



## **Evaluating the potential for urban consolidation centres**

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### **Abstract**

This paper focuses upon the potential for Urban Consolidation Centres (UCCs) to alleviate local environmental and traffic problems within urban areas. An international literature review was undertaken, interviews were held with a range of relevant parties, and an evaluation framework was developed. In previous work a narrow focus has typically been adopted and no examples of thorough scheme evaluation were found. A particular concern discussed in the paper is the identification and subsequent allocation of the costs and benefits of implementing and operating a UCC. Lessons learned from existing and attempted UCCs are then presented, and a number of themes and location types that point to successful implementation are identified. The likelihood of a UCC being successful depends considerably upon the legal and planning frameworks in the locality or country involved.

*Keywords:* Freight consolidation; Urban transport; Transport policy; Freight scheme evaluation.

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### **Introduction**

This paper summarises key elements of the findings of a research project on Urban Consolidation Centres (UCCs) funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) and carried out by the University of Westminster (2005). The project essentially consisted of a scoping study that aimed to identify the potential for the development of UCCs that have as their principal objective the alleviation of local environmental and traffic concerns in urban areas. It was also concerned with the wider business and supply chain issues associated with the use of such centres.

Broadly speaking the key purpose of UCCs is the avoidance of the need for goods vehicles to deliver part loads into urban areas (be that a city centre, an entire town or a specific site such as a shopping centre). This objective can be achieved by providing facilities in or close to the urban area whereby deliveries (retail, office, residential or construction) can be consolidated for subsequent delivery into the target area in an appropriate vehicle with a high level of load utilisation. A range of other value-added

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