trainees could progress to more senior positions over time. While time has to be committed to monitoring trainees, the two schemes have proved successful in significantly increasing the number of skilled staff and allowing staff resources to be used more effectively

Warwickshire CC has a defined 'graduate launchpad' scheme, for staff in economic development. This involves 2 years employment plus training, with on-the-job courses. In 4 years the authority has taken on 10 graduates, and the earlier ones have progressed to more senior positions with the authority or with economic development organisations in the sub-region. The scheme is designed to help resident graduates in Warwickshire, either attending a local university or being local to the area. The posts are advertised locally and on the Warwickshire web site and there is no tie-in with any university. At present this scheme is limited to the Economic Development group. The scheme is thus considered very successful (other authorities are known to have copied it).

5.7 Improve training / CPD

Most respondents made some reference to training, and about half specifically described initiatives to improve training and CPD for staff. This was broadly accepted as a general need throughout the workforce. In a number of cases it was specifically linked to acquiring and training new staff, both graduate and school leaver (as outlined above). Priority tends to be given (understandably) for training and development in areas where staff and skills shortages are most evident. Most authorities have some form of staff review system, linked to departmental performance planning, and guiding training programmes. One or two require staff to have a personal development plan (PDP), to guide their continuing professional development (CPD); quite a few encourage this but do not require it, though experience shows that most staff will prepare one if encouraged. Effective training and CPD initiatives require adequate resources to be devoted to the training budget. They can also occupy rather more time of experienced staff, through their supervision or mentoring of staff under training.

Although each authority will have its own particular focus for training and CPD, respondents generally recognised the importance of achieving wider (standardised) goals for staff skills and knowledge. For this reason a career grade scheme linked to formal qualification with a professional body is seen as valuable. These exist for engineers but are not generally available for staff in other fields.

While some training and CPD may be led by internal staff (experienced professional staff and other authority staff where available), most of it is likely to need involvement of outside educational expertise. Links with local universities and colleges are seen as particularly important for this. Often short courses and seminars can be developed for several authorities in a region, perhaps with transport providers and other interested bodies also sharing in them.

There is general agreement that good training and support for CPD provides a solid return in having more effective and well motivated staff. The only downside lies in instances quoted where, after gaining experience backed by significant training, staff then leave to take up better paid jobs with other organisations!

Cornwall CC has a strong training programme, especially for newly appointed graduates and school leavers, aimed at developing their skills and experience. This is focused on achieving particular qualifications, especially the NVQ3 in Transport Technical Support (which the authority helped to pioneer). This has an identifiable short term cost in two respects. First, there is a short term overall performance loss until the new trainees (currently a large number) develop the experience to carry out their jobs effectively. Second, the performance of experienced staff is affected by the time which they are required to dedicate to training. Nonetheless, the medium term impact in building up experienced staff is considered as positive.

Wiltshire CC is now supporting five staff at various stages in relevant MSc courses, mostly transport planning. The authority pays the course fee and provides the time for attendance etc. This is done under an agreement by which the employee stays with the authority for at least two more years or repays all or part of the fees. The initiative is seen as useful, and the authority is now promoting it further.

Derbyshire CC has, as part of the annual staff review process, encouraged all staff to develop a PDP with their manager, and most have done so. This helps focus on training and CPD needs and guide the training programme. The overall progress is monitored by the departmental management team, and is linked to departmental performance management. Because the PDP process is used seriously, staff are much more confident in asking for training / CPD support and for changes in responsibility. Training resulting from this has covered both technical and transferable (e.g. communications) skills. The review / PDP process has also led to some changes of post. The system is considered to be valuable.

West Sussex CC advises all staff to prepare PDPs, as part of their annual review, and supports training reflecting suitable options from this. Currently the authority is also assisting the Construction Industries Council (CIC) with a trial of revised NVQs in Transport Planning, with one person trialling NVQ5. At this stage it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this.

5.8 Career progression / Salaries linked to qualifications

Quite a few authorities have a formal career progression scheme, in which salaries are specifically linked to achievement of qualifications. Some relate this to achievement of chartered engineer status, which appears to aid retention of experienced staff.

Essex CC is developing a career progression scheme for technician / engineer level staff. Competencies are agreed at management level, and used in the review of staff, especially those at lower levels. The outcome of reviews is used to identify training needs to bring members of staff up to defined competences. This approach is considered valuable and is now being developed to allow movement further up the career structure if qualifications are gained.

5.9 Market supplements and salary increases

A few respondents provided examples of paying market supplements in some form. These include 'golden hellos' for certain (senior) posts which were seen as difficult to fill for salary reasons – however, the limited experience so far suggests that this usually does not increase the level of competent applicants. Supplements to existing (experienced) staff have also been paid in a few instances and these have helped with retention of staff. There is however some concern that use of supplementary payments in certain cases can cause a general loss of morale among other staff.

Leicestershire CC has put market supplements on to 200 posts (out of an establishment of 500 of all grades in the department) for a period of three years, to May 2004; this has helped to retain staff. A major department review is now in hand to re-evaluate all posts; the new gradings will replace the current salaries including market supplements.

Shropshire CC Has raised salaries through regrading for highways development control and traffic management posts (by about £1500-2000 and £1000 respectively); this has helped attract good applications for a couple of vacancies and also to retain existing staff.

5.10 Initiatives by partner (contractor) agencies

Respondents indicated a number of steps which partner agencies (contractors) were known to have taken:

- Some consultants openly advertise for graduates from a broad range of disciplines to assess suitability for training
- One or two companies have successfully recruited overseas to fill vacancies notably in South Africa and Australia.
- Larger partners have overcome staff problems in particular areas through their ability to move work between offices.
- Consultancies evaluate carefully tasks given to individuals to ensure that those with the most appropriate skills are used (i.e. do not give tasks that can be done by others to people who have skills that are in demand)
- Consultants employ temporary staff on short contracts, including recently retired professionals on a part time basis to supplement pensions, other freelance staff and agency staff. (They can usually pay premium rates for temps.)

6. Other factors in transport delivery

Local authorities are required to carry out their responsibilities, including those related to delivery of transport policies and programmes, within the context of national policies, including those related to economic, social and environmental matters. Policies in these areas are directed by Government, but Government in turn needs to understand the aspirations, trends and cultures of British society to create a workable policy framework for all organisations involved. Unless such a conducive national context is established, local authorities are not in a position realistically to improve their delivery of transport responsibilities on their own. Indeed, it is arguable that, even where they take initiatives, these can bring significant results only if they are broadly supported by wider factors. Most CSS member authorities do not consider that Government is setting a sound framework in which they can carry out their transport responsibilities.

This chapter looks at what CSS members consider are the wider issues and needs in this respect, reflecting the responses to questions 23, 25 and 26 in the questionnaire. Question 23 identified three particular bodies – Government, the CSS, professional associations – and asked what steps respondents thought these might take to improve the situation. In considering the wider issues, respondents identified a number of important needs. In some cases it was suggested that particular organisations have a primary responsibility for tackling certain topics. The following paragraphs describe the wider issues raised and indicate where respondents thought responsibility for addressing some topics might best lie.

6.1 Promotion of the transport industry and professions

The poor image of the transport profession is seen as a major constraint on gaining new staff. To offset this, active steps must be taken to promote the industry generally. The professional associations are considered to have a major role to play here, and they should be seeking to raise the standing of engineering, transport and planning. In doing this, they should work in coordination rather than individually, and should focus on marketing. Respondents also thought that the CSS itself should take steps to promote the industry. However, the primary responsibility is seen to lie with Government, who should be promoting the engineering industries and local authorities as sound, rewarding and indeed esteemed places to work, as the nursing and teaching professions are now being promoted. The Government's "wavering commitment to transport" was considered to be reducing confidence in the profession and hence reducing potential interest in entry.

6.2 Establish stability over time

Despite the long term focus of the White Paper and the 10-year Plan, many decisions by Government are made on a short term basis. This in part at least is caused by a concern not to be seen as "anti car", even though policies actually focus on encouraging people to use other means of transport. This does not allow consistency in plan development and project implementation. This approach is reflected in short term decisions also made by local authority members, either to optimise a short term opportunity or to meet political objectives. Annual funding (discussed below) is another facet of this issue.

Industry appears to be 'fire fighting' in order to fulfil its responsibilities. The pressure is on to spend more money on quality and best value outputs and it is being assessed against performance at a time when the skill levels are not fully available in the market place. When the next industry trough occurs (all processes are of a cyclic nature), it is essential that those responsible for leading the profession do not make the mistake of

disposing of skilled people and cutting back on training schemes. The next peak will be just round the corner.

Government needs to address this, by moving decision making on to a more consistent basis over time.

6.3 Increase the funding available

The level and form of funding available to transport authorities over time has significant implications for transport delivery, including its effect on staffing. Clearly projects can only be carried out within the funding available; and, although the 10-year Plan has raised total funding levels significantly, it has not created funding sufficient to meet all the expectations generated by the Government. Furthermore, funding grants and authorisations from Government are still issued on an annual basis. This means that projects are often developed and implemented on a short term basis, to fit within the year's budget, and often this adds to costs, whereas consistent development over a period of time would enable more effective use of staff time. Sometimes this leads to small projects being chosen to fit the budget, while more ambitious schemes which might offer substantial benefits are dropped because they cannot be funded at the time.

Such constraints on funding also impact directly on staff. The obvious issue is the total level of funds available to pay staff and to provide for their training. Because salary levels form a major cause of problems, higher levels of funding for local authorities are needed on a stable basis, over a long term period. This is something which Government has to provide for if they wish local authorities to deliver transport policies effectively. Respondents recognise the increase that Government has put into transport, but point out that the jump in activities underpinned by the 10 year Plan funding has itself created a demand for more staff resources, and hence much higher staff costs, that Government has not addressed. One response pointed out that professions such as doctors and lawyers enjoy high status in society but also enjoy generally high salary levels.

There is also an indirect but serious effect on staff. Weaknesses in funding which lead to both delays and short term rushes to implement some projects, which makes working in local authorities more pressured and uncertain, further reducing morale and effectiveness of staff.

6.4 Improve entry to the industry and support for education and training

There is a widespread belief that promotion of the industry should start at school level, with much more being done to market the opportunities among school pupils, especially when they are considering going into work or moving on to higher education. This is particularly seen as the responsibility of the professional associations, who should actively promote the various opportunities open, via education and training. Professional associations should maintain the standards for their professional qualifications but should also make entry as accessible as possible.

However, Government is also seen to have an important role here, through the attention being paid to education in its widest sense ("lifelong learning"). Creating a positive atmosphere for learning and personal development is essential if young people especially are to be encouraged to move into professions such as highway engineering and transport planning. This should be supported by Government, especially through formal and general educational requirements (including NVQs). The potential for sponsored studentships was considered useful; it was suggested that this could be by

individual local authorities (see examples in Chapter 5) or possibly through a coordinated scheme led by CSS.

6.5 Review processes to speed up delivery

Government has established more substantial consultative processes with the public and stakeholders as part of the implementation of plans. The time and resources for these have to be built into projects and managed properly. Local schemes, especially where they are seen to be “anti car”, can become controversial, and thus may become delayed, or even on occasions abandoned. This means that staff resources are used less efficiently, and the image of the authority suffers. This needs to be reviewed.

Some other statutory processes also take up substantial time:

- Preparing plans along closely formalised lines.
- Bidding for transport scheme funding, in accord with the laid down system.
- Preparing assessments of performance as part of Best Value and similar regimes.
- Bidding for funding and support under the various separate initiatives available, such as regeneration funding, rural bus challenge, etc.

While some formal processes are to be expected, all of these various groups take significant time of senior staff, reducing the time they have to manage people and oversee project development and implementation.

6.6 Coordinate public transport decision making

Developing public transport forms an important part of national transport policies, and the bus strategy now forms a required element of the LTP strategy. However, implementing public transport schemes, both service development and infrastructure schemes, is very difficult because of the fragmented nature of public transport provider organisations. The bus industry is deregulated (outside London) and its legal framework can cause difficulty in delivering transport projects involving bus service improvements, as local authority control over bus routing decisions is limited to contract services. Getting bus company support for transport schemes can be difficult where those companies have different investment priorities. The rail industry structure involves a very large number of organisations. It currently faces serious funding difficulties and appears to lack any clarity of direction. In consequence, securing funding and / or agreement from Network Rail (formerly Railtrack) and rail industry companies for rail projects is proving difficult. These are matters which Government has to address if public transport is to provide an attractive means of travel for most people as envisaged.

In Northern Ireland the unique situation of a sole public sector bus and rail operator tends to make practical public transport planning responsibilities unclear. This lack of clarity often slows planning and implementation issues on local transport measures. Lack of technical knowledge within the Roads Service on planning and providing for buses adds to this difficulty.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter draws together the findings of the report and sets out some recommendations for the County Surveyors' Society in relation to member authorities' responsibilities for delivery of transport strategies. These are grouped under four main themes. They include strategic actions and practical steps. Some items might be implemented in the near future while others would require development over time.

These recommendations address the interests of all UK authorities with responsibility for the delivery of transport plans and projects. CSS may therefore wish to consider taking forward actions in this field with the Local Government Association (LGA), and perhaps seeking partnerships with other bodies as appropriate.

7.1 Establish a forum for coordinating good practice

CSS member authorities face serious and immediate problems, with one in twelve posts vacant, severe difficulties in replacing experienced staff, a particular shortage of highway engineers, and some lack of sufficient breadth of skills among staff. Authorities have responded to these issues with a range of initiatives, reviewed in Chapter 5. These vary widely in their approach, reflecting circumstances, including the pattern and scale of problems each authority is facing, its resources and its judgement of what may secure the best results. However, they have two common features: they are primarily short term in nature; and they are generally not coordinated between authorities.

CSS should therefore consider establishing a coordinating forum for bringing together good practice in staff development, retention and recruitment. This might have a remit to:

- act as a focal point for exchange of experience and information between authorities on initiatives taken and their effectiveness (the material in Chapter 5 of this report may act as a starting point)
 - establish an Internet based discussion group exchanging views, feeding in material and drawing on it
 - develop an Internet based good practice manual, regularly updated
 - agree common positive factors to use in promoting employment with local authorities
- develop coordinated action on some key aspects, perhaps at regional level, e.g.
 - information exchange on educational establishments and training organisations, and the services they offer
 - an Internet based job application site for all local authorities in a region, and perhaps for partner organisations (transport providers, consultancies, etc.)³⁰
- arrange regular “skills for delivery” monitoring reports, to update CSS members, Government and the profession
- commission further research studies on staffing issues when considered necessary

These steps could be implemented in a fairly short timescale.

³⁰ A proposal is already being considered for developing such a site for use by all West Midlands authorities

7.2 An open case should be presented to Government

The survey brought out strongly the extent to which problems of staff skills and shortages faced by local transport authorities reflect a national context of uncertain and short term decision making, on transport and other policy areas. Although short term initiatives by authorities remain essential, these can only work effectively if a context for their success is established firmly at a national level. The policies being applied and implemented by local authorities, in which the public at large have a strong interest, are those which Government has set out at a national level. It is Government which must be persuaded to evolve a stable and supportive policy framework.

CSS should therefore consider undertaking a national campaign to establish the nature and scale of the hurdles facing local transport authorities, with the aim of seeking changes in Government's approach. Such a campaign would draw together the key facts (as set out in Chapters 4 and 6) and present them to Government, in whatever formats seemed appropriate. It might in particular stress the importance of commitment to measures ensuring adequate staffing over a period of time if national transport policies are to be implemented. It might take the form of an open letter or report to Government, publicised through the professional press.

Such a campaign may lead to the Government taking specific steps in the transport field. The campaign might also – or alternatively – encourage Government to make some regulatory or funding changes in the administration of local authorities giving them more freedom to act on their own. The concern about skills shortages is shared by other organisations besides CSS. In any national campaign CSS should therefore consider the merits of coordinating with other relevant organisations.

This campaign could, and arguably should, be developed and launched in a fairly short timescale.

7.3 Comprehensive career development should be established

The principal initiative by local authorities to address the serious problems of staff shortages and skills gaps lies in their evolution of personal development and training programmes for staff. As Chapter 5 shows, these cover a wide spectrum, reflecting each authority's needs and resources. Simple in house courses have an important role to play, and may prove of particular value for smaller and less pressured authorities. However, some larger authorities with particularly large shortages of skilled staff have evolved programmes of recruiting both school leavers and graduates and developing them through career progression by combined training and job placements. This often involves use of educational establishments and training companies in the authority's region.

In principle the professional institutes might be playing a larger role in this activity. However, while all of them are active (as Chapter 2 shows), their primary focus is on their own major area; transport does not feature widely. Furthermore, although all are committed to supporting the Transport Planning Society and the Transport Planning Skills Initiative, they are in practice not providing a coordinated response to the current transport staff skills gap. The role of TPS and the work of TPSI are primarily geared to transport planners, especially at graduate level, not to the wide range of personnel needed in delivery of transport responsibilities.

CSS should therefore consider taking the lead in setting up, for its members, a comprehensive career development programme for transport and related staff across all grades. The main features of such a programme might include:

- coordination of contents and standards at national level
- emphasis on development of transferable skills for all staff involved in delivery of transport strategies
- close links with the main professional institutes, associations and initiatives involved in transport
- organisation at regional level by member authorities working together, perhaps in cooperation with all local authorities in the region
- involvement on an appropriate basis of other bodies:
 - national organisations, such as TPI / TPSI
 - transport and infrastructure providers
 - engineering companies and consultancies
- close links with universities, colleges, and commercial training bodies providing courses and facilities in the field
- establishment of
 - a programmed approach to recruitment of school leavers and graduates, leading to a specified early career progression
 - comprehensive training and CPD for all staff
 - a clear focus on career development, through formal career grade schemes linked to professional qualifications

Such programmes would aim to generate greater numbers of people with the necessary skills, both to fill the most obvious gaps – especially highway engineering – and also to widen the pool of transferable skills, especially to ensure that technically skilled staff also have these transferable skills. It should seek to generate “strategic thinking” throughout the community of transport personnel.

In parallel it might also form the basis for developing more flexible staffing structures within local authorities. This would enable people to move round between types of work more easily, support the creation of additional rewards as necessary to meet market needs, and allow development of more interesting career paths, improving CPD opportunities. At the same time the authority could more rapidly adjust to changing circumstances. It should seek to develop a “strategic direction” throughout the organisation. Of course it is well recognised that making changes of this nature across local authorities poses a serious challenge.

This would require considerable development, and forms a medium term option.

7.4 The relevance of other European experience should be explored

The development of effective transport forms a key task for regional and local authorities throughout Europe. Many regions, districts and cities within the European Union face similar pressures of demands for greater mobility from citizens and organisations who also want better accessibility, economic stability and a quality environment. The general perception within the UK is that continental countries have a much better integrated transport system – a view that is generally correct but not wholly so. Regional and local authorities are responsible for much of the implementation, as in the UK. While there are strong differences between countries, in culture, regulation, funding, and public authority structures, there are undoubtedly lessons to be learned from liaison with other European organisations over good practice. Formal links already

exist via the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), of which LGA is a member. Other practical connections also exist, albeit on a piecemeal basis, via EU research programmes, twinning, links between academic and commercial bodies. All of these offer scope to compare staffing and training processes among other European authorities, and follow up potential initiatives; but at present they are generally fragmented.

CSS should therefore consider coordinating liaison with other European authorities over matters for which it is responsible, including transport. This might include formal links with other countries' local authority organisations, and practical contacts by UK authorities with authorities in other countries. These would address a whole range of matters reflecting current interests of CSS (and LGA) members or individual authorities. They might include three principal objectives in terms of staffing and skills:

- Study of transport and planning practice in other countries and how staffing and skills development relates to these, including review of education and training programmes.
- Development of short term exchanges of staff between authorities, to develop experience for the staff and to bring potential new approaches into the host authorities.
- Exploration of the scope for UK authorities to employ skilled staff from elsewhere in Europe, adding to the potential staffing pool and again offering the chance to import new approaches.

Acting on these will require commitment of resources, including time and expertise, but they may offer valuable widening of opportunities to address staff and skills issues.

This could be started in the near future but the real development would be possible only in the medium term.

Appendix 1: Design and management of the survey

The remit from the CSS SPARC Committee identified the main focus of the work as a survey of CSS members to identify their problems in staffing skills and vacancies and what actions they were taking to address these. These would provide material, along with desk research, for a report which (a) set out the problems and issues in depth and (b) provided recommendations on tackling the problems, based on existing good practice by CSS members.

Development of the questionnaire and proposed dates were initially agreed at an inception meeting with the CSS client manager, on 31 October 2002. Design of the questionnaire was then developed, input being obtained both from the client manager and from two very experienced senior managers in other authorities. The aim was to enable respondents to provide focused comments on a number of key points without committing much time; though the opportunity to offer substantial information was also given. Most of the questions were guided but open, with a few factual questions (to allow indicators to be drawn) at the start.

In preparing the questionnaire, account was taken of the TPSI employers' survey, dispatched to potential respondents in academic organisations, consultancies and local authorities in early November 2002. Some concern was expressed by the TPSI Management Committee about potential conflicts, but analysis by both the UWE study team and the manager of the TPSI employers' survey confirmed that, while a small degree of overlap existed, the two surveys differed quite widely in focus, content and style. The Chairman of the CSS SPARC Committee circulated a note to member authorities advising of the CSS survey but also encouraging them to complete the TPSI questionnaire if they received one.

Despatch and return of the questionnaire were to be by email, managed by the CSS secretariat (based at Lincolnshire County Council). As the pre Christmas period was not thought to be a good time for circulating the questionnaire, and TPSI planned to carry out their follow-up of non-respondents during the period, it was decided that the survey would be sent out on Friday 3 January 2003. The closing date for receipt of responses was set as Friday 24 January. The survey was fronted by a covering letter, written by the project manager. The front sheet of the questionnaire set out guiding principles for completion, and also invited anyone with queries over completion to contact the principal researcher.

Relatively few questionnaires were returned by 24 January, while only a handful of inquiries about it had been made. A reminder was therefore circulated by CSS secretariat early in the following week; this produced a few more questionnaires and contacts, but not many. After consideration at senior level in CSS, a memorandum was circulated to all non-respondents on 10 February over the CSS President's signature; this urged member authorities to complete the questionnaire, but especially requested them to email the principal researcher within 24 hours to advise either when they would submit their completed form or if they felt unable to off a response. This too drew hardly any responses.

At this stage responses had been received from 21 authorities, and 3 had indicated they would not respond. The completed questionnaires provided a substantial amount of valuable material on which to base the intended report. However, this left open two related questions: why had the majority of CSS members not responded to the questionnaire? did the pattern of experiences and views expressed by respondents hold good for the remainder of the CSS membership? In order to draw this out, it was decided to carry out a telephone follow up of as many non respondents as possible.

Telephone follow up was carried out (by the principal researcher), during two periods: 19 to 21 February, and 7 & 8 March. Calls were made to the CSS contact manager for almost all those authorities who had not responded. This brought the following results:

- a few authorities arranged completion of questionnaires, received over the following days – the contents of these were added into the analysis sheets
- for a number of authorities a short telephone discussion was held, at the time or at a later date, to establish the authority's experiences and views relating to staff and skills shortages – the points made were recorded on a summary form
- quite a few authorities advised that they were not able to complete and return the questionnaire because of the serious pressure on staff resources
- there remained a number of CSS members for whom no useful response could be obtained.

Thus the final coverage of the survey among CSS membership was as follows:

Authority type	Number of CSS members	Questionnaire completed	Telephone interview held	No useful feedback
English County	33	18	7	8
English Unitary	5	2	1	2
English Metropolitan District	2	1	0	1
Welsh Council	13	6	3	4
Scottish Council	32	8	3	21
Sub total	85	35	14	36
Northern Ireland [1]	1	1	0	0
Other [2]	2	0	0	2
Total	88	36	14	38

Notes

1. The five divisional offices of the Northern Ireland Roads Service are all members of CSS, however for the purposes of this survey the Service chose to submit one questionnaire covering all its divisions together.
2. Isle of Man Government, Transport for London

Following completion of the survey returns, the principal researcher contacted a number of responding authorities by telephone to discuss points they had made, primarily with regard to initiatives on staff retention and recruitment (questions 21 and 22). This yielded some useful extra material.

Appendix 2: The survey documents – covering letter and questionnaire

The covering letter



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3 January 2003

Dear Colleague,

Short term skills shortages in delivering local transport responsibilities

As you have been advised, the SPARC Committee of the County Surveyors' Society has asked us to carry out a survey into the short term skills gap among member authorities. This is primarily aimed at addressing staffing problems which you may be experiencing in carrying out the range of policies geared to the Government's aims for transport; especially those based around defined responsibilities for local transport strategies. It also includes other main areas of CSS member authorities' responsibilities relevant to this, including planning and economic regeneration. I append an outline of the context and broad aims (this also appears on our Unit's Web site).

We appreciate that this is a very wide area. However, CSS wishes to establish so far as possible a holistic view of the problems its members face. This is reflected in the questionnaire, which comes to you with this letter, also as an electronic file. The initial items call for some specific numbers (actual figures or reasonable estimates) so that we can draw out (a) the total scale of the problem and (b) if any variations exist by size of authority. Most of the remaining sections are open, seeking both information and views on your authority's experiences and initiatives in this field. Nevertheless, we would like as much specific information as possible (e.g. numbers of staff brought in by a specific initiative) or even estimates where appropriate (e.g. number of staff who might have left without a specific initiative). I am sure you will make clear the basis of any such entries.

You may have commissioned partner organisations (usually established consultancy firms) to carry out some of your transport and related functions for you. We have within the questionnaire provided opportunities for you to set out any relevant issues related to this (including skills problems faced by partner organisations if they are known to you).

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the study's principal researcher, Reg Harman, on 01992 415248. Please note that

he may contact you following receipt of your questionnaire if there are any queries about your response.

Please would you let us have your response by Friday 24 January. If you face any problems in meeting the target date, please contact Reg Harman.

With thanks in anticipation of your help with this study.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glenn Lyons'.

Professor Glenn Lyons

The survey questionnaire

Implementing Plans for Transport and the Built Environment: Addressing the Short Term Skills Gap in Local Authorities

Survey of Member Authorities of the County Surveyors' Society

Introduction

This study concerns the skills gap regarding local authorities' capacity and ability to deliver (to the satisfaction of their officers and members) against their goals as set out in Local Transport Plans or equivalent strategy documents.

Please complete and return this questionnaire electronically.

We have deliberately designed this questionnaire to fully elicit your experiences and opinions. You may find it helpful to read through the whole questionnaire first in order to make best use of the succeeding questions.

Questions 6, 7 and 9 ask for definite numbers (money and people) by specific categories, in order to establish firmly the scale of the issues. Where specific figures are not available, sensible allocations will prove valuable. The definition of functions and staffing structures will vary between authorities: if you are unclear about how your own groups fit, please refer to the fuller definition of the categories in Appendix 1.

Please type your responses in the box provided for each question. For most questions the box will expand as you type to provide for entry of as much information as you care to give us. Where documents exist providing information on topics covered in the questionnaire (e.g. reports to Committee or to the management team), you might find it useful to send these, preferably in electronic form, rather than re-enter the material on the questionnaire. If in doubt over the relevance of material, we suggest you include it.

The questionnaire should then be returned to reg.harman@ntlworld.com, copy to glenn.lyons@uwe.ac.uk. Please would you title the Word document as 'CSS survey – Xxxxxxx CC' (or '... DC', '... Council', or other authority title). Any supporting documents should be sent electronically with it if possible, otherwise posted. The closing date for completion is **Friday 24 January 2003**. Please contact Reg Harman on 01992 415248 if you have any queries or comments.

We would like to elaborate on the written submissions by discussing the initial results with a representative sample of responding officers. If you would be prepared to take part in this, please respond 'yes' to question 27 at the end of the survey.

Many thanks in advance for your time and input to this study.

Section 1: Context

This section aims to establish an overview understanding of the nature of your authority

1. Name of Authority

2. Type of Authority (please delete as appropriate)

county council / English unitary authority / Welsh council / Scottish council

3. Please give a brief overview of your organisational structure and size in relation to delivery of the functions covered by this survey (e.g. listing of groups/teams/sections by function and no. of staff)

4. Officer completing survey

Name:
Position:
Telephone:
Email:

Key Indicators

5. Key information for your Authority [as at 2001]

Area: hectares
Population ('000): ,000
Road length (excluding motorways and trunk roads) km.

6. Main spending on transport & related built environment functions 2001/2002 [£'000]

If you do not have specific information to hand, please provide estimates.
Please enter estimates in *italics*.

Function	Staffing	Revenue (other than staff)	Capital
Transport policy & planning			
Highways - management			
Highways - maintenance			
Public transport (strategies & services)			
Development planning			
Development control			
Economic development, regeneration			
Information services			

7. Breakdown of staff numbers in main functions related to delivery of transport functions and responsibilities (current establishment, excluding directors)

Sector	Managers & team leaders	Other professional staff	Technicians & assistants	Support staff
Transport policy & planning				
Highways - management				
Highways - maintenance				
Public transport (strategies & services)				
Development planning				
Development control				
Economic development, regeneration				
Information services				

8. Are any relevant local authority functions carried out, partially or completely, by partner agencies (consultants / contractors)? If so, please provide a brief description, setting out for each function the role played by the partner agency, the staffing allocated and the budget.
 (This excludes stakeholders such as developers or public transport companies with whom the authority is jointly progressing projects of common interest.)

Section 2: Understanding the problems

This section aims to establish the level of vacancies you face, your experience of trying to fill vacancies, how things have changed or not in the last 2-5 years, and why and how such vacancies have arisen.

Vacancies

9. Current positions unfilled

(exclude current vacancies for which appointments have been made)

Sector	Managers & team leaders	Other professional staff	Technicians & assistants	Support staff
Transport policy & planning				
Highways - management				
Highways - maintenance				
Public transport (strategies & services)				
Development planning				
Development control				
Economic development, regeneration				
Information services				

10. Please describe in more detail any problems you have experienced in trying to fill such vacancies.

(quantity and quality of applications, success in making good appointments, etc. Experience and results of specific initiatives are covered in questions 21. and 22. below.)

11. How and why have such vacancies arisen?

(internal movement of staff, expanding workload, restructuring, loss of staff to other local authorities, consultancies or sectors, etc)

12. How would you describe the current situation compared to that before the LTP or equivalent processes were introduced?

(please put 'x' in the relevant column for each line)

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Better</i>	<i>Similar</i>	<i>Worse</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Number of vacancies				
Staff retention				
Overall abilities of staff				

Skills gaps

13. To what extent do you consider that the skills needed for delivery of Local Transport Plans (or equivalent) have changed overall?

Please distinguish between technical skills (e.g. travel demand modelling, highway design) and transferable skills (e.g. preparation of reports, presentations to colleagues and council members, communicating with the public)

14. To what extent do you consider that current staff are equipped with these skills?

15. What key skills do you now see as forming problem areas?

Impact of vacancies and skills gaps

16. What – if any – have been the impacts of the shortages and skills gaps which you have identified?

Please identify these, as specifically as possible, in relation to the various functions and how they affect:

- i. preparation of plans and projects
- ii. implementation of projects
- iii. relationships with the public
- iv. relationships with partner and stakeholder organisations
- v. use and retention of funds
- vi. staff morale
- vii. other aspects

Causes of vacancies and skills gaps

17. Do you consider that salary levels form a major factor in problem vacancies and skills gaps? If so, please identify those positions which this affects. To what extent do you consider that salaries might realistically be raised to address the problem?

- 18. To gauge approaches to salary levels (without a wholesale survey), we wish to have indicators of salaries for two typical jobs. Appendix 2 sets out two job descriptions. Please indicate what salary (salary range) you would currently advertise for these positions.**

Position 1: £

Position 2: £

- 19. To what causes do you attribute any problems of vacancies and skills gaps that your Authority has encountered? Do the causes differ by function and type of staff?
Please be as specific as possible**

Partner agencies

- 20. Are any of your partner agencies experiencing problems with vacancies and / or skills gaps, so far as you are aware? If so, please explain (a) the nature and extent of these, and (b) what impact, if any, they have on the delivery of transport services in your authority.**

Section 3: Addressing the problems

This section aims to establish what measures you have undertaken or plan to undertake to deal with the problems experienced, what the results of these initiatives have been and what further ideas you have on dealing with the problems.

Staffing initiatives

21. **What measures have you taken to address problem vacancies and skills gaps? What results have these had on (a) numbers and (b) performance of staff in the positions concerned?**

Please identify results as specifically as possible – including those from initiatives which did not work as expected as well as from successes

22. **Are you currently considering any new initiatives (by the Authority alone or in partnership with others)?**

23. **Do you think that there are steps which should be taken by**

- A. **Government**
- B. **County Surveyor's Society on a corporate basis**
- C. **professional associations**
- D. **other organisations / initiatives**

Partner agencies

24. **Please explain your understanding of the nature and effectiveness of any steps or initiatives to address vacancies and skills gaps that have been or are being taken by partner agencies working for you.**

General

25. **Have you any other points to make about staff vacancies and skills shortages or any specific recommendations for solving problems?**

Section 4: Other problems with transport delivery

This section seeks your views on possible problem areas in transport delivery other than staff vacancies and skills shortages.

General

26. Do you consider that factors other than staff vacancies and skills shortages cause major problems in delivery of transport responsibilities? If so, please identify these factors and indicate how significant you think they are. Are they separate from staffing and skills shortages or do they complement them in any respects?

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Section 5: Conclusion

This offers you the opportunity to provide further input by discussion with the survey team.

Conclusion

27. Following analysis of the survey results, the survey team would like to carry out further discussion of these topics with a number of representatives from responding authorities (probably by telephone). Would you be prepared to take part in this?
(please delete as appropriate)

No	Yes
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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please now return it to reg.harman@ntlworld.com
and copy to glenn.lyons@uwe.ac.uk
by 24 January 2003.

Definition of categories

<i>Function</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Transport policy & planning	Development & monitoring of Local Transport Plan / Local Transport Strategy. Development / coordination / management of LTP/LTS projects & programmes. Coordination with other agencies' strategies & programmes. Liaison with other local authorities, Government, Highways Agency, regional agencies, SRA, other stakeholders.
Highways – management	Development, implementation & monitoring of highway network programmes, e.g. engineering and traffic management. Liaison with Highways Agency (or equivalent), other relevant agencies. Highways development control (S.106 etc.).
Highways – maintenance	Programming & supervision of highway maintenance, including street lighting.
Public transport (strategies & services)	Development & monitoring of public transport strategies. Implementation of PT programmes & projects. Coordination of service provision (commercial & contract) Liaison with PT providers, SRA, other relevant agencies.
Development planning	Development & monitoring of economic, social and land use strategies under Development Plan and other responsibilities. Coordination with transport and other strategies & programmes. Liaison with other local authorities, Government, regional agencies, other stakeholders
Development control	Development control functions
Economic development, regeneration	Development & monitoring of economic development & regeneration strategies & programmes. Liaison with other stakeholders
Information services	Provision of IT, information & technical support for internal & external clients.

APPENDIX 2

Job descriptions for two typical jobs

[Note – Authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland should read reference to the Local Transport Plan (LTP) in these examples as local transport strategy.]

Position 1:

Senior Transport Planning Officer

An experienced person is required for our forward thinking transport policy and planning team, to work on strategies and projects which form a major focus of the Authority's strategies. You will be involved in the monitoring, development and review of the Local Transport Plan (LTP), and also contribute to the development of strategies for sustainable transport. You will also be expected to take on project management responsibilities for transport related schemes, from inception through to the end of feasibility, when appropriate.

This is an excellent opportunity to develop a career in transport planning and to influence transport provision in a major transport Authority as part of a dedicated team. The Authority is fully committed to the professional and personal development of its staff and offers scope for gaining a variety of experience to meet your career development needs. In addition we offer a competitive salary and benefits package.

The main responsibilities for the post include

- To contribute to the development of transport strategies contained in the LTP, in particular walking, cycling, parking and highway network management.
- To contribute to the production of the LTP Annual Progress Report.
- To represent the County Council in dealings with other transport authorities and undertakings.
- To act as project manager for schemes from inception through to end of feasibility and public inquiry when appropriate.
- To work effectively with those officers having responsibility for promoting and developing improvements to the transport network as part of other initiatives, (e.g. Safer Routes to Schools).
- To work with officers involved in development control and regulation to establish the Authority's requirements for infrastructure improvements arising from new development as required.

The qualifications and experience required are

- Education to degree level or equivalent.
- Membership of IHT, ILT or another recognised professional institute.
- Five years' experience in transport planning, management or research.
- A thorough understanding of key transport themes and issues.
- Ability to manage people and resources effectively.
- The ability to establish effective working relationships with a wide range of partners, within and outside the Authority.
- Good skills in oral and written communication, presentations, and press contacts.

Position 2:

Highway Projects Engineer

Due to an expanding workload, we are looking to recruit an Engineer into our Highway local projects team. The core work of the Team covers local highway projects to implement the Authority's Local Transport Plan, which is aimed at creating safer and more sustainable movement for all. Your main responsibilities will include responsibility for feasibility studies, scheme design and public consultation for a wide range of local highway and transport schemes. You will also be expected to contribute to other transport initiatives from time to time.

This is an excellent opportunity to work in an attractive environment and contribute to the future of an Authority which is renowned for its pioneering transport initiatives. We have a strong commitment to training and development, with full support for day release learning and extra leave for staff seeking professional status. In addition we offer a competitive salary and benefits package.

The main responsibilities for the post include

- To undertake feasibility studies and scheme design for local highway projects, including pedestrian and cycle facilities, junction improvements, local safety schemes, road safety audits, speed management, and bus priorities.
- To carry out public consultation on schemes.
- To represent the County Council in dealings with other transport authorities and undertakings.
- To work effectively with officers responsible for transport policy and planning, including the Local Transport Plan.
- To work with officers involved in development control and regulation to establish specific requirements for infrastructure improvements related to new development.

The qualifications and experience required are

- Education to degree level or equivalent.
- Membership of ICE or IHT.
- Three years' experience in highway design, traffic management and road safety engineering.
- A thorough understanding of highways engineering practices and issues, especially in relation to implementation of Local Transport Plans.
- Ability to manage people and resources effectively.
- The ability to establish effective working relationships with a wide range of partners, within and outside the Authority.
- Good skills in oral and written communication, presentations, and press contacts.