

## *Best Urban Freight Solutions*

# Urban freight distribution in the UK

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# Outline

- Key issues facing urban distribution
- Policy background and development
- Research in the UK
- Example of project using supply chain approach
- Conclusions

# Key issues for urban distribution in UK

- Distribution and logistics systems are continually evolving
- Major growth in the demand for outsourcing of services
- Customer expectations of service levels are growing
- Increased levels of concern about environmental impacts of urban transport systems

## Traditional policy thinking in UK

- Not a priority for policy makers
- Freight transport regarded as a problem
- Freight-thinking has tended to take place as a reaction to problems
- Traditional policies are aimed at all transport or likely to be punitive in nature for freight
  - Vehicle access time restrictions
  - Goods vehicles not allowed to use bus lanes
  - Measures that create new bottlenecks
  - Permanent road closures
  - Planning/design of cycle lanes
  - Road signing

# Reasons for a change in approach

- Government White Paper on Transport
- Sustainable Distribution Report
- Requirement to prepare Local Transport Plans including freight
- Transport Strategy for London
- PLUS...
- Planning Policy Guidance
- Debate about an urban renaissance

## Some key outcomes

- Renewed interest in urban freight
- Awareness of lack of information
- Interest in new approaches to understanding the problems
- Links to other developments - for example e-commerce

## Some existing research problems

- Narrow definition of vehicle activity and type
- Poor understanding of why vehicles are there
- Pattern of movement not well understood
- Supply chain focus missing
- Range of trip types
- Importance of service trips and vehicles
- Problem definition weak
- Few links to sustainability policies

# Current research focus in UK

- Awareness of lack of data - support for data collection now starting
- Work on supply chain approach
- Research into pragmatic solutions to local problems (Freight Quality Partnerships)
- Research into best practice



## Example of project using supply chain approach

- Develop framework for better understanding urban distribution
- Current freight patterns to/from businesses
- Investigate problems experienced by goods and service vehicle operators
- Research how to achieve more sustainable urban distribution: policy measures and company initiatives

# Issues addressed in discussion groups

- Participants current goods and servicing operations
- Problems experienced carrying out these operations
- How participants would respond to range of new policy measures
- Company/supply chain initiatives

## Usefulness of project

- Wider definition of distribution helpful in understanding scale and scope of problem
- Absolute and relative number of freight vehicle trips at different businesses and mapping of the activity
- Supply chain decision making process and link to vehicle activity
- How supply chains could potentially react to new policy measures and effect on activity
- How changes to urban distribution could be discussed and planned by supply chain partners and policy makers

## Research outcomes: Actions for policy makers

- Need to develop balanced supply chain view of freight transport operations
- Role and importance of freight transport including economic as well as environmental impacts
- Reassessment of priority given to freight vehicles
- More consideration of implications of non-freight policy measures on freight

## Research outcomes: Policy measures that could assist freight operations

### Seven main groups

- Loading / unloading policies
- Vehicle access policies
- Road space sharing policies
- Information provision
- Policies towards other road users
- Traffic management
- Freight Quality Partnership

## Research outcomes: Actions for companies

- Scope for more initiatives that bring economic and environmental benefits
- Existing opportunities to work with partners in supply chain
- Ways to resolve sharing benefits
- Significance of working with receivers even if they are not “customers”

## Conclusions: Urban Distribution in the UK

- Urban distribution becoming more important for policy makers
- Companies can take important initiatives
- Quality Partnerships are essential
- Companies will need to respond to new urban policies in an innovative way
- Links to wider developments becoming more apparent - e.g. social exclusion and e-commerce

**Thank you**



## Report Title

**“A framework for considering policies to encourage sustainable urban freight traffic and goods/service flows”**

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<http://www.wmin.ac.uk/transport/projects/u-d-summ.htm>

# Urban distribution systems

Comparative example using  
two types of pharmacy outlet



