

RICS Policy Unit

Transport Development Areas Guide to Good Practice Summary



TDA Summary

The new TDA guidance

Comprehensive new guidance on the identification and implementation of Transport Development Areas (TDAs) has been published by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

The full guidance has been sponsored and supported by the Greater London Authority; the Institution of Highways and Transportation; the Institute of Logistics and Transport; LT Property; the Local Government Association; Railtrack Property; the Royal Institute of British Architects; the Royal Town Planning Institute; Scottish Enterprise; the Strategic Rail Authority; Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive; Transport for London; and the RICS London Regional Board.

This summary document describes the background to the TDA guidance and briefly sets out the principal elements of the guidance. The full guidance contains some 22 case studies drawn from around the country.

Background

In July 2000 the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, with the support of the then Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, published research into the feasibility of introducing TDAs into the planning system. The report received support from a wide range of transport, environment, planning, local government and business organisations. Subsequently reference was made to TDAs in revised PPG13, published in March 2001. It referred to TDAs as *"a mechanism to help integrate development and transport objectives in highly accessible locations, for instance by bringing together all parties around a shared vision"*.

In view of the widespread support that the TDA approach received it was felt that the preparation of a 'toolkit' was essential to enable local authorities and all other interested parties to put the concept into practice.

The concept

In essence, a TDA is a means of securing well designed, higher density development around good public transport nodes in towns and cities. It does not seek to lay down a rigid blueprint and can be applied in ways that suit the needs of a particular location. It does not require new legislation or changes in policy but it does require the commitment of local authorities and other partners if the concept is to be carried forward successfully.

The research report defined a TDA in more detail as:

"an integrated land use/transport planning approach operating around urban public transport interchanges or nodal points well served by public transport in which a more specific relationship between development density and public transport service level is instituted".

It went on to say:

"As an economic concept, TDAs are also the focus for more institutionalised arrangements whereby public transport operators receive additional funding based on the transfer, where appropriate, of part of the higher financial returns to development which might be achievable in such areas."

A TDA therefore provides the opportunity for three significant transport and development opportunities:

- **Financially more attractive (or at least less uncertain) development opportunities**
- **The prospect of additional investment in public transport enhancements**
- **A contribution to the sustainability objectives of the Transport White Papers in terms of integration of land use and transport, reductions in the need to travel and less reliance on private transport**

Objectives of the guidance

The basic concept of the TDA approach is already recognised within the existing policy framework. However, the research report found that the approach to the identification and implementation of TDA-style development of key sites or locations within urban areas has been both inadequate and inconsistent.

The research report also concluded that whilst the planning system can and does deliver TDA-style development, benefit could be gained from:

- **Greater clarity/more positive direction at the policy level**
- **The provision of detailed guidance on TDA identification and delivery**



To secure widespread application of the 'TDA Approach' across a range of urban circumstances will require commitment by all stakeholders and, whilst TDAs are not a quick fix, early steps can be taken. This Guidance sets in motion the practical mechanisms for the designation and delivery of TDAs, and the policy process that will be needed from the national to local planning level. Within this context, the key messages are therefore:

- **Use TDAs as a key focus of locational policy**
- **Use the 'TDA Approach' as a mechanism for delivering suitable outcomes**
- **Think long term, act now**

The original research showed that the approach could be applied to a very wide range of circumstances. These range from transport nodes in major conurbations to relatively small market towns.

All those involved in the planning process are regarded as being within the 'target audience' for the guide, including elected and appointed members, regional/local government officers, the development industry, public transport providers and operators, professional advisors and consultants, employers/business community, the logistics industry and the community at large.

How the TDA Approach links with government policy

Government has placed increasing emphasis on integrated, sustainable, land use and transport planning, as evidenced in PPGs 1, 3 and 13 and the Transport White Papers.

PPG1 (General Policy and Principles) emphasises the need for sustainable development, mixed use and design. It advises local authorities to integrate their transport and land use policies in ways that reduce reliance on the private car and encourage alternative means of travel. PPG3 (Housing) contains a number of points relevant to TDAs, in particular the need to link development with accessibility and public transport, an emphasis on densities and design, parking standards and a more proactive approach to land assembly. The revised PPG13 (Transport) takes sustainable development as its policy basis, and specifically refers to the TDA concept, focusing on approaches that diminish the need to travel. Other key policy statements on the use of economic instruments as part of the planning system – including development related to planning obligations – are also relevant.

The nub of the TDA approach is embodied in the following statement in PPG13:

"Local authorities should seek to make maximum use of the most accessible sites, such as those in town centres and others which are, or will be, close to major transport interchanges...They should develop a clear vision for development of these areas, prepare site briefs and, where appropriate, consider using compulsory powers to bring development forward."

The TDA approach chimes in with the Urban White Paper's drive towards an urban renaissance and the Rural White Paper's vision for a living countryside, with access to key services and facilities delivered through integrated local transport solutions.

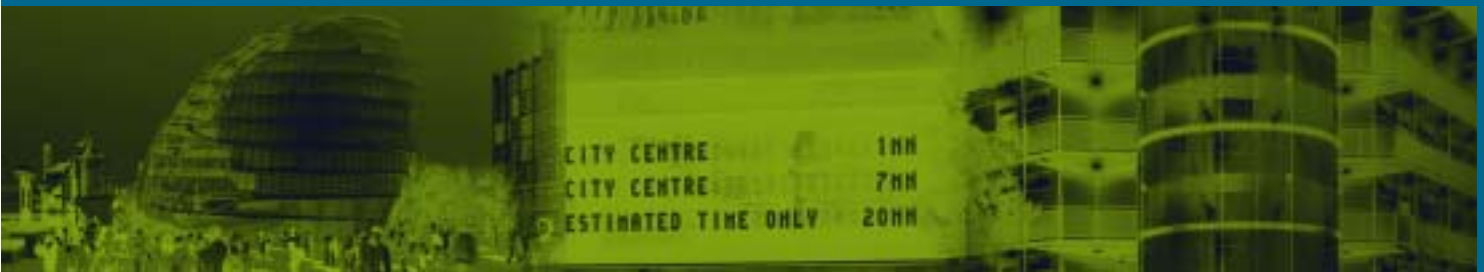
Whilst the original research was based upon existing practice and procedures and a series of eight case studies in England, the TDA principles and overall approach are applicable to a wide range of circumstances across the UK. Within this context, Scottish Enterprise and the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive have supported the preparation of TDA guidance and Scottish case study work has been undertaken. The TDA approach is entirely consistent with planning guidance in both Scotland and Wales, as shown by Planning Guidance (Wales) Planning Policy First Revision (paras. 8.1.2 and 8.3.2) and Scotland's NPPG17 (paras 6 and 7). 14 case studies have been undertaken since July 2000 as well as reviews of the earlier work. All these studies have demonstrated that the application of higher density development – both residential and commercial – related to public transport nodes is perfectly feasible as part of the overall TDA process.

Planning for the TDA approach – what to do and how to do it National Policy

The policy framework in England, Scotland and Wales addresses the following areas of relevance to the TDA approach:

- Key site identification
- Locational policy
- Overall approach on housing, employment, retail, leisure and services
- Guidance on delivery of enhanced integration

The recent Planning Green Papers are likely to herald extensive changes in the planning framework for England and Wales but the thrust of the changes should serve to underpin the TDA approach still further. Significant changes contemplated for Scotland should also be wholly compatible with the TDA concept.



Regional Planning Guidance (England)

There is considerable scope for regional guidance to take account of the TDA approach and advocate its inclusion within development plans and local transport plans, with the Spatial Development Strategy fulfilling a similar role in London

During the first stage of RPG review the active promotion of TDAs should be included as a regional objective, to be applied across as wide a range of urban settlement types and rural centres as possible. It is vital to the approach that key stakeholder groups such as the transport providers and development industry are engaged at this early stage.

RPG should, where appropriate, encourage local authorities to ensure that within TDAs permissions for higher density development include developer contributions towards public transport and local transport objectives.

The Regional Transport Strategy – prepared as an integral part of RPG – should include measures relevant to TDAs such as accessibility criteria, increased public transport choice, car parking standards and demand management.

It is anticipated that the first draft spatial development strategy in the UK (The London Plan) will indicate that designation of sites for TDA-style development should be undertaken by the various London boroughs, with the London Plan itself providing appropriate policy advice and characterising the key opportunities across Greater London.

Structure Plan and UDPs

At the pre-deposit consultation stage structure plans and UDPs should incorporate as a specific objective the promotion of TDAs as a focus for locational policy to be applied across a range of urban settlement types and rural centres. Key sites and central locations will normally be the most appropriate for formal TDA designation. Other locations such as nodal points and interchanges on main public transport routes, however, will readily lend themselves to adoption of the underlying principles.

Local authorities should apply the TDA approach in three key phases: survey, analysis and plan-making

Survey

Knowledge about the likely locations of TDAs is crucial, in particular the criteria laid down in PPG12 which states that local authorities should keep under review:

- The principal physical and economic characteristics of the area, including property market supply and demand
- The size, composition and distribution of population
- The communications, transport system and traffic of the area
- Environmental characteristics
- Overall accessibility appraisal, including transport network, service levels, network capacity and scope for expansion

The survey phase will identify likely locations in terms of areas with the potential to adequately serve more intensive land use developments and markets able to promote and support such development.

Analysis

This stage should consider amongst other things:

- Significant excess capacity in existing infrastructure, including public transport, utilities and social infrastructure
- Potential for development in existing or new public transport corridors
- Opportunity for improving public transport accessibility

Plan-making

Early discussion and liaison between local authorities, developers, landowners, operators, the RDAs, LECs, the WDA and all other stakeholders is essential to the successful application of the TDA approach, with Development Plans and Local Transport Plans providing the initial basis for this.

Local planning authorities should prepare appropriate TDA related policies and proposals which take particular account of boundaries, transport accessibility appraisals, urban design, density, parking standards and other key issues.

Development plans should identify key criteria relevant to the TDA approach, particularly in relation to transport accessibility and urban design, with major TDA development opportunities being informed by preparation of a detailed design or development brief including, where appropriate, boundaries and density ranges (particularly for residential).



Implementing the TDA Approach

The key ingredients for successful implementation of the TDA Approach are seen as being:

- Establishment of an overall partnership
- Funding
- Land assembly
- Specific defined delivery mechanism
- On-going monitoring and review

For the most complex schemes there may be benefit in forming TDA delivery companies to secure implementation, delivery and management.

As regards partnership, the Urban White Paper underlines the need to secure Urban Renaissance through effective partnership which will in turn allow 'joined-up strategies' to be developed, with local people and other organisations and interests involved, tackling local problems and realising local opportunities.

Partnerships to take forward the TDA Approach should include:

- The local authority, normally in the lead or enabling role
- * The landowner
- The investor
- The developer
- The designer
- The transport operator/provider
- The occupier

Funding/Developer contributions

TDA development may involve developer contributions to public transport infrastructure but this will vary greatly according to local circumstances and the economic viability of individual schemes within the TDA.

Land assembly

Land assembly will often be an important issue for TDA type development, particularly for large development sites. Many parties may hold land within a potential TDA and land ownership surveys need to be undertaken by the TDA promoter at an early stage. In some cases the use of, or threat of the use of, compulsory purchase will be necessary for planning authorities to secure the TDA development within appropriate boundaries. However, in most cases agreement between all landowning stakeholders should be the objective.

Active urban management

Much of the advantage to be gained through the TDA Approach will be squandered unless an appropriate regime of on-going active urban management is put in place.

Town Improvement Schemes are seen by the Urban White Paper as a potential mechanism for allowing local authorities and other stakeholders to deal with area improvement and maintenance of environmental quality. The concept may prove to be of particular importance with regard to TDAs, along with appropriate joint ventures and/or partnership agreements.

Conclusions

The Guide to Good Practice sets in motion the practical mechanics for the designation and creation of TDAs from formulation of the appropriate policy context at national, regional and local planning level to delivery on the ground.

The TDA Approach cannot offer a 'quick fix' which will resolve all the problems of securing more integrated land use/transport planning. However, as part of an overall package of coordinated measures it can offer a number of significant benefits. These include:

- *A virtuous circle of land use plus transport planning leading to better integration*
- *More sustainable development*
- *Transfer of journeys/trips to more sustainable modes*
- *Provision of a key focus for spatial development frameworks and locational planning*
- *A shared vision or strategy supporting the urban renaissance and delivering suitable outcomes on the ground*
- *A degree of certainty regarding core densities – particularly residential – to be expected within a designated TDA.*

The full guidance

The guide was written by Peter Hine and Andrew Marsay (Symonds Group), Jeremy Edge (ATIS Real Weatheralls) and Kathy Gal (gal.com)

Copies of the full guidance are available free of charge from RICS Contact Centre (tel 0870 333 1600). Extensive information is also available on the RICS website(www.ricsonline.org).

For further information about the guidance contact either Ewan Willars or Jenny MacDonnell in the RICS Policy Unit (Tel 020 7222 7000).

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