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TSPT

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17 AUGUST 2000

Dear NTS user

### **National Travel Survey User consultation**

The National Travel Survey is currently undergoing a 'Quality Assurance Review' as a National Statistics output. As part of this review, we wish to consult users of the survey to ensure that it meets their needs as far as possible, within the constraints of funding and the burden on respondents.

Internal users in DETR have been consulted, and this letter invites you to take part in the consultation as an external user. It is planned that any changes recommended will be incorporated in the design of the survey from the beginning of 2002.

As part of the consultation process, we have produced the enclosed questionnaire. If you would like to use it to pass on your comments on how the National Travel Survey could be improved to meet your needs, we would be very pleased to receive them.

Please use the questionnaire as a framework only. If you have other comments not covered, or need extra space for your comments, please use extra sheets.

If you feel there is a more appropriate person in your organisation to fill in this questionnaire, or there is someone else who may also have an interest, please pass or copy it on. You may also wish to note that there is a Seminar at the DETR on 6 September 2000, to discuss users' needs from the NTS - see details at the end of the questionnaire.

Please return completed questionnaire, to Barbara Noble at the address above by **Friday 15 September 2000** at the latest. Earlier returns would be appreciated. An electronic version is also available on request from [barbara\\_noble@detr.gov.uk](mailto:barbara_noble@detr.gov.uk).

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely

**PETER CAPELL**



**Respondent's details**

Name:.....

Company/institution:.....

Role:.....

Address:.....

.....

Telephone number:.....

Fax number:.....

Email address:.....

What do you use the NTS for? (multi-tick)

- Research
- Planning
- Formulating policy
- Teaching
- Commercial
- Not used, but would like to use in future
- Not used, and unlikely to use in future
- Other (please specify) .....

How do you access NTS data? (multi-tick)

- Publication - printed
- Publication - electronic
- Custom tables from NTS team
- ESRC data archive
- Not used

Which is the most recent dataset that you have used? (one tick)

- 1994/96 or earlier    1995/97    1996/98    1997/99    Not used

How often do you use the NTS? (one tick)

- Every week
- Every month
- Every quarter
- Every six months
- Every year
- Less than once a year
- Never used it

Are you involved in running and/or commissioning your own household surveys, or other surveys on personal travel?    Yes    No

If yes, please describe:

## 1. Current format of the NTS

The National Travel Survey is a household survey, with all individuals in the household completing a face-to-face interview and a one-week travel diary. Previous consultation with internal customers in DETR has resulted in agreement that this format should be retained. However, this could be reconsidered in the event of any strong representations from external users.

**Please respond below on the general aspects of the NTS design described above:**

- No comments
- Keep the same format
- Prefer changes listed below

## 2. Survey sampling details

The NTS is based on a random sample of private households. This sample is stratified by Government Office Region (further split to metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties) and population density. A further level of stratification is carried out based on household car ownership and socio-economic group of the head of household, using 1991 Census data.

The Primary Sampling Unit (PSU) is the postcode sector. From each of 252 PSUs (in the year 2000), 23 households are chosen at random from the Post Office Small User file, giving a total of 5,796 sampled addresses. Each PSU is the workload of one interviewer.

Full details of methodology can be found in the NTS Technical Reports, published by ONS which are also available electronically, at <http://www.transtat.detr.gov.uk/personal/>

**Please respond below on the sampling methodology employed in the NTS:**

- No comments
- Keep the same survey design
- Prefer changes listed below

### 3. Questionnaire topics

In broad terms, the following data are collected on the NTS using Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI):

**Household level data**, including household characteristics, availability of transport services, household attitudes to local bus services.

**Vehicle data** are collected at the household level, including age of vehicle, vehicle type, annual mileage, fuel type, company car details.

**Individual level data** including economic status, individual travel requirements, use of season tickets, frequency of use of public transport.

Full details of the current questionnaires can be found in the 1998 NTS Technical Report, published by ONS which is also available electronically, at <http://www.transtat.detr.gov.uk/personal/>

Questions currently under trial for future inclusion include:

- household level: availability and use of community transport; e-shopping;
- individual level: ethnic group; attitudes to public transport, facilities for cyclists etc.
- vehicle level: work-related deliveries; mileage outside GB on last trip.

#### **Should the above topics and data items be changed or added to?**

- No comments
- Keep the same questions
- Prefer changes listed below (include questions that are no longer needed as well as suggestions for new topics)

#### **Household level data**

#### **Individual level data**

#### **Vehicle data**

#### 4. Diary data

All members of the household (including children) are required to complete a 7 day travel diary of all personal travel within Great Britain. Details are collected for individual journeys and journey stages, including purpose, mode, distance, time, car occupancy, costs of parking and public transport.

Walks of less than 50 yards are excluded. Walks of over 50 yards but less than a mile are only included on day 7 of the diary, to ease respondent burden, but all short walk data are grossed up by a factor of 7 in published results.

In addition, data are collected on long distance (over 50 miles) journeys for the three weeks before the main travel week.

Detailed origin and destination addresses are not currently asked for, due to the problems with asking respondents and interviewers to accurately record the required information, and the high burden that would be placed on respondents. In addition, sample sizes would be extremely small for analysis purposes. Any thoughts or ideas about these problems would be useful.

**Please respond below on travel data:**

- No comments
- Keep the same diary design
- Prefer changes listed below

## 5. Data processing

Raw data are received from ONS and processed by DETR. Some missing data are imputed. Only data from fully responding households are used for analysis. However, some households fully participate in the interviews, but fail to complete diaries. We are considering using the interview data only from partially responding households.

There is currently no weighting of the output data, although there are plans to consider this. It is intended that projects to consider weighting options will be carried out in the near future. A non-response survey could be part of this process.

There has also been preliminary work to derive a variable giving 'tours', a circuit of several journeys starting and ending at home, although this has yet to be tested and analysed. Thoughts on other items that could usefully be added at the data processing stage would be most welcome, particularly with regard to the potential for incorporation of small area statistics from other sources.

### **Please respond below on weighting, imputation, and derived variables:**

- No comments
- Keep the same data processing as at present
- Prefer changes listed below in weighting/ imputation/ use of partially responding households etc

## 6. Data access

The NTS is currently disseminated via a number of methods:

- printed reports and publications
- electronic versions of reports and publications, available on the world wide web
- raw data available for academic use from ESRC
- ad-hoc requests for data handled by the NTS team at DETR
- new web-based interrogation available shortly

**What additions/changes would you like to see made to the ways in which data from the NTS are disseminated?**

- No comments
- Current dissemination satisfactory
- Prefer changes listed below

**If there were changes made to the dissemination methods, would you be likely to use the NTS more often?**

## 7. Other innovations

If funds become available, it may be possible to increase the sample size of the NTS, so that biennial or annual data become available.

**Would you welcome this?**

- No comments
- Current sample size sufficient
- Prefer changes listed below

It may then be appropriate to ask a core set of questions every year, with a rotating set of non-core questions asked every two or three years. For example, questions on demographic background, car ownership and driving licence holding would certainly be core questions. Details of access to local facilities, and frequency of use of public

transport are examples of questions that might be asked in rotation. If the questionnaires could be shortened, it might then be possible to add additional 'modules' on an occasional basis, for research purposes.

**Do you favour this approach?**

- No comments
- Current design preferred (ie all questions asked each year)
- Prefer changes listed below

Advances in technology may impact on the NTS in future. These include using Global Positioning Systems to track respondents, and completion of diaries over the Internet. There are no plans to use either of these on the NTS in the near future, although progress will be watched with interest!

**Are you aware of any new technologies which could be useful to the NTS in the near future?**

- No comments
- Suggested use of new technology:

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP. PLEASE COMMENT ON FURTHER SHEETS IF YOU WISH, EITHER TO EXTEND ANSWERS GIVEN ABOVE OR TO ADD COMMENTS ON TOPICS NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE.**

## THE NATIONAL TRAVEL SURVEY

Do you use the National Travel Survey?

Does it meet your needs? What suggestions do you have?

If you have suggestions then come to this **DETR/TSUG** seminar. There will be short presentations by **Mike Hughes** and **Barbara Noble**, followed by a general discussion of users' needs.

**Mike Hughes** is Chairman of the Transport, Travel and Tourism Theme Working Group and Statistics Head of Profession in DETR. He will be describing the rôle of user consultation in the context of National Statistics Quality Reviews, with particular reference to the National Travel Survey.

**Barbara Noble** is the Statistician in charge of the National Travel Survey. She will be describing how the review is being carried out.

Please note that the seminar is **free**, whether you are a member of TSUG or not.

If you would like your views to be included in the review, but cannot attend this seminar, please contact Mike Haslam at the address below.

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2000, 2.30-5.00pm**

at

**Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (Conference Room 5L)  
Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DR**

**Please note that no one can be admitted to Great Minster House unless they are booked in.**

**Please book by sending the cut off slip below to:**

**Mike Haslam  
Zone 2/17  
DETR  
Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DR**

**Nearest underground stations:**

Pimlico  
St.James' Park  
Westminster

**TEL: 020 7944 4748 Fax: 020 7944 2164 E-mail: [Mike\\_Haslam@detr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Mike_Haslam@detr.gsi.gov.uk)**

### **'NATIONAL STATISTICS USER CONSULTATION - THE NATIONAL TRAVEL SURVEY', Wednesday 6th September 2000, 2.30-5.00pm.**

Please book \_\_\_\_\_ places on the above seminar.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Or e-mail

[Mike\\_Haslam@detr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Mike_Haslam@detr.gsi.gov.uk)

