Quality of Life at Risk

Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change
Amsterdam
24 May, 2007
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On 6th June 1997 John Prescott said “I will have failed if in five years time there are not many more people using public transport and far fewer journeys by car. It's a tall order, but I urge you to hold me to it”

On 16 May 2007 John Prescott said “I had never envisaged we would have 7 million new cars. It has created real problems.”

Forecasts published by Prescott’s department for 2007 at the time of his 1997 statement:
Motor vehicles +27% = +6.85 million
Traffic +35% = + 8.9 million
Growth of GDP over 10 years at 2.8% = 32%

London > Edinburgh
332 miles
Parking meters 20’ apart
Therefore 264 per mile
One lane = 87648 cars
7 million extra vehicles = 80 lanes

Business as usual in Britain
• 5 miles per day in 1950
• More than 30 miles per day now
• 60 miles per day in 2025

The Public
Fatalist
Hierarchist
Individualist
Egalitarian

The Public
Fatalist
Hierarchist
Technical fix
Individualist
Egalitarian
The social consequences of hypermobility
(the pollution-free perpetual-motion engine & electronic mobility too cheap to meter)

- more dispersed (more suburban sprawl)
- more polarised (greater disparity between rich and poor)
- more anonymous and less convivial (fewer people will know their neighbours)
- less child-friendly (children’s freedoms will be further curtailed by parental fears)
- less culturally distinctive (the McCulture will be further advanced)
- more dangerous for those not in cars (more metal in motion)
- fatter and less fit (less exercise built into daily routines)
- more crime ridden (less social cohesion and more fear of crime)
- subject to a more Orwellian style of policing (more CCTV surveillance)
- less trusting (the rise of the audit/risk-assessment culture)
- less democratic (the majority will have less influence over the decisions that govern their lives)
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“The swings are packed away at night because kids might climb the fence and use them unsupervised and hurt themselves.”

Hypermobility & democracy

Three opinion polls

- Would you like a car and unlimited air miles?
- Would you like to live in the sort of world that would result if everyone’s wish were granted?
- Would you like to live in a cleaner, safer, healthier, more sustainable world in which people knew their neighbours, and it was safe for children to play in the streets?