Book review

INTEGRATED FUTURES AND TRANSPORT CHOICES: UK TRANSPORT POLICY BEYOND THE 1998 WHITE PAPER AND TRANSPORT ACTS

J. Hine and J. Preston (eds). Ashgate Publishing, 2003. ISBN 0 7546 1991 5, £50, 330 pp.

This recent publication attempts to consider some of the Government's new policy directions contained in their 1998 Transport White Paper, and to explore wider issues of how transport in the future may be better integrated with other areas of public policy (such as housing, education, and employment) to achieve sustainable mobility patterns.

To tackle these issues, the book is divided into two main parts. Part 1 ('The Issues') is a collection of chapters covering important policy directions in transport, such as social inclusion, traveller information, technology-led futures, reducing car dependence and sustainable freight distribution. Part 2 ('The System and Emerging Patterns of Regulation') addresses key areas concerning policy implementation: the governance and regulation of transport, including the changing nature of organisational frameworks, land-use planning and transport demand, bus and rail regulation, charging for road-use and parking, and economic aspects of traffic restraint.

The editors have assembled an impressive set of authors, drawn

principally from UK academic institutions, who assess how successfully the various principles of the 'New Realism' approach to transport planning have been converted from theory into practice. Several authors highlight a number of areas where progress has been particularly challenging; for example, the slow take-up of powers to introduce bus quality contracts, road-user charging and workplace parking levies, and management and operational/safety issues in the rail industry. Several authors also consider how well placed the transport industry is to deliver an integrated transport policy.

The book concludes that evidence is emerging (for example from several of the recently completed multimodal studies) that a 'predict and provide' approach still exists in some sectors of the transport planning system, and argues that road improvements may prove a more attractive option in terms of ease of delivery compared with a more complex integrated strategy. The reader is invited at the end of the book to consider the possible implications of this policy dilemma.

The book should attract a wide audience thanks to the breadth of topics covered. It provides an excellent commentary on the implementation of the Ten Year Plan and future directions in transport policy.

N. THORPE