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Local Authority Cooperation with Urban Freight Stakeholders: A Comparison of Partnership Approaches

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Freight transport operations in urban areas are normally performed by private companies using public infrastructure and governed by regulations implemented by public authorities. Until recently there has been little involvement of private companies in local transport planning processes and as a result urban transport regulations and plans are frequently formulated with limited understanding of the impacts on freight transport operations. In the UK, freight partnerships have been developed to bring together public and private stakeholders often in an urban context and there are other examples elsewhere in Europe. Few of these partnerships have been assessed in order to compare their activities systematically. The paper compares several freight partnerships and considers their usefulness and possible shortcomings in terms of specific outcomes and projects as well as their input to and influence on policy formulation. Six partnerships are investigated by means of desk research, interviews and questionnaires and in two cases participation by the researchers. The freight partnerships are compared using an assessment framework derived from the literature review conducted. Results show that short-term actions solving specific problems are valued but are not perceived as the sole benefit of the partnerships. Longer-term relationships and mutual understandings of each other's problems and possibilities are considered equally important especially in respect of input to policy formulation by the local authorities. The results also show that one of the most important factors to support the on-going activities of a partnership is a core set of engaged and interested participants and several ways in which this can be achieved have been identified.

Keywords: Local authority transport planning, Public-private partnerships, Urban freight partnerships, Urban freight transport.

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1. Introduction

Urban freight transport involves considerable interaction between the public and private sector. For many years the role of the public sector (city authorities or the local authorities within cities, e.g. boroughs, districts and arrondissements) has been confined largely to one of regulation. Much of this regulation has focused on time of day of operation and limits on vehicle sizes. Therefore in general, private companies perform freight transport operations in urban areas and the public sector regulates those operations and is responsible for the local infrastructure network. Until recently there has been little involvement of private companies in the local authority transport planning process.

At best this results in a passive role for the private sector while at worst there can be some degree of confrontation or antagonism between those making the rules (public authorities) and those trying to adapt to the rules (transport operators). In the past ten years it has become clear that achieving greater efficiency (regarding all aspects of sustainability: social, economic and environmental) in urban freight requires the city/local authority to address the issue with new organizational approaches, which cannot be achieved without public-private understanding, collaboration and partnership (Crainic et al., 2004).

The latest White Paper on Transport (European Commission, 2011) presents ambitious goals for reduced emissions and recognises transport in urban areas as an important area to focus on. The proposed goals cannot be achieved simply through regulation nor are they likely to be met by actions taken only by the private sector. The need to find dramatic improvements has stimulated interest in the role of partnerships. However, relatively few studies have taken place into urban freight partnerships and the role of the local authority within such a partnership Most studies with the local authority as the focus have considered regulations (Muñuzuri et al., 2012) or modelling as the main way to find measures to solve urban freight transport problems (McLeod et al., 2006). The project DISTILLATE in the UK has focused on local authority transport planning and how decision making for sustainable urban transport could be improved (May, 2009), although that project did not consider freight transport.

However, May (2009) concludes that cities need to focus on strategy development before implementing measures that may be un-coordinated. Furthermore, it is suggested in the results from the DISTILLATE project that partnerships and learning across sectors are necessary in order to deliver sustainable transport plans and policies – through decision support tools (Binsted & Paulley, 2009; Forrester, 2009; and, Hull, 2009). In line with that, there is a need for more coordinated approaches also to freight planning in urban areas and these approaches need to bring together the various stakeholders. The BESTUFS project (Huschebeck, 2004) recommended analysing the approaches to public private partnerships (PPPs) in urban freight transport and the provision of guidelines for cities and urban transport operators to set up and implement successful PPPs, as well as recommending that those PPPs should be linked to an integrated transport plan. In the BESTUFS II project (Allen & Eichhorn, 2007) it was recommended that policy makers should be clear about the issues where they want the engagement of the private sector and decide how best to use the time and efforts; focusing on key issues helps to keep a continuous engagement from the private sector.

Despite the work noted above there remain many unanswered questions about public-private partnerships in urban freight transport. Although general guidelines and principles have sometimes been discussed there have been only a few case studies of initiatives and there has been a limited attempt to compare approaches to public-private urban freight partnerships in a systematic way. This paper addresses these questions by considering six examples of freight partnerships in five European cities. The research has identified the background to establishing

the partnerships and has reviewed the main features of each of them in terms of their composition, activity and factors that may influence their success or failure. The research problem we have addressed is to investigate whether there are common features in the partnerships that can point at useful and valuable outcomes and a longer term role for the partnership. To achieve this we have sought information from participants in the partnerships about factors they consider contribute to the success or weakness of the partnership. The paper is organised as follows. The second section considers the literature about urban freight partnerships. Section three contains a brief discussion of the methodology used for the more detailed research concerning the six case study examples of urban freight partnerships. Each of the partnerships studied are discussed in more depth (section four) and then similarities and differences are addressed in section five. The conclusion draws together the lessons learned from the assessment.

2. Public private partnerships in an urban context

Clearly the words used to describe something are important and it is also apparent that translating terms can be difficult. During the research for this paper, we have encountered several terms that are used to describe similar activities: 'Public Private Partnership' (a wider context), 'Freight Quality Partnership' (freight specifically mentioned), 'Local Freight Network' (suggesting a local context), 'Peer to Peer exchange' (exchange of information between two individuals or groups of stakeholders) and 'Freight Charter' (a specific contract with obligations between stakeholders). In the UK the term 'network' would be considered rather vague and therefore the term 'partnership' is usually preferred if the idea is to bring organisations together (network would imply simply sharing information). However, the term 'partnership' has a more formal meaning in some countries implying in some instances a legal relationship - this may explain why the term 'network' or 'charter' has been used in the case of Gothenburg and Paris. Having reviewed the activities of these freight partnerships/networks in the five cities we are confident that they are similar enough to one another to be worth comparing and to avoid unnecessary repetition of words we refer to them as 'partnerships' throughout the remainder of this paper.

2.1 Partnerships in an urban freight context

Peters (1998) defines a public private partnership as containing the following components: first, a partnership involves two or more actors, of which at least one is public; second, each participant need to be principal (being able to bargain on its own behalf rather than having to refer back to other sources of authority), which also implies that each participant has a stable commitment to the partnership; third, an enduring relationship among the participants with some continuing interactions; fourth, each participant contributes with something to the partnership – material or immaterial; and, finally a partnership implies some shared responsibility for outcomes of their activities. The term Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is mostly used to refer to the bringing together of private and public sectors in a long-term partnership of funding, construction, renovation, management or maintenance of infrastructure or the provision of service (European Commission, 2004). Browne et al. (2003) use a definition of PPP that considers both a narrow and a broad definition. A narrow PPP is intended to involve the private sector in public projects. A broad PPP involves the public sector's intervention into private practices and operations, as well as consultation and dialogue in the public decision-making, which we also endorse in this paper.

According to Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) there are three main drivers for increased used of partnerships: 1) *Efficiency* – multi-agency partnerships can be a way of making better use of

existing resources, add value by bringing in new providers and fostering innovation, and they can be a means of levering in new resources; 2) *Integration* – multi-agency partnerships can be a way of securing greater integration and to join up dispersed service providers, whilst also harnessing the distinct contributions that different agencies can make to meeting diverse and complex local needs; and, 3) *Accountability* – in the context of declining turn-out in local elections and low levels of interest in local politics, partnership arrangements can be a means of securing new forms of accountability for public services.

A reason to set up a partnership could be the possibility to exchange information and knowledge between stakeholders. Marsden & Stead (2011) observe that established networks and peer to peer networking supports policy transfer while Marsden et al. (2011) argue that policy learning is a social process built around curiosity, exchange and trust. These points are relevant to this paper and are addressed here in the context of urban freight transport. Within urban freight transport there are a wide range of potential solutions to problems and the need for interventions and the types of intervention will vary between urban areas and in accordance with specific policy goals. The importance of stakeholder co-operation, and involvement for urban freight transport issues are mentioned by Quak (2008) but he does not comment on the possibility of involving the stakeholders in discussions with the local authority through partnership on a regular, and long-term, basis. Indeed Dablanc (2008) argues that local partnerships are only useful in a limited number of cities, since they rarely contain the whole variety of actors that participate in urban freight transport. However, good stakeholder cooperation could be a success factor for cities in their work with urban freight transport (Browne et al., 2007). Nevertheless, it is important to consider the issue raised by the European Intermodal Association regarding the 'Climate Transact Declaration' (2009) where they state that "…[sustainable transport partnerships] are valuable […] but should not become a green card for local authorities not to produce coherent sustainable transport measures." The objective of implementing measures for improved freight transport, i.e. to reach sustainability, does not always mean an improved situation for the logistics companies but rather a giving and taking for overall improvement. The objective is, or should be, to reduce the conflict between different stakeholders' requirements (Muñuzuri et al., 2005).

2.2 Freight partnership approaches in different countries

Much of the discussion above assumes a partnership approach at a city level. However, policy formulation at the national level may provide encouragement for the creation of local partnerships. Here, not surprisingly, practices are rather varied between countries. In Sweden the national government established a group to discuss broad logistics issues in 1997 that subsequently became the national 'Logistikforum' (Logistikforum, 2012). This Logistics Forum is the government's advisory body for logistical issues and has one subgroup that focuses on city logistics. A report produced by the Logistics Forum (Logistikforum, 2011) highlighted that consensus and common ground for all the different actors and stakeholders are important in order to achieve sustainable urban freight transport.

Holland has a national urban freight policy that supports regional and local freight partnerships (Degenkamp, 2011). Perhaps this is not surprising given The Netherlands has a relatively long tradition of working with urban freight transport. The early 1990's saw the introduction of urban freight measures at a national level in the Netherlands and in 1995 the Platform for Urban Distribution was founded, with eleven parties as a mixture of ministries and transport associations with the aim to stimulate and co-ordinate city logistics (van Duin, 2006). In France, the introduction of freight issues into urban mobility master plans (Plans de déplacements urbains, PDUs) has made a considerable difference. The PDU concept has been proposed to French local governments since the 1982 Transport Act called the "LOTI" (Loi d'orientation des

transports intérieurs). PDUs are now compulsory for metropolitan areas over 100,000 inhabitants and over 70 French urban areas are affected by the measure. Freight is considered one of the major issues at stake in a PDU process. In the UK the concept of Freight Quality Partnerships began in the mid-1990s as a result of a joint industry and local authority initiative and was supported at the national level with the publication of guidance and case studies in 2003 (Department for Transport, 2003a and 2003b).

More information is available about UK freight partnerships than is the case in the other countries studied. Freight Quality Partnerships (FQPs) were noted by the government in the DETR report (1998), having been launched initially in 1996, by the Freight Transport Association (FTA, 1997). The government have promoted FQPs since 1999 (DETR, 1999) and in 2008 made the following statement:

"There are many areas where local authorities are demonstrating significant leadership on freight issues […] particularly through local authority involvement with industry in Freight Quality Partnerships (FQPs). These partnerships can play a significant role in developing understanding between parties with different apparent self interests and often lead to outcomes that satisfy the needs of all parties. The best FQPs produce tangible benefits through implementing informed decisions" (Department for Transport, 2008)."

Allen et al. (2010) identified 87 FQPs in the UK and carried out a survey amongst them. It was noted that 38 of those 87 FQPs had an urban focus, 36 a combined urban and rural focus and 13 a rural focus. However, only 58 of the FQPs were found to be still in operation. The results of the survey show that the FQPs have resulted in improved partnership between the public and the private sector. The greatest challenge was to maintain the focus and interest of the members.

2.3 Developing and managing an urban freight partnership

Three EU Projects provide suggestions about factors that are important when establishing and maintaining a partnership concerned with freight transport in urban areas: CIVITAS (Breuil & Sprunt, 2009); TURBLOG (2011); and, START (2009).

Results from experience in the CIVITIAS Initiative (Breuil & Sprunt, 2009) identify four areas that need to be considered in all initiatives regarding urban freight in order to achieve a successful outcome: 1) *Political involvement* – they note that local political engagement is important and they argue this is especially so for medium-sized cities 2) *Target groups* – must be identified clearly in order to facilitate the design and implementation of solutions by establishing consensus, and, to support the implementation among stakeholders; 3) *Methodology* – a strong and rigorous management methodology is important in order to establish milestones and objectives (in order to measure the progress of the project and to identify the barriers; and, 4) *Modelling* – the design and adaptation of organisational and technical solutions must be based on reality.

The TURBLOG (2011) project compiled a list of issues that were identified regarding transferability of knowledge, as recurring in most cases of the major EU projects within urban freight transport. These issues included the need to accept the complexity of the situation rather than trying to implement measures with little understanding of the consequences. The project also noted that there was a need to avoid seeking single solutions to complex problems and that the acquisition of data for analysis was an important stage in many projects but one where there was often only a limited effort made to acquire this data and to use it for evaluation. A final consideration concerned the importance of considering urban freight measures as business propositions and the need to foster cooperation between actors that required in turn stakeholder involvement and the understanding of other's opinions.

One of the objectives of the EU project START (2009), was to initiate 'Local freight networks' in five participating cities. The project results showed that there are a number of important success factors for a freight network:

- Decide on a focus and ambition and make sure that the objectives are put together with the participants of the network.
- Formulate an action plan for the network.
- The network should include stakeholder from local authorities, transport associations, suppliers, retailers, and haulers. But, also other stakeholder groups e.g. property owners, town centre managers, chamber of commerce, infrastructure providers and the police.
- The number of participants should be manageable (10-20 was the recommendation).
- Regular attendance by the same participants is also a key factor as it takes time to build trust therefore continuity is essential.

The points made in the references above overlap with each other to some extent and have therefore been reduced to nine main factors that need to be met by urban freight partnerships and against which the partnership cases studied can be assessed (see Table 2 in section 4). The nine factors can be grouped in three main areas of interest: formation of a partnership, management of a partnership and the outcomes of a partnership.

3. Research approach and methods used

Five cities from the four countries presented above, that have implemented public-private urban freight partnerships have been studied; Paris, Utrecht, Lidkoping, Gothenburg and two different groups in London (Central London Freight Quality Partnership, CLFQP; and, Commercial Delivery Group Westminster). The partnerships have been studied at various levels of detail; see Table 1, during a two-year period (2010-2012). The selection of cases has been made in order to consider partnerships at different levels of development (maturity) and to provide a contrast in terms of national coverage and the scale of the urban areas. These partnerships have also been documented and therefore there is a starting point for the investigation. While it is clear that there are other partnerships that could be studied in other cities, the scale of the research that was possible has allowed a reasonably detailed assessment to be made of these five cities and six partnerships. The aim of the assessment has been to see to what extent the nine factors extracted from the EU studies can be found within the case study partnerships and to consider whether these contribute to the usefulness of the partnerships (in terms of the perception of participants and outputs identified).

The cities in this study are of different sizes and structures. London (UK) and Paris (France) are European mega-cities, although the partnerships studied in London only cover the central area, Gothenburg (Sweden) and Utrecht (The Netherlands) are middle-sized cities and finally, Lidkoping (Sweden) is a small city.

Our research approach combines several methods for collecting information. The study consist of both secondary data, based on governmental and project reports written about or to support the freight partnership or network that have been studied, and primary data that have consisted of interviews, comparative questionnaire survey and (observer/researcher) participation. Some documentation is available about all the partnerships and this has been consulted to establish information such as starting date and geographical coverage as well as to collect some of the outputs that have resulted from the partnerships (for example, reports and guides). The other

methods have provided insights into participants' views as well as factors that can be important in establishing and continuing the operation of a freight partnership.

Table 1. Urban freight partnerships that have been studied

	PARIS	UTRECHT	LIDKOPING	GOTHENBURG	LONDON CLFQP	LONDON Westminster
Secondary data – reports etc.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Primary data - interviews		X	X	X	X	X
Primary data – participation			X	X	X	X
Primary data - Questionnaire				X	X	

3.1 Interviews

A total of 24 interviews have been performed in Utrecht, Lidkoping, Gothenburg and London with a selection of participants of the different freight partnerships, in order to get an understanding of the initiation, structure, problems and possibilities in the different areas. The interviews have been of a semi-structured type, where the interviewees have been given the opportunity to speak freely about their perception of the freight partnership in which they participate. The interviews were essential in understanding the partnerships and in specifically understanding what participants felt about the partnership, its usefulness and the way it was organised. They have provided insights that would have been hard to acquire simply through self-completion questionnaires.

3.2 Participation

The researchers have also participated in a number of meetings for several of the cases studied (see Table 1). The most active participation has been in the cities of London and Gothenburg where both researchers have been involved in the freight partnerships – In the London case chairing the quarterly meetings, in Gothenburg regular attendance at meetings during a 12 month period and also a workshop where both authors participated discussing 'the future of the local freight network' with its members. Research through participation has not been widely reported in the urban freight and city logistics literature. However, here the participation has clearly helped in providing access to the interviewees, giving and understanding of the interaction and relationship between the participants throughout the meetings, as well as a wider understanding of the work performed in the partnerships respectively.

3.3 Questionnaire for participants

The interviews and participation helped to identify a shortlist of questions on which it was felt that it would be valuable to have a wider coverage. Therefore a questionnaire was handed out to the participants of the partnership in Gothenburg and the Central London Freight Quality

Partnership (CLFQP) during one of the respective groups' ordinary meetings. The questionnaire was handed out at the beginning of the meeting and collected by the end, resulting in a very high response rate. The questionnaire contains seven questions regarding the participant's role in the partnership, the connection to other participants of the partnership, the perception of the network/partnership, the work, the outcomes, successes and failures. In Gothenburg, all the participants present at the meeting (18) completed the questionnaire and furthermore two stakeholders who were not present at the time completed the questionnaire by email. Therefore a total of 20 responses were received (the network consists of approximately 25 participants). In London a total of 11 responses have been received from a total of 25 circulated. The discussion in the following section thus considers the results from 24 interviews and 29 questionnaire responses.

The interviews were essential to an understanding of the issues in the various partnerships. However, it is also clear that the questionnaires enable a wider range of participants to express views and provide responses. The combination of semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire could be used to extend this research to more cities and to evaluate more partnerships. Although participation in the meetings certainly enriches the understanding of the interaction between stakeholders it would not be an essential requirement in any further development of the research.

4. Results of urban freight partnerships studied

The results of the review of the partnership cases will be presented throughout this section, based on the documentation, interviews, questionnaires and participation as presented in the previous section. To begin with, we present a summary of the basic attributes of the partnerships studied (see Table 2). The data for this table is collected from interviews in all cases except for the Paris case, which is collected through the webpage (Paris City Council, 2006) and Dablanc et al. (2011) supported by an email exchange (Ripert, 2012). For each case we present:

- by whom they were initiated and when (as well as when ended if not still on-going),
- in which way they are funded,
- what kind of partner/stakeholder manages the partnership,
- the number of participants usually attending meetings,
- what kind of governmental status they have, and
- the regularity of meetings held in the partnership.

The table below indicates three main differences between the various partnerships: the number of participants, the governmental status and who is the manager of the partnership. Those issues will be addressed in section 5 further down the paper, regarding what this means in forms of outcomes and thoughts from participants. The difference in governmental status is that the formal advisory committee have a formal agreement and/or serve as a consultative body for the local authority, whereas the informal advisory committee is used to get input and exchange knowledge between the participants. The participation in the partnerships is generally voluntary, but in the case of the formal advisory committees, the participants have signed a contract where they make certain commitments. In the Utrecht case, the selected participants are actually employed by the authority for the purpose of participating in the partnership thus increasing the importance of the partnership.

Table 2. The characteristics of different urban freight transport partnerships

City/area	Initiated by	Year of start/end	Funded by	Managed by	Participants (No./meeting)	Governmental status	Regularity of meetings (No./year)
Paris	Local authority/ recommendation after public-private collaboration	2006/ 2009	Local authority	Local authority	47[1]	Formal advisory committee	2 +[1]
Utrecht	Local authority/advice from private sector	1993/on going	Local authority	Local authority	7-8	Formal advisory committee	8
Lidkoping	Local authority/ recommendation after public-private collaboration	2006/ 2010	Local authority	Local authority/ Industry		Informal advisory committee	-[5]
Gothenburg	Local authority/EU project	2005/on going	Local authority	Local authority	~25	Informal advisory committee	3
London CLFQP	Government/ recommendation after public-private collaboration[4]	2005/on going	Local authority/ Industry	University	~20-30[2]	Informal advisory committee	3-4 +[1]
London Westmin.	Local authority	2007/on going	Local authority	Local authority	10-20	Informal advisory committee	4

[1] 47 persons have signed the charter. Unclear how many regularly attend meetings.

[2] Extra meetings for special issues.

[3] Including the steering group of 12 persons. The number of participants is unlimited, but there is normally 20-30 that attends meetings.

[4] Due to a specific reason about high levels of PCNs (Penalty charge notes)

[5]No meetings at the moment due to lack of chairman.

Note: In the case of Utrecht, Lidkoping, Gothenburg and London CDGW funding of the activities is provided by the local authority. In the case of London CLFQP funding of the work of the secretariat/management is jointly provided by local authorities and the private sector. In the case of Paris the financing of the committee related to the charter is unknown.

4.1 Paris Good practice charter

In Paris, the City Council has in consultation with trade professionals involved in transport put in place an action plan. The consultation process took about four years and has resulted in a *Good practice charter for transport and delivery of goods in Paris* (Paris City Council, 2006). Within the framework of this charter, a Monitoring Committee was put in place as one of the (seven) recommendations that the charter presents. The Charter Monitoring Committee had the objective to ensure the collaboration between the local government authority and the professional and the commitments made by the signatories of the charter. The committee did also see to it that the content of the charter was adjusted in relation to the evolution of its context. Hence, the

committee should deal with all issues raised by the consultation process regarding goods delivery and transport in Paris.

The Monitoring committee was chaired by the Assistant Mayor of Paris in charge of transport, traffic, parking and roads, and by the Assistant Mayor of Paris in charge of commerce, craft industry, freelance professions, self-employed occupations and artistic occupations. The members in the committee were the signatories of the charter (trade associations and the chamber of commerce and industry, etc.), the police authority, the French railway infrastructure management company, French national railways company, port of Paris authority and, from the Paris city council representatives of the Economic development and Employment department, the Urban Ecology and the Urban planning department took part. Meetings took place two times every year for ordinary meetings, between the years 2006 and 2009. Extraordinary meeting could occur by request by a signatory of the charter to deal with a certain issue.

Dablanc et al. (2011) present outcomes of this partnership to be an agreement of redefinition of regulations regarding freight transport in three areas: delivery regulations reserving a time window for the least polluting vehicles, providing better on-street delivery with better enforcement and planning and zoning regulations for the land use master plan. Further on, Dablanc et al. present conclusions from the partnership to be: importance of dialogue, a time mismatch between actions by public and private parties, inadequate enforcement of traffic and parking regulations, the necessity of strengthening land use strategies, inadequate representation, the usefulness of experimentation and the relevant territory is larger than the city of Paris (therefore the partnership is argued to have too narrow a geographical limit).

4.2 Committee for distribution affairs in Utrecht

The Committee for distribution affairs in Utrecht (called CABU) is a local freight partnership in Utrecht. This partnership has existed for 18 years (founded in December 1993) and is an advisory board for the local authority government on freight transport issues. The issue of exemptions from regulations for certain freight vehicles was the starting point for the partnership. There are ordinary meetings 8 times per year, which are all set in the beginning of each year. The participants are 7-8 people attending each meeting and are representatives from the chamber of commerce, transporters association, shippers association, entrepreneurs association, shop association and from the city, civil servants from the department for transport and from the department of economic affairs. Sometimes, independent institutions that safeguard the distribution issues attend a meeting. The local authority, acting on advice from the business association, founded the partnership. The local authority assigns the persons that participate at the partnership meetings with this mission, as stated by local regulation. It is a personal assignment, although the participants represent their respective organisation (Degenkamp, 2011).

Experiences from the partnership in Utrecht show that the requirement for representatives of the city authority to participate provides benefits as it ensures local knowledge is available in terms of advice, ensures commitment to the committee and provides continuity. The authority assignment also gives the partnership an official status as an advisory committee and makes the partnership work formal. The rather low number of participants is considered to be good, since a larger group with such frequent meetings would be difficult to maintain. Now, the members feel obliged to be there and fulfil their assignment. The partnership works well since “you do something that benefit all its members and the members take their task seriously”. Typical topics on the agenda addresses checklists of points of attention, central plans that need to be discussed and advice on what happens elsewhere that Utrecht can take up and discuss as solutions to their own problems. The effects of the Utrecht partnership have been, among others, a lot of attention to distribution for new developing areas, direct influences on plans and policies, an air quality action plan and, stopping of a plan for a new shopping centre due to points about problematic

freight transport and consequences for cycling safety raised by the partnership (Degenkamp, 2011).

4.3 Lidkoping collaboration group

The municipality of Lidkoping have introduced several "Collaboration groups" with different purposes, connecting private and public stakeholder for discussions and development of the municipality. Several of those groups have connections to urban freight transport, where issues about infrastructure, climate and collaboration between different stakeholder groups are involved. One of those groups has been active for several years discussing issues regarding transport and traffic throughout the municipality, including stakeholders from transport companies, large industry companies and representatives from the local authority. However, during interviews in Lidkoping (Aldén, 2012; and Gustavsson, 2012) it was realised that this group has stopped meeting and is therefore no longer involved in freight transport issues. The main reason for this is highlighted to be that the chairman vacated his position and no replacement had been found at the time of the interviews in 2012.

The participants valued the partnership when it existed as a good way of exchanging information and knowledge between the participants. Discussions in this group mainly concerned infrastructural issues, whereas issues directly connected to freight transport activities, problems and possibilities, in the urban area tended to be low on the agenda. However, a reason for this, according to the interviewees, could also be the fact that the stakeholders of the small sized city centre of Lidkoping do not perceive any major obstacles to efficient freight deliveries.

4.4 Local Freight Network Gothenburg

Gothenburg introduced a "Local freight network" during the EU project START (2005-2009). This partnership continued after the end of the START project and now has three meetings every year with around 20-25 participants from: trade associations in the inner-city, representatives from large shopping centres, a variety of transport operators and hauliers, commercial property landlords, transport association, university, vehicle industry and from the city, civil servants from the traffic and public transport authority, the city planning authority and, the department for exemptions and permissions. There has been a good interest for the partnership amongst stakeholders. The only stakeholders that have been difficult to include have been retailers and landlords (however they now have one representative each). The chairman of the partnership puts a lot of effort into making the group work, and focuses on collaboration and co-operation. This recognises the fact that participation is voluntary and therefore there have to be good reasons for people to give up their time to attend. It is estimated that the total time required to organise and chair the meetings represents about 10% of a full time post. An important benefit for the city authority arising from the partnership is that to achieve higher-level strategic objectives (for example complex access considerations for a pedestrianized zone) it is essential to involve and cooperate with the various stakeholders including in particular those from the private sector (Jäderberg, 2012).

One of the most interesting results from the survey is that the majority of participants acknowledge the informal network between the stakeholders as the second most important aspects to join the meeting, following the information sharing. The participants appreciate the possibility to discuss problems and issues regarding urban freight transport, and to be an advisory board, although it is not formal, and to get "a channel into the local authority" in order to affect the urban freight issue. Despite the informal nature of the consultation it is clear that participants consider that their views are taken into account by the local authority and that this has the potential to influence urban freight strategies in the longer term. The only drawback

highlighted in the survey (from two of the respondents) is that the focus of the partnership is limited to the urban area, whereas they consider a lot of the freight issues in Gothenburg are present at the wider regional level and that also should be discussed.

Key outcomes of the partnership approach in Gothenburg include a better exchange of information between participants and an increased understanding of each other's problems. Concrete effects of the partnership have been a higher level of successful enforcement of regulations within the urban area, outcomes have been of for example a brochure on parking restrictions for heavy vehicles, increased number of 'walking speed areas' (that enable deliveries to be made as long as vehicles drive at 'walking speed') and a length limitation for vehicles in the inner city.

4.5 Central London Freight Quality Partnership

The Central London Freight Quality Partnership (CLFQP) is a partnership between local government, local businesses, freight industry and others with an interest in freight issues within central London (the seven boroughs of: City of London, City of Westminster, Camden, Islington, Southwark, Kensington and Chelsea and, Lambeth) with the aim of developing an understanding of freight transport issues and problems and to develop constructive solutions (London's FQPs, 2012). The partnership was initiated in 2005 by the government after a recommendation from a public-private collaboration. The membership is free of charge and has no formal responsibility or mission from the government. However, the partnership is used as an advisory board in certain issues. The partnership has ordinary meetings 3-4 times per year plus 4-5 meetings regarding special issues. The meetings are open for anyone with an interest to participate, but there are usually no more than 30 people attending, with a core number of persons around 20 (that comes to most meetings). After each ordinary partnership meeting there is a steering group meeting, that consist of 12 persons from the boroughs and key stakeholders from industry. The partnership and the steering group is managed and chaired by the University of Westminster (Lynch, 2012). The central London partnership (and the other FQPs in London) were initially funded by Transport for London (TfL) but the TfL funding ceased in 2011which has resulted in a decrease in activity amongst the FQPs. However, the CLFQP gets funding from the region of central London and are operating as a "low-cost-solution" in a very efficient way, mainly due to the information exchange focus and the fact that there are not many costly activities (Wainwright, 2012).

The members of the partnership welcome the possibility to interact with other stakeholders, to exchange information and the regular meetings enable them to achieve this. That the partnership is bringing together different stakeholder groups and the possibility to discuss problems and possibilities with others are highlighted by the members as the main reason for attending the meetings – both for the authorities to get an understanding of the freight stakeholders point of view and vice versa. The most important outputs from the meetings, according to the participants, have been specific projects with outputs, for example: Loading and unloading code of practice, reduction in penalty charges for loading offences and an electric vehicle charging point initiative.

4.6 The Commercial Delivery Group in City of Westminster

In the borough of the City of Westminster in London, stakeholder involvement is recognised as important regarding several issues and freight transport is one of them. They have a Commercial Delivery Group, where the local authority invites freight industry representatives to discuss problem and issues regarding freight transport in the borough. The Westminster partnership was founded in 2007 and initiated by the parking director of City of Westminster. The partnership is

completely financed and run by the City of Westminster and has quarterly meetings involving voluntary participants with an interest in the issue. There are between 10 and 20 participants at each meeting, depending on the points on the agenda. The participants are roughly the same as in the central London partnership except representatives for the other boroughs do not participate and there are one or two additional participants with specific interests in Westminster.

The main benefits of the partnership in City of Westminster are the possibilities to share good ideas, knowledge and to build good working relationships (Regan, 2012). The main outcomes of the partnership have been the identification of loading and unloading hotspots and an overall reduction in freight-related parking/loading penalties.

5 Assessment of the freight partnerships

In order to assess the partnerships studied, the following section draws together some of the general lessons learnt from the results discussed in section 4. Table 3 indicates the level of evidence we have found by the partnerships respectively on whether they do follow the partnership criteria identified in section 2 of the paper. This assessment is based on the review of published documents together with the interviews and the questionnaires. The discussion is structured around the three groups of factors noted previously – namely: (i) *the formation of partnerships*; (ii) *management of partnerships including motivation and the importance of sharing information and ideas openly in order to solve problems as well as the potential benefits of formal terms of reference and 'authority'*; and, (iii) *the effects and outcomes of partnerships*. In particular there is a focus on the points where there are clear similarities and differences between the partnerships reviewed in detail.

(i) *Formation.* There is clear general evidence from conferences, publications and EU projects that urban freight issues are receiving greater attention yet despite this, there are very few people working full time on the partnerships that have been reviewed. For example in London, none of the boroughs have personnel working specifically with freight transport issues, however the people attending the CLFQP have an interest and part of their working time recognised to handle freight transport issues. At the city level, Transport for London has an active freight group consisting of about 10 people while in Gothenburg there is a one full time employee for freight and in Utrecht two half-time employees for freight. The importance of having a local authority representative in the formation of a partnership emerges strongly from the partnerships studied. Participation by the local authority representatives is seen as a key factor in making the partnerships effective and participants in both London and Gothenburg noted this point very strongly in the interviews. For all the partnerships studied it could be concluded that it is the act of participating that builds the knowledge and therefore attendance at meetings is important. The study shows strong support for having participants that provide a range of views but they also need to be relevant to the specific issues that are being addressed. Political involvement, however, appears to be linked to whether the participation is 'formal' or 'informal'. Where there is a formal nominated group of participants (as in Utrecht) there will also be clear political links. However, we have not been able to identify that this leads to outcomes that are necessarily different to those from less formal partnerships. The partnerships that have been studied are generally rather "low cost" solutions. It is mainly the local authorities/boroughs that finance them, but the cost does not need to be very big, i.e. mainly meeting associated costs. In most instances financing specific projects or initiatives has to be found from other sources. Nevertheless, by combining resources there are cases where studies or initiatives can be undertaken which would not have been possible without the coordinating role played by the partnerships.

Table 3. Assessment of the partnerships studied according to the nine partnership criteria. Key: ⦸=no evidence was found, ✓=some evidence, ✓✓= strong evidence

	Paris	Utrecht	Lidkoping	Gothenburg	London CLFQP	London Westminster
FORMATION						
Objectives need to be related to the members of the partnership	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Relevant and varied stakeholders should be involved	✓ ✓	✓	✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓
Political involvement	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	⦸	⦸	⦸	⦸
MANAGEMENT						
There should be an action plan	✓	✓ ✓	⦸	⦸	✓	⦸
Number of participants need to be manageable (10-20)	⦸	✓ ✓	⦸	✓ ✓	✓	✓
Regular attendance by the same participants is necessary	⦸	✓ ✓	✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓ ✓
Strong project management	✓	✓ ✓	⦸	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓
OUTCOMES						
Accept the complexity of the situation and avoid seeking single solutions	✓	✓	⦸	✓	✓	⦸
Consider urban freight measures as business propositions	⦸	✓ ✓	✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓

(ii) *Management.* A range of approaches to leadership and organisational structure has been identified. Common to the success seems to be that the partnership has to be chaired or led in a way that persuades participants that it is neither favouring the public or private partners. A good chair and organisation is essential, which have been acknowledged throughout the study, both to maintain the regularity of meetings and structure of the group, and to conduct and develop the outcomes of the discussions. To attract private businesses to participate, the meeting agenda need to include plans for action and change – it is not enough just getting to know other people. For private stakeholders there is a need to justify the time spent at the meetings. However, for the participants to truly understand the long-term effects of the partnership it is essential with regularly participation. Few of the partnerships studied have an action plan – but some interviewees nevertheless highlight the action plan as important. The importance of regular attendance by a core group at meetings emerged in several of the partnerships studied. Indeed regular attendance and notes with action points from the meetings can be a partial substitute for a formal action plan.

Regarding the number of participants there is however split evidence as well as perceptions by participants, somewhat depending on the type of partnership they attend. Having too many people present at the meetings would lead to very complicated discussions and would make it even more difficult to reach any common positions. On the other hand it would in some ways be more representative of the complexity of the urban freight stakeholders. In a practical way a number up to about 25 seems acceptable and it is interesting that, as discussed in the case studies, in Gothenburg for example, there is a limit on the number of participants (of 25 maximum) whereas in London there has been no attempt to limit the number although typically meetings

consist of 20-25 people. Having a limit to the number for participants for detailed discussions does ensure that the discussion can have enough depth to engage the interests of the stakeholders – an essential point for continued involvement. All participants have noted the need for clarity and some degree of formality. It is important that there are notes of meetings and agreements and actions should be recorded. The participants should have enough power within their organisation to be able to implement agreed changes, but also be able to share important information from their organisations with the partnership. Regarding formality: the freight industry would, in general, like it to be more formal, i.e. would give them more "reason" to be there since it would be more important and there would be greater possibilities to agree common positions related to the partnership. Whereas local authorities in the UK seem to prefer the informality as this enables more discussion and interaction with others without having to adopt formal 'legal' positions. A Swedish freight partnership manager on the other hand, would believe in the more formal set up because of the possibilities to have a more engaged set of participants. Closely related to this issue, there is the importance of dissemination of the partnerships' work outside the group that attend meetings. One of the main reasons would be to inform policy makers, politicians and others that could be affected by the discussions, views and outcomes of the partnerships meetings. If disseminated properly, for example through an annual report, even the informal partnership could have an influence on the decision making processes in a better way – not only the formal advisory groups.

(iii) *Outcomes.* One of the main reasons that have been put forward for the need for the public sector representatives to attend relates to the scope to share knowledge about the business aspects of freight transport operations, and there is evidence of the need to consider urban freight transport initiatives as business propositions. Most partnerships studied show some evidence that the complexity of the urban freight situation has been considered and that they are working towards finding and developing a variety of solutions to those problems. Those involved in the partnerships need to be willing to share information openly and work together – this can be difficult if there is a tradition of opposition or a generally antagonistic working relationship between the public and private sectors. Local authority interactions with freight industry and freight stakeholders often arise as a result of complaints (e.g. noise complaints by residents, problems over loading allocations etc.). But this is slowly changing through a better understanding of the freight issues as an area that could be possible to work with in the cities that have regular partnership meetings. Sharing knowledge and the transferability of knowledge between partners is highlighted as the most important effect of the partnerships from all interviewees, in accordance with the results presented by Marsden and Stead (2011) as well as Marsden et al. (2011). Inevitably working collaboratively can take time. There is a long-term perspective with the freight quality partnerships that can't be disregarded. Short-termism is good for some specific activities and actions, but as a whole, the best benefits of the partnership are the long-term relationships.

Regarding the outcomes of the partnerships, a certain element of concrete achievement also seems to be important but the scale expected by participants does seem quite varied and the interest in shorter versus longer term improvements is not necessarily the same in all the cities reviewed. However, outputs and achievements are a way to support the work of the partnerships and to encourage continued attendance. The guides and studies prepared by some of the partnerships that took part in the research may have a value beyond the immediate dissemination of information. Specifying and delivering major projects may not be possible for these partnerships because they are not constituted in a way that enables them to manage projects and the level of funding is rather limited. Given the difficulty of carrying out major projects or enacting significant changes in policy it can be argued that there is a risk that the partnership becomes a 'talking shop' and that there are no constructive outcomes from the discussions. However, is that really a problem? One of the main aims with partnerships is to

create an understanding of freight transport issues – and with the partnerships where the issues of freight transport are discussed regularly; there will be an increased understanding amongst the participants. Furthermore, this reinforces the need that the partnership involves face-to-face meetings and sometimes divergent opinions rather than only considering the exchange of information through knowledge sharing tools and websites since this leads to the risk of losing the essential informal information exchange. If the participants are sufficiently senior then the knowledge and understanding will be spread through the stakeholder organisations. The issue to highlight would therefore be to see to that the participants have enough mandates to affect their respective organisations and see to that the discussed issues are issued through those organisations. The latter is a question for the manager and chair of the partnership at meetings, to firmly handle record keeping and follow-up.

The assessment of the features of the partnerships shows that despite the difference in urban scale and the varying organisational structures there are in fact many similarities when the main benefits and challenges are considered. Resourcing is, not surprisingly, seen as a constraint but the overall picture that emerges is positive with participants being clear that sharing insights and knowledge is an essential first step to find solutions to many of the complicated problems of urban freight.

6. Conclusion

The research has investigated a selection of six freight partnerships in five cities. The central research problem has been to identify whether there are common features that appear to result in valuable outcomes from these partnerships. In addition, we have captured a range of views from the participants in these partnerships about the successes and weaknesses of the partnerships in which they are involved. The research has highlighted that there is not a single model for an urban freight partnership and that cities have found a range of approaches according to the particular circumstances that prevail. Nevertheless, there are some clear insights into what needs to be encompassed within a partnership. To be credible and effective the partnership must bring together a range of relevant participants from both the public and private sectors, confirming earlier research about partnerships. Urban freight policies need to be shaped with input from the private sector and the public sector needs to have a better understanding of the business and operational aspects of urban goods movements. It is evident from the interviews that the on-going participation by a core group of people is important in building personal links that can overcome some of the tensions and difficulties inherent in trying to resolve complex public-private interactions within an urban context. We have found evidence that support, what we find as important key points:

- There is a need for strong management and organisation of a partnership;
- Having relevant as well as a variety of stakeholders is important;
- In some partnerships political involvement was considered to be important;
- Not only objectives are important, but also the dissemination of outcomes in order to maximise the opportunity for identifiable policy impacts;
- Outcomes are not just physical objects and projects, but equally important is the relationship and knowledge exchange between participants since these provide the foundation for a further improvement in the urban freight situation;
- A focus on long-term possibilities is important.

A local partnership alone could not solve all the freight transport issues in a complex urban area. It is just one piece of the puzzle that is needed. Creating and supporting partnerships does not avoid the need for policy-makers in city authorities to devise appropriate measures and regulations. However, the regulations and critical issues such as enforcement are much more likely to be tailored to the requirements of the city when they are discussed and developed through the consultation process of the local partnership. The benefits from the outcomes of the partnerships are not only valuable for the local authorities, but also have benefits for the private partners who both receive early information about on-going processes and have the possibility to affect the design and implementation of future policies. This comparative study has highlighted the potential benefits of wider research to investigate more of the partnerships that have been formed to address urban freight issues. The simple analytical framework could be applied across a wider range of cities and the results would help to inform the further developments of the freight partnerships.

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