



# Land-use, transport and vehicle technology futures: An air pollution assessment of policy combinations for the Cambridge Sub-Region of the UK

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## ABSTRACT

This paper reports on an investigation of the impact on air-quality of combinations of urban form development scenarios and vehicle fleet technology changes. The scenarios combine policies affecting urban land-use plans within the Cambridge Sub-Region of the UK, alongside technological changes within the projected vehicle fleet. Broadly, the scenarios consist of the 'Trend' for urban form policy and vehicle technology and the urban form policy options of 'Planned expansion', 'Market-led development' and 'Urban compaction', each combined with form-appropriate technological scenarios addressing the uptake of current, and future, technologies in the vehicle fleet. The framework developed for environmental assessment is described, from land-use transport interaction, through traffic assignment and emissions modelling, through to dispersion calculations.

The urban form-vehicle technology combinations have been assessed in terms of overall vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT), greenhouse gas (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, and local air quality (NO<sub>x</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, PM, HC). Results are presented for 2021 and show that overall network emissions change from -13% (Compaction) to +8% (Market-led) relative to the Trend, but effects on emissions in individual districts (NO<sub>x</sub>) may be much greater, -40% to +50%. Annual mean concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> at the street level may vary by -7 to 8 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The use of electric vehicles in the 'Urban compaction' scenario aids mitigation of air quality issues in the city centre. The results are discussed with respect to the feasibility of scenario implementation, current approaches to planning, and trends in vehicle technology. Limitations of the modelling framework are also identified, and future developments outlined.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Urban form and air quality

There has been much debate in recent decades over how urban form can impact transportation behaviour and environmental quality. It has been argued that dispersed patterns of living and decentralised employment, enabled by ready access to private transportation, increases vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999; Glaeser & Kahn, 2001, 2010), resulting in exacerbation of negative externalities including air pollution (Cervero & Kockelman, 1997; McCarty & Kaza, 2015; Pourahmad, Baghvand, Zangeneh Shahraki, & Givehchi, 2007). Such reasoning has led to the conclusion that urban compaction offers a solution, by promoting shorter trips and modal shift to public transport (Litman, 2007), reducing overall emissions. For example, Stone, Mendick, Holloway, and Spak (2007) suggested a 10%

increase in urban population density would lead to a 3.5% reduction in VKT and emissions.

However, Melia, Parkhurst, and Barton (2011) present a counter argument, known as the 'Paradox of Intensification' that arises due to the relationship between population density and vehicle use being rather inelastic, as confirmed by an extensive TRB (2009) review of this relationship that finds a doubling of urban density reduces VKT, on average, by only 5%. The paradox then arises that urban compaction reduces VKT and so is beneficial in terms of reduction in global pollutant (CO<sub>2</sub>) emission, but is detrimental in terms of local pollution (e.g. NO<sub>2</sub>, particulates) as traffic intensity increases on capacity-constrained networks in urban centres, often accompanied by localised congestion, and elevated pollution levels that can offset any form-achieved gains.

Understanding the nature of the intensification paradox clearly requires that assessment goes beyond a consideration of emissions to address pollutant concentration that is important to exposure and

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health impact. This is complex to determine, having dependency on specific, local factors such as on-street travel patterns, meteorological conditions and canyon morphology (Borrego et al., 2006; Martins, 2012; McCarty & Kaza, 2015; Yuan, Ng, & Norford, 2014). In addition, the paradox is sensitive to geography, as the most problematic pollutants at local level vary (Chen, Li, Zeng, Guan, & Liu, 2011; Fan et al., 2018). Cities in the UK and northern Europe tend to have most issues with compliance to nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) standards (DEFRA, 2018a,b; EEA, 2018), whereas those in Eastern Europe and Asia have greater problems with particulate matter (Tasmin, 2019) due to differences in source types and mixes, fuels and technologies. Furthermore, understanding how air quality varies across the city, where local morphology and density varies is complicated by processes of transboundary pollution movement (Ramswami, Hillman, Janson, Reiner, & Thomas, 2008), the photochemistry between oxides of nitrogen and ozone (Borrego et al., 2006; Stone, 2008), and formation of secondary particles from nitrates and sulphates. Some of these factors can be addressed via a very dense network of monitoring sites, but this is generally impractical, hence atmospheric dispersion modelling, which is capable of addressing such complexities is required. However, to date such models have been little used in the exploration of urban form effects on air quality.

### 1.2. Urban form, air quality and technology

Our prior work on sustainability appraisal of urban form within its regional context (Echenique, Hargreaves, Mitchell, & Namdeo, 2012), modelled emissions but not atmospheric concentrations, and revealed a relatively weak influence of urban form on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, given a context of strong growth pressure and long run social and economic pressures, and hence we argued that:

“Smart growth principles should not unquestioningly promote increasing levels of compaction on the basis of reducing energy consumption without also considering its potential negative consequences”, and that “CO<sub>2</sub> reductions may be better pursued through technological improvements.”

Echenique et al. (2012)

The role of technology in delivering a more sustainable city is gaining more widespread attention, and indeed, is changing the perception of what a sustainable urban form might be. For example, in a life-cycle assessment study of the Greater Helsinki region, Heinonen and Junnila (2011) found that the city of Espoo, with a lower density than Helsinki city, was becoming a lower carbon emitter (per capita) than its neighbour, due to the greater potential to implement renewable energy technologies (solar capture, heat pumps etc.) including those needed to power electric vehicles (a higher consumption of material goods in Helsinki city also partly explained the observations). This contrasts to those prior studies, which do not incorporate technology effects and conclude compaction is most able to deliver low carbon urbanisation (e.g. Glaeser & Khan, 2010).

The role of technology in city sustainability has long been of interest to those concerned with urban form (see Brotchie, Hall, Newton, & Nijkamp, 1985) yet form-technology combinations are challenging to investigate so relatively under-studied. The internal combustion engine radically altered cities in the past, and we can similarly anticipate that new ‘disruptive technologies’ will alter forms in the future. In the transport sector technology mediated interests include: electrification of road transport, ‘intelligent’ mobility (such as ‘Mobility as a Service’ - MaaS), and automation of the driving task (Manyika et al., 2013). Electrification in the medium to long term may result in on-street air quality benefits, although this appears dependent on how and where that electricity is generated (Yu & Stuart, 2017).

In addition to these technological ‘game changers’, air quality problems have resulted in a European regime of both mandated continual improvements to new internal combustion engine vehicles (the ‘Euro

standards’, ACEA, 2018), as well as developments of retrofit solutions (e.g. particulate filters and de-NO<sub>x</sub> catalysts) for existing vehicles. Internationally, these Euro standards have been adopted elsewhere, for example the Bharat stage emissions standards in India (ICCT, 2016), and in the “Jing” standards in the Chinese capital (Transport Policy, 2018). Consumer choice is also turning against light diesel vehicles (SMMT, 2018) due to concerns over NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, leading to changes in UK Vehicle Excise Duty (colloquially ‘Road Tax’) (Gov.uk, 2018), even though such vehicles have historically been more fuel efficient than comparable petrol vehicles. Whilst elements of fleet turnover and on-vehicle technologies are routinely incorporated into air quality studies, their application within urban form appraisal, remains a novel topic for study.

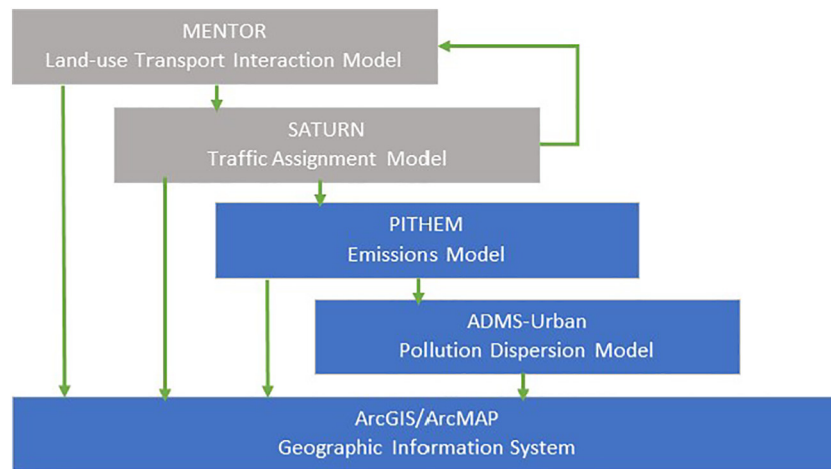
Our prior work on sustainable urban form (Echenique et al., 2012; Echenique, Barton, Hargreaves, & Mitchell, 2010; Mitchell, Hargreaves, Namdeo, & Echenique, 2011) examined the sustainability of current and proposed spatial planning strategies in the UK. We used Land-Use/Transport Interaction (LUTI) modelling to drive a multi-criteria sustainability appraisal of radical, but realistic, alternative urban forms, with an analysis of three UK regions: London and the Wider South East, Tyne and Wear, and Cambridge Sub-Region. This work indicated the challenge to sustainability posed by rapid urban growth, but indicated the potential for sustainability gains, through appropriate combinations of urban form and technology, that were greater than those possible with urban form policies alone (Echenique et al., 2012). Our analyses addressed global and local emissions but stopped short of addressing implications of form-technology combinations for air quality. Therefore, in this paper we report on work, for Cambridge and its sub-region, that examines the impact of packages of measures comprising of complementary urban forms, transport schemes and vehicle technologies. We assess impacts in terms of VKT, global and local emissions, and local air quality (PM, NO<sub>x</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub> and HC).

## 2. Modelling methodology

The modelling methodology and framework we employ, builds on the tools and outputs of the SOLUTIONS project (Echenique et al., 2010). Fig. 1 outlines the modelling framework, where grey boxes represent elements inherited from SOLUTIONS, whilst blue boxes represent the novel elements discussed in this paper. In brief, the four tools used were: 1) the MENTOR land use/transport interaction model (Echenique et al., 2010); 2) The tactical traffic model SATURN (Simulation and Assignment of Traffic in Urban Road Networks) (Hall, van Vliet, & Willumsen, 1980); 3) The data extraction and emissions calculation tool PITHEM (Platform for Integrated Transport, Health and Environmental Modelling) (Namdeo & Goodman, 2012) and 4) The air-quality dispersion model ADMS-Urban (McHugh, Carruthers, & Edmunds, 1997). The operation of each of these components is briefly outlined below. ESRI's ArcGIS software (ESRI, 2011) was used to visualise outputs from each.

### 2.1. Land use/transport interaction and transport modelling

MENTOR is a windows-based version of the MEPLAN model (Echenique et al., 2010; Echenique et al., 2012), and is characterised as a ‘spatial-economic LUTI’ model (Simmonds & Feldman, 2011; Wegener, 2004). It estimates the locations of households and employment in zones across a study region, and the transactions between households and employment that generate transport demand (Hargreaves & Echenique, 2008). It models land and labour markets as being in equilibrium for a given time period. In a period, supply is fixed (i.e. land markets are constrained), whilst prices are adjusted so that demand matches supply (Abraham, 1998). An explanation of the structure of the model, and of the steps undertaken in an iteration are presented in Hargreaves and Echenique (2008). The Cambridge-specific MENTOR model (MENCAM) was specifically designed to test



**Fig. 1.** The modelling framework adopted in the ReVISIONS project. Grey boxes denote elements undertaken as part of the previous SOLUTIONS project. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

combinations of land use and transport policies at the Cambridgeshire sub-regional scale.

The SATURN traffic-assignment model serves a two-fold purpose: Firstly, it provides an indication of the inter-zonal costs of transportation during an iteration of the MENTOR model (Hargreaves & Echenique, 2008). Secondly, SATURN-derived, link-based flow and speed information drive the emissions calculations of PITHEM (see below). SATURN is a ‘mesoscopic’ transport model, in that it incorporates two phases: a ‘traditional’ assignment phase where trips from O-D (Origin-Destination) pairs are assigned network routes, and a simulation phase, in which delays at intersections are calculated (Hall et al., 1980). Iterative assignment using both phases provides a better indication of the effects of congestion on link costs (for MENTOR) and on flow patterns (for PITHEM), than via assignment alone.

Given the modelling platform developed in the SOLUTIONS research, use of the coupled MENTOR and SATURN models for the Cambridgeshire region was axiomatic. However, historically, both models have enjoyed considerable use both within the UK and internationally, e.g. see Echenique et al. (1990) regarding the use of MEPLAN in three European cities, or Shepherd, Timms, and May (2006) regarding SATURN in the UK context.

## 2.2. Emissions and dispersion modelling

Emission modelling was carried out using the PITHEM tool (Namdeo & Goodman, 2012) which generates a link-based emissions inventory from an imported SATURN network. Inventories may be built from a palette of country, road, vehicle and technology types. Different inventories may be applied to pre-defined, spatial-temporal areas, or routes (e.g. between O-D pairs) making the tool attractive for analysing technology based options. The tool contains a database of over 600 vehicle types (defined by chassis-type, fuel, engine size, weight, Euro class and exhaust treatment technology) for inventory definition. Emissions calculations for a particular vehicle are based on application of polynomial speed-emissions curves (see Section 3.4). PITHEM has been used successfully on several UK and EU-based projects (Goodman et al., 2014, 2016).

Dispersion modelling used the commercial ADMS-Urban model (McHugh et al., 1997; CERC, 2018), a quasi-Gaussian dispersion model, that takes into account meteorology, atmospheric boundary layer structure, height-dependence of wind speed, turbulence and stability, and NO<sub>x</sub> photochemistry, and able to calculate concentrations over spatial scales from street to region (CERC, 2018). ADMS is routinely used in the UK for assessment purposes, though it has also seen use in Europe, the United States and Asia (e.g. to study traffic restriction

measures associated with the Beijing Olympic Games (Cai & Xie, 2010; CERC, 2018)). Numerous validation studies exist (e.g. Hood et al., 2018; Owen, Edmunds, Carruthers, & Singles, 2000; Stocker, Hood, Carruthers, & McHugh, 2012). ADMS was selected for this study based on its demonstrable utility and accuracy for dispersion modelling, and its appropriateness for modelling at the city scale. Conversion of modelled NO<sub>x</sub> to NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations was done via post-processing ADMS outputs using the DEFRA conversion spreadsheet (DEFRA, 2012a), in the absence of detailed background ozone information for the sub-region.

## 3. Study area and scenario design

### 3.1. Study area

Fig. 2 shows the area addressed in this analysis, which comprises four district councils including the main population centres of Cambridge (2011 pop. ~123 k, area: 116 km<sup>2</sup>), Huntingdonshire (~170 k pop., 352 km<sup>2</sup>), as well as South and East Cambridgeshire (~150 k, 348 km<sup>2</sup> and ~84 k, 252 km<sup>2</sup> respectively). In terms of form, the area may be described as monocentric, based around Cambridge itself. Fig. 3 shows the main transport links in the area, and the extent of local air-quality modelling (blue inset box). The A1/A1(M) represents a primary North-South corridor in the UK, whilst the A14 is a key East-West corridor, carrying goods to the port of Felixstowe in Suffolk. The southbound M11 feeds into London's North Circular road.

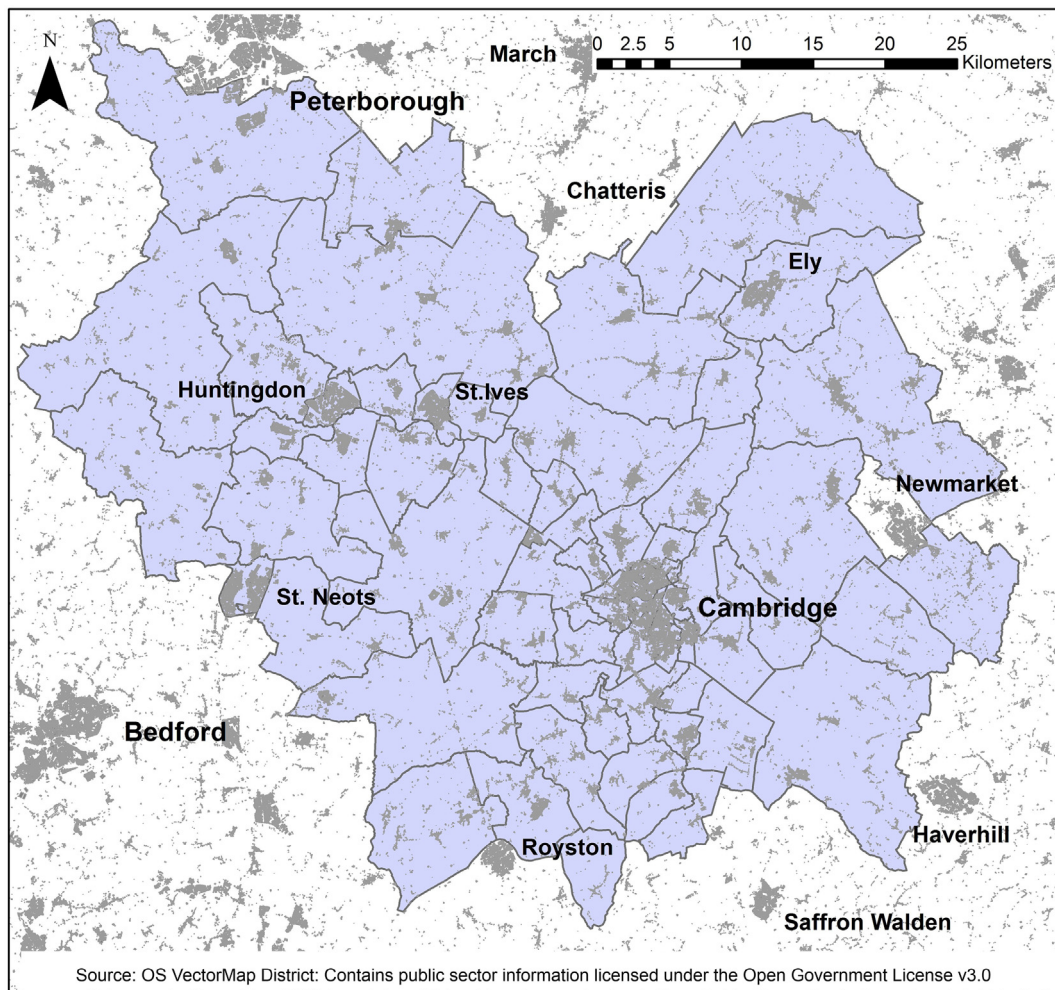
Both Cambridge and Huntingdon have declared, central Air-Quality Management Areas (AQMA), and further areas along the A14 between the two settlements. These AQMAs are based on exceedence of annual NO<sub>2</sub> standard (DEFRA, 2018a,b).

### 3.2. Scenarios tested

The scenarios examined in this paper derive from those previously examined in Echenique et al. (2012), and may be summarised as:

- A ‘Trend’ scenario, based on policies from the 2003 Cambridge Structure Plan, and;
- Alternate scenarios based on allocation of households and employment under the principles of ‘Compaction’, ‘Planned expansion’ and ‘Market led dispersal’.

The scenarios considered in SOLUTIONS are summarised in Table 1 with a brief generic description and specifics for the Cambridge study area. Further information may be found in Echenique et al. (2010,



**Fig. 2.** Major population centres and baseline extent of urban development in Cambridgeshire. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

2012). Each alternate scenario is considered ‘a response to differing views on what should be the priorities for urban development’ (Echenique et al., 2010) and ‘designed to be as distinct as possible from the trend to show their benefits and disadvantages (Echenique et al., 2012). As with the ‘Trend’ scenario, the base year is 2001 with a modelled target year for the alternate scenarios of 2021.

Data driving the LUTI scenarios was sourced from the Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) MENCAM model (Echenique et al., 2012). This was calibrated using 1990’s socio-economic data, with some updating using 2001 household and employment data. The SATURN networks were also provided by CCC and used in the second ‘Cambridge Futures’ study (Hargreaves & Echenique, 2008), as well as in SOLUTIONS.

### 3.3. Technology packages

The technology packages selected (Table 2) were tailored to each scenario based on what were considered feasible adoption rates for those technologies (Wright, 2012), but also to highlight distinctions between option. The packages are outlined in Table 2. Two compaction options were tested, Compaction and Compaction+, with the latter favouring the uptake of electric vehicles within the centre of Cambridge. Each technology package was applied by building an appropriate emissions inventory in the PITHEM tool, then processing the LUTI/SATURN outputs via PITHEM, into an ADMS-Urban input deck. Required data was drawn from a number of sources. Fleet proportions,

based on scrappage of old vehicles and uptake of new vehicles, used for the Trend scenario, and as a basis for the alternate scenarios, were taken from Venfield and Pang (2012). Speed-emissions curves for the inventories were taken from the UK Emissions Factors Toolkit V5.2c (DEFRA, 2013). Modifying (scaling) factors for alternate fuel and hybrid vehicles were derived from Murrells and Pang (2013), and further fuel economy savings for freight and public transport vehicles were adapted from Li, Pearson, and Murrells (2009). Diurnal and seasonal emission scaling factors were from the Department for Transport (DfT, 2013).

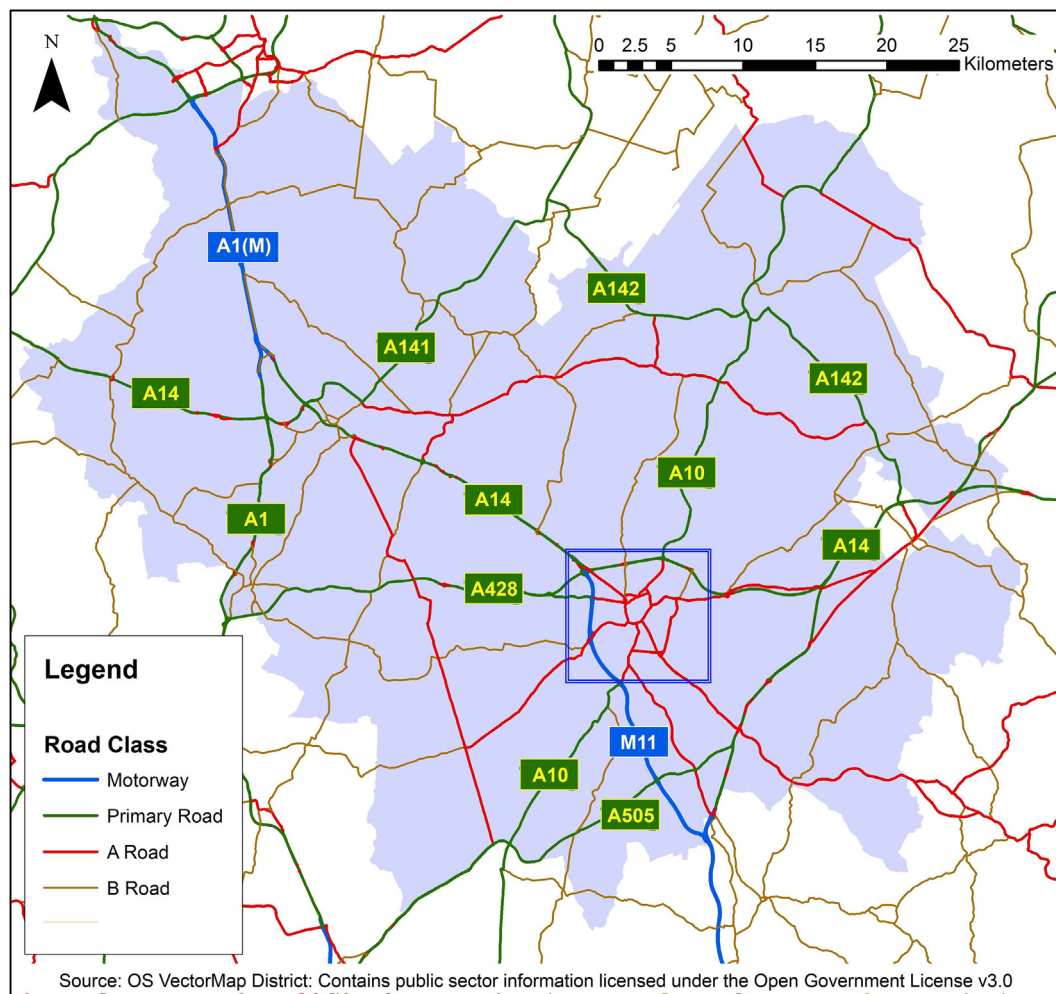
### 3.4. Dispersion modelling

The ADMS model was run over a 10 km × 10 km grid, with cell dimensions of approximately 125 m × 125 m, over the blue box area in Fig. 2. Additional background (ambient) pollution information, and concentrations arising from non-traffic sources were taken from DEFRA background maps (DEFRA, 2012b). Meteorological information was sourced from the UK Met Office from the Monkswood station, to the north of Cambridge, as the closest available site.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Vehicle kilometres travelled and emissions

Results from the Trend 2021 scenario were first compared to a



**Fig. 3.** Major transportation routes and corridors in Cambridgeshire and area of detailed air quality study. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

**Table 1**  
Urban form scenarios (Echenique et al., 2010).

Name	Description
Trend (21_Trend)	The Trend scenario is based on the 2003 Structure Plan for Cambridgeshire, with most new dwellings to be built within and around Cambridge and in the A14 corridor, plus a high rate of growth in East Cambridgeshire, particularly around Ely and a new settlement called Northstowe to the NW of Cambridge in South Cambridgeshire. Much of the new housing was allocated to sites within and around the edge of Cambridge where there are the greatest employment opportunities. This included some relaxation of the green belt constraints and thereby reduced the need to travel compared to the preceding planning policy that had allocated almost all development beyond the green belt. The increase in business and retail floorspace follows a similar pattern to the dwellings but with lower growth in East Cambridgeshire. The transport schemes included in the Structure Plan to 2016 are part of the Trend scenario (and were also included in the other urban form scenarios). The Trend scenario includes some additional schemes to represent investment from 2016 to 2021 including a guided bus extension to the east of Cambridge and a highway link from the east of the city to the A14,. This scenario reflects that the UK planning policy constrained suburban expansion and prioritised development to brownfield land and areas with good public transport.
Compaction (21_Comp)	The Compaction option involves high density development within the existing urban footprint, and is public transport oriented. It attempts 'to reduce travel and resources use, and increase social cohesion and vitality'. This scenario would develop an extra 19,000 dwellings within Cambridge itself (30% more than under the "Trend") and correspondingly fewer in the outer areas of the Cambridgeshire sub-region. There would be a tunnel for guided buses under the city centre via the bus station and railway station but no new link road to the east of Cambridge.
Market-led Dispersal (21_Disp)	The Market-led Dispersal option involves lower density private transport oriented development. This option diminishes the intensity of urban land use, reflecting people's choice for space at affordable prices, and involves some land take from previously open land in areas where there would be strongest demand for development. This would be subject to local planning constraints to achieve densities of at least 20 dwellings per hectare to avoid sprawl. In this scenario, growth is primarily around the fringes of Cambridge, in settlements to the north of the city, and along transport corridors (A10, A14 and M11). The transport schemes would be similar to the Trend option.
Planned Expansion (21_Plex)	The Planned Expansion option comprises new settlements with mixed density in good transport corridors and a mix of private and public transport. It represents an attempt to mitigate against the perceived disadvantages of the above options, to give 'balanced communities' and protect open landscape via development as edge expansion, along defined corridors or as new satellite communities. In this scenario new dwellings are concentrated in areas where there is economic growth and good road and public transport connections. This includes the eastern edge of Cambridge, the A14/guided bus transport corridor, and the M11 corridor south of Cambridge. The areas would be polycentric new settlements clustered around the public transport stations. The transport schemes would be similar to the Trend option.

**Table 2**  
Vehicle technology options applied to the 2021 urban form scenarios for emissions and dispersion modelling.

Name	Description
Trend (21_Trend)	Fleet projections from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) <a href="#">Venfield and Pang (2012)</a> are used.
Compaction (21_Comp)	The historic pattern of uptake of diesel vehicles is reversed within the Cambridge City boundaries, with small, petrol engine 'city cars' becoming more prevalent, making ≈60% of trips within the city by 2021. There would be additional provision of public transport within the city at park-and-ride sites
Compaction Plus+ (21_Comp+)	As above, but there is additional uptake of Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) for private transport within 30 km of Cambridge centre. Uptake of private BEVs is assumed to be < 0.01% in 2012, rising at 0.1% per year to 2015, then at 0.5% per year beyond 2015. This equates to ≈3.3% of trips being made by BEVs in 2021. Hybrid electric buses are used for public transport within city boundaries.
Market-led Dispersal (21_Displ)	The historic pattern towards dieselification of the private fleet is continued, and compounded by a further trend towards larger-engine (2+ litre) vehicles, both within the city, and in the hinterlands, resulting in ~23% of trips being made by these vehicles, compared to ~13% in the Trend. Little investment in public transport
Planned Expansion (21_Plex)	Increased demand for bus/park-and-ride facilities and expansion of existing guided bus routes. All buses are assumed to be either 'Euro V+' hybrid buses, or 'clean', low NO <sub>x</sub> buses, based on 'Euro VI/de-NO <sub>x</sub> ' technologies. The increase in public transport patronage leads to a commensurate reduction in passenger car usage from the fringes and hinterlands of the city.

baseline 2001 scenario. Total vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) would increase by +11.5%, but technology changes in the fleet resulted in projected CO<sub>2</sub> emissions falling by –16%, PM<sub>10</sub> by –37% and NO<sub>x</sub> and HC emissions by over –80%. However, primary NO<sub>2</sub> emissions only fell by –9%. Over the same period and region, the SOLUTIONS project ([Echenique et al., 2012](#)) showed increases in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 16% for the transport and building energy sectors for the Cambridge Sub-Region. The fall in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reported here are due to more aggressive assumptions on fuel consumption improvements to light-duty IC vehicles than were present in the EFT emissions figures ([DEFRA, 2013](#)) in the light of European Union CO<sub>2</sub> targets, than in the SOLUTIONS modelling.

[Table 3](#) provides the results for the 2021 urban form-technology scenarios, with reductions compared to the 2021 Trend scenario shown as negative values. These results are further illustrated in [Fig. 4](#) with results for each scenario (dashed lines) plotted relative to the Trend case (solid blue line). Note that the change in pollutant emissions associated with the scenarios falls into a relatively small range (–12.7% to +7.1%), although these variations in emissions are greater than the changes in vehicle kilometres travelled (–4.2% to +4.7%). This indicates that the vehicle technologies have a larger impact on emissions than the changes in urban form alone, consistent with the findings of [Echenique et al. \(2010, 2012\)](#), and [Mitchell et al. \(2011\)](#). Furthermore, note that the SOLUTIONS modelling for Cambridge found that, for the 2021 urban form scenarios (with conventional fleet technology), carbon dioxide emissions varied from Trend by only ± 4% for the sub-region as a whole, much less than the –13% to +7% observed here where newer clean technology is represented in the fleet.

[Fig. 5](#) presents the spatial distribution of the uCO<sub>2</sub> emissions intensity (emission/area) across the sub-region for the Trend scenario. Cambridge City Centre is clearly visible towards the lower right of the sub-region, as is the town of Huntingdon to the north-west. The junction of the M11 and A14 at Girton (part of the A14 Corridor AQMA) also represents an emission 'hot-spot'.

[Fig. 6](#) presents the change in total NO<sub>x</sub> emission for each scenario relative to Trend. The 'Compaction' and 'Compaction+' options reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emission (by up to 40%) in the areas north, east and south of

Cambridge and around Huntingdon. Unfortunately, these areas are not Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), but increases in Cambridge City may be in AQMAs (emissions in West Chesterton and Market wards increases up to +50%). The 'Compaction+' option limits the maximum increase to +45%.

The Dispersal option increases emissions, primarily in wards north of the city (especially those bordering the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon) and to the south (in Queen Edith's, Shelfords and Stapleford, Harston and Hauxton wards). The Planned Expansion option gives more marginal changes (–9% to +17%) across the study region, with the greatest increases again along the A14 corridor to the west of Cambridge. Maps for the other pollutants show the same general spatial patterns were observed, though actual percentage changes in each zone differed. Changes in PM and NO<sub>x</sub>/NO<sub>2</sub> were more sensitive in those zones carrying a greater relative proportion of heavy duty traffic, whilst larger changes in HCs and overall uCO<sub>2</sub> were observed in areas carrying a greater relative number of light duty vehicles.

Note that the mass-based changes in emissions ([Table 3](#) and [Fig. 4](#)), plus the spatial analyses in [Figs. 5 and 6](#), present only a partial picture of the atmospheric impact of the planning scenarios – concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> within Cambridge itself are described in the next section.

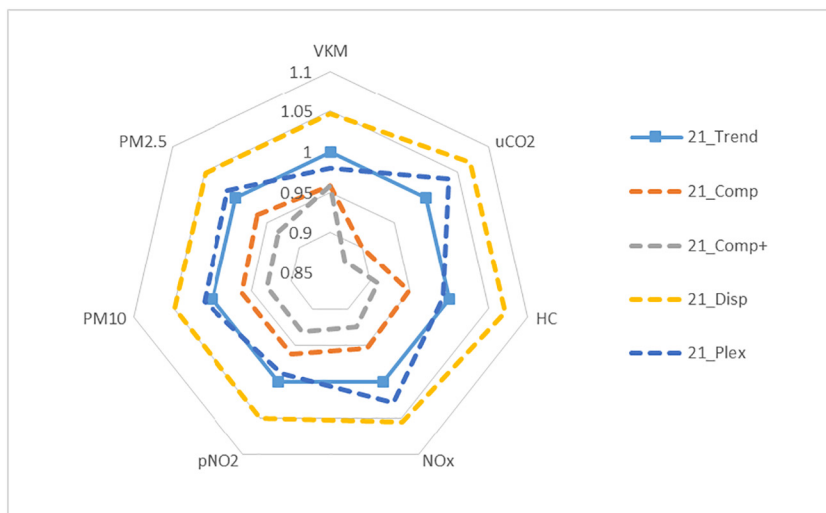
#### 4.2. Spatial changes in air pollutant concentrations

Given that local air-quality problems associated with NO<sub>x</sub>/NO<sub>2</sub> that are present in the area, and which are generally limited to within 200 m of major roads, it is appropriate to consider how the urban form-vehicle technology combinations also impact upon air quality. This analysis, not conducted under SOLUTIONS, used ADMS to model changes to near-road pollutant concentrations. Concentrations for 2001 were first modelled, and annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> levels were observed in excess of the prevailing 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> annual mean standard, for areas around the city centre, within the inner ring road. [Fig. 7](#) illustrates changes to annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations for Cambridge (see box area in [Fig. 2](#)).

These results illustrate that compaction delivers significant improvements in air quality at the periphery of the city, but that the central area experiences a significant decline, which we interpret as a

**Table 3**  
Network performance (absolute values) of alternate planning scenarios relative to the Trend scenario.

Parameter	21_Trend	21_Comp	21_Comp+	21_Displ	21_Plex	Units
VKT	6320.7	–262.5 (–4.2%)	–262.5 (–4.2%)	+297.6 (+4.7%)	–129.4 (–2%)	m.km.
uCO <sub>2</sub>	1018.9	–101.3 (–9.9%)	–129.2 (–12.7%)	+71.2 (+7%)	+37.4 (+3.7%)	kT
HC	236.8	–11.9 (–5%)	–21.3 (–9%)	+16.7 (+7.1%)	–1.9 (–0.8%)	T
NO <sub>x</sub>	1361.7	–63 (–4.6%)	–102.5 (–7.5%)	+74 (+5.4%)	+39.4 (+2.9%)	T
pNO <sub>2</sub>	445.2	–17.1 (–3.8%)	–30.9 (–6.9%)	+22.4 (+5%)	–5.2 (–1.2%)	T
PM <sub>10</sub>	224.2	–8.3 (–3.7%)	–15.5 (–6.9%)	+10.8 (+4.8%)	+2.4 (+1.1%)	T
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	127.6	–4.4 (–3.4%)	–8.6 (–6.7%)	+6.2 (+4.9%)	+1.7 (+1.3%)	T

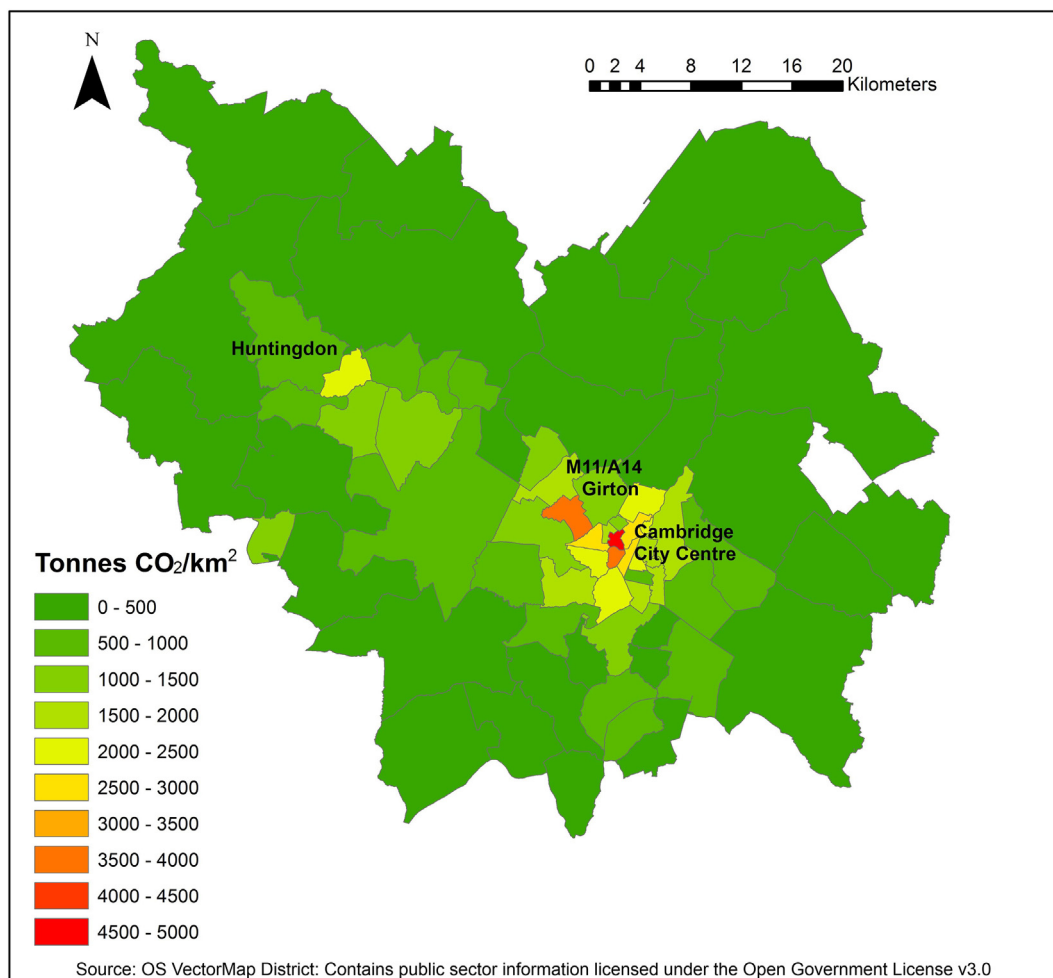


**Fig. 4.** Radar plot of network performance relative to the Trend scenario. (Baseline performance = '1'). (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

congestion effect. Conversely, Dispersal results in an overall increase in emissions and a decline in air quality along a link road around the south of the city that was part of the Dispersal option but not included in the other options, but air quality is much improved throughout the city, relative to Compaction. The Compaction+ option improves city air quality relative to compaction, yet in air quality terms does not

compete with dispersal, whilst air quality under Planned Expansion sees no clear pattern, although all changes observed are minor.

The results, as presented are somewhat in conflict with [Borrego et al. \(2006\)](#) who reported little variation in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations between compact and dispersed city forms, and [Bechle, Millet, and Marshall \(2011\)](#), who suggested that ‘compactness’ (defined as urban



**Fig. 5.** Intensity of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions across the modelled sub-region.

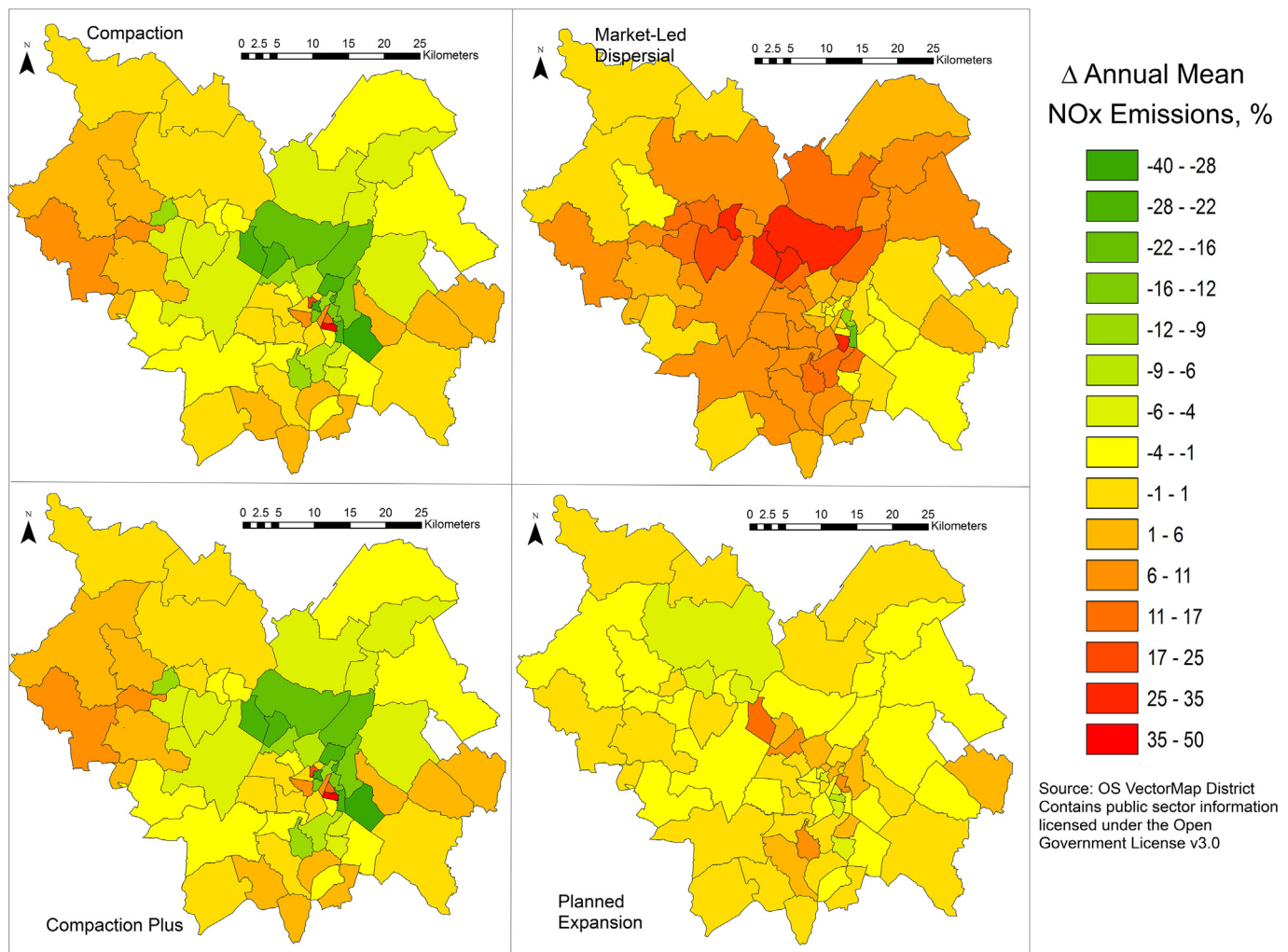


Fig. 6. Spatial changes in NO<sub>x</sub> emissions across Cambridgeshire, relative to the 'Trend' scenario (Anti-clockwise from top left: Compaction, Compaction+, Planned Expansion, Market-led Dispersal).

circularity) was not a significant predictor of NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations, though cities and regions with more contiguous (rather than 'leap-frogged' or dispersed) development could be associated with lower NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations.

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

### 5.1. Limitations

Before considering the results of the analysis more fully, it is appropriate to note a number of methodological limitations. It is recognised that there have been a number of developments in the field of air pollution post-completion of the modelling work, and secondly that the use of available components and data from the decade-old SOLUTIONS project limits the current applicability of results in the strictest sense – rather they need to be viewed as internally consistent, and representative of their respective scenarios.

Considerable attention has been given in the past few years as to why predicted emission and concentration decreases, expected from the implementation of the Euro 5/V and 6/VI classes, and reflected in the type of modelling presented here, have not materialised in the real-world (Carslaw, Beevers, Tate, Westmorland, & Williams, 2011; Hagman & Amundsen, 2013, 2015; Hagman, Gjerstad, & Amundsen, 2011; Keuken, Roemer, Zandveld, Verbeek, & Velders, 2012; Weiss et al., 2012). Issues surrounding the real-world versus drive cycle

performance of vehicles have received considerable research and media attention of late, whether this be the under-performance of de-NO<sub>x</sub> equipment (Carslaw & Rhys-Tyler, 2013; Oxley, ApSimon, & Valiantis, 2011; Velders, Geilenkirchen, & de Lange, 2011), increasing primary NO<sub>2</sub> fractions in late-model diesel exhausts post 2000 (Grice et al., 2009; Rhys-Tyler, Legassick, & Bell, 2011), outright 'cycle-beating' by manufacturers (Ekberg, Eriksson, & Sivertsson, 2016), or lack of understanding on deterioration of emissions with vehicle age and mileage (Carslaw, 2018).

Examination of the light vehicle diesel emissions rates between PITHEM/EFT version 5 (DEFRA, 2013) and EFT version 8 (DEFRA, 2017), for 2021, show that, for uCO<sub>2</sub> factors agree within 1%, for particulate matter generally within 5% (though EFT v8 rates can be up to 12% higher at low (< 15 km/h) speeds). For NO<sub>x</sub> speed-dependent discrepancies are large, reaching +63% at free-flow urban speeds (50–60 km/h), and are still significant, but smaller (+36–54%) at lower and higher speeds. Hence we would expect an update to this work using the latest emissions factors to be detrimental to the NO<sub>x</sub>/NO<sub>2</sub> results for the Compaction and Market-led Dispersal options to a greater extent than the other options examined.

Court action against central government for ongoing exceedences of European annual NO<sub>2</sub> objectives have also lead to Clean Air Zones (CAZs), wherein certain vehicles are restricted, and 'pollution charges' being examined in several cities – including Cambridge (GCP, 2017). These developments threaten to overturn the historic dieselification of



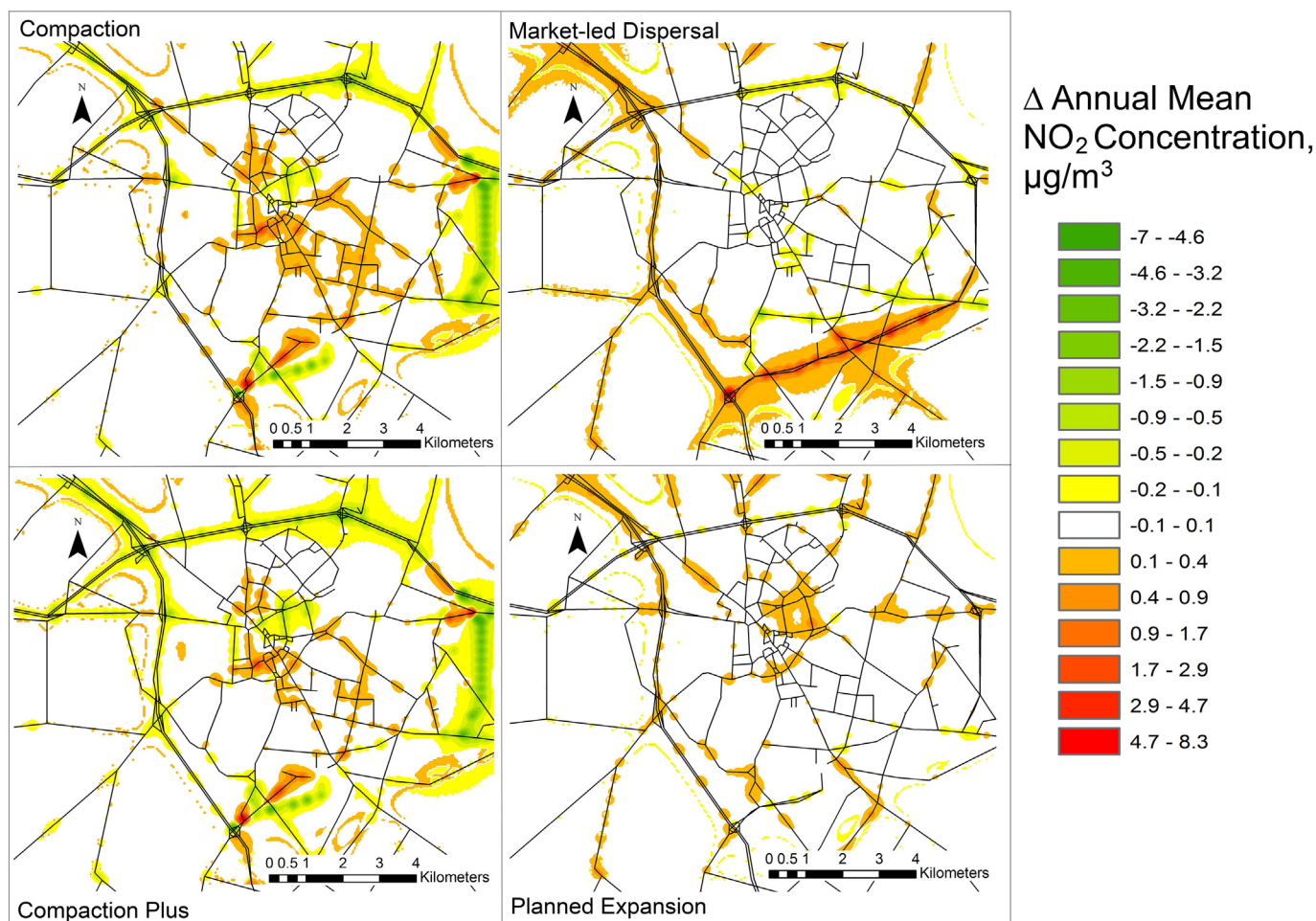


Fig. 7. Changes in predicted annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations across the City of Cambridge, relative to the 'Trend' scenario (Anti-clockwise from top-left: Compaction, Compaction Plus, Planned Expansion and Market-led Dispersal).

the vehicle fleet in the UK, as assumed by the Market-led Dispersal scenario. A further pledge for a ban on all new petrol and diesel car sales by 2040 also seeks to drive penetration of alternate-fuelled vehicles beyond previously assumed rates, such as those proposed by Wright (2012), and used in the Compaction+ scenario. The current EFT places hybrid and electric VKT at approximately 5.5% of the total in 2021 (DEFRA, 2017), above the 3.3% assumed in the Compaction+ scenario, for example.

There is also on-going discussion within the air-quality community as to whether it is appropriate to use strategic macro- or meso-transport models such as SATURN for local air-quality assessments, or if traffic micro-simulation coupled with a suitable instantaneous emissions model is preferable (Boulter, McCrae, & Barlow, 2007), as these models may be better able to represent congestion effects, such as those that may be expected in the Compaction options. Broadly, we would expect emissions and concentrations under such a modelling scheme to increase substantially in areas of congestion.

Conversely, there is an argument that speed-emission curves, such as those used in the EFT, used in conjunction with assignment models such as SATURN, give a 'false sense of accuracy' regarding marginal speed changes in a network. This has led to the adoption of a 'speed and congestion band' approach for the appraisal of new road schemes by Highways England, the UK-body responsible for the strategic road network (HE, 2015).

Following this idea, the SATURN model used for this study had been calibrated to the traffic conditions and networks of the Base Year (2001) and the Trend scenario. Its main purpose was to provide car

travel times and costs for the spatial allocation modelling of the land use activities within the sub-region, rather than air pollution concentration modelling. The Compaction option would greatly increase the population densities within Cambridge compared to the Trend and so forecasts of the traffic speeds, flows and queuing may be less reliable than for the Trend within and around Cambridge.

This is unlikely to have had much effect on the findings for the sub-region as a whole, but means that the forecasts of absolute air pollution concentrations within Cambridge may be unreliable, especially for Compaction, because there would be higher volumes of traffic on roads that are already congested. Traffic queues and peak-spreading could have a disproportionate impact on traffic emissions. This is an example of how further, more detailed traffic simulation modelling would be useful in conjunction with other measures to reduce air pollution in a higher density city such as traffic demand management, cleaner fuels and attractive and sustainable alternatives to car use. The models used for this study were calibrated using data that is now somewhat outdated and so may not take into account current choice behaviour and travel options. Note also that the options tested were a combination of land use policies and supportive transport schemes. Therefore, the findings on air quality concentrations are affected by location specific combinations of transport schemes and land use policy. Also, Cambridge is atypical of most small cities in the UK because of its university, historic setting within a rural hinterland and its strong growth of employment within and around the city. Similar research would be useful on the relationship between land use transport planning and vehicle technologies on emission for other cities as a comparison.

Likewise, for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions there are discrepancies between values (in terms of g/km rates) calculated via the EFT (versions 5 or 8), and those in the National Transport Model (NTM) (Li et al., 2009) or the Greenhouse gas conversion factor repository (DEFRA, 2013; Hill, Venfield, Dun, & James, 2013) used for official reporting of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Whilst light vehicle emission (cars, vans, motorcycles) tend to correspond well between data sources, greater discrepancies exist for heavy vehicles (HGVs and buses). These discrepancies increase with time, as the NTM and DEFRA CO<sub>2</sub> values assume improvements in fuel efficiencies (CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are analogous to fuel consumption) of heavy vehicles (by approximately 5% every 5 years), that are not present in the EFT figures. Indeed, the presence of de-NO<sub>x</sub> technologies (e.g. Selective Catalytic Reduction) and regenerating particulate traps on modern heavy vehicles (Euro V and VI) is assumed to marginally increase fuel consumption (by approximately 1%) in the EFT dataset. The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions values generated (Table 3) are tank-to-wheels (TTW) values, and further assumptions on the efficiency of fuel production and distribution are required to convert these to well-to-wheels (WTW) values for carbon foot printing (Hill et al., 2013), or to accurately calculate displaced emissions from BEVs (i.e. from transport to electricity generation).

Regarding urban topography, taller building forms associated with the compaction options may alter street canyon dimensions, leading to entrapment of pollutants. Such changes may be expressed in general surface roughness properties in Gaussian models such as ADMS-Urban, or application of canyon modelling. More rigorous analysis would require robust simulation e.g. via Computational Fluid Dynamics modelling. Other researchers have taken this approach when studying urban form (e.g. Yuan et al., 2014).

Finally, we note some limitations associated with the specific geography of the case study. The modelled strategic networks do not provide full coverage of the city or region, but are focussed on key routes. The congested assignment part of the SATURN model had a detailed road network for Cambridge and its periphery which approximately corresponded to the area of the blue box in Fig. 2. There is uncertainty arising from the background pollution maps and the DEFRA sector removal tools (DEFRA, 2012b), and pollution contributions from minor roads may be misrepresented. Climate information does not reflect changing meteorology relevant to the air quality analysis, though relevant elements of the UKCP09 weather generator data, for example temperature and precipitation predictions, could, in principle, be included (EA, 2018).

## 5.2. Interpretation and conclusions

Despite the caveats above, we conclude that the results of the analysis provide a credible *comparative* analysis of the combined role of urban form and vehicle technology on emission and air quality for a small city surrounded by a largely rural sub-region of market-towns and villages. Previous work by the authors (Echenique et al., 2012; Mitchell et al., 2011) has suggested that the impact of a range of urban spatial planning options on emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> would be limited in comparison to the general growth of emissions under trends of long-term socio-economic change and population growth. Mitchell et al. (2011) reported a maximum 5% CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction due to the compaction of urban form over a 30 year period, and concluded that technological advancements could be a greater driver for emissions abatement. This conclusion was drawn from an analysis of both the transport and building sectors, with the authors noting that prior studies based on analysis of the transport sector alone showed larger elasticities. Echenique et al. (2012) summated that “Urban form policies can have important impacts on local environmental quality, economy, crowding, and social equity, but their influence on energy consumption and land use is very modest”.

The results in this study build on the author's previous work, and are consistent with the previous findings. Whilst this new analysis is based

solely on the transport sector, it includes more aggressive assumptions regarding the energy efficiency of motor vehicles over the examined period, and includes electrification of the sector in the compaction scenarios. Under the 2001–2021 Trend scenario, transport CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are projected to decrease by 16%, whilst for the Compaction policy the reduction achieved is 22%. Hence, we argue that, in this paper, we have demonstrated that greater uptake of clean technology vehicles has the potential to further mitigate emissions, but that the rate of reduction remains rather modest. This reflects the limited rate of clean technology uptake represented in our scenarios, which seek to reflect plausible technologies, and which operate over a modest temporal range.

With respect to air quality, we observe a deleterious effect of compaction. Intensification increases population density, and whilst per capita car use may be reduced with benefits in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction, intensification also increases concentrations of traffic, which results in the observed decline in local air quality. This is the ‘paradox of intensification’ phenomenon discussed above, and where Melia et al. (2011) concluded that any compromise involving limited intensification would merely act to redistribute problems between local and global objectives. They therefore advocate intensification with more radical vehicle constraint and provision for slow modes and public transport. We observe that air quality benefits may be delivered under a compaction policy accompanied with more aggressive uptake of clean technology (‘Compaction+’), although other local traffic externalities such as noise are not addressed.

The findings of our earlier SOLUTIONS project suggested that a policy of planned expansion (such as polycentrism) offered a potential compromise between the relative pros and cons of compaction and dispersal, and provide better space (housing) standards than compaction, but without the energy consumption of market led dispersal. The work presented here furthers that conclusion, and indicates that, with respect to environmental objectives a planned expansion policy coupled with clean technology has potential to deliver reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emission relative to the dispersal option, but without the risk to exceedance of air quality objectives that compaction implies (Fig. 7).

Further work is required to test this conclusion more thoroughly although this is challenging due to the resource intensive nature of working with such linked-models. Because air quality impacts are so context dependent (e.g. non-compliant air quality may occur in populated town centres, or along sparsely populated main roads) it would also be beneficial to extend the analysis to incorporate population exposure and health impact assessment. For example, Martins (2012) reported that urban sprawl options lead to higher modelled particulate matter and ozone concentrations in the Porto area of Portugal, compared to trend and compaction options, but compaction lead to higher population exposure to particulate matter (though ozone results were less clear).

The future work could also consider the environmental justice or equity implications of the scenarios, developing an air quality environmental justice analysis as developed by Mitchell (2005), and applied to Leeds by Namdeo and Stringer (2008), which would further enhance the sustainability appraisal of the urban form-technology scenarios. Likewise, disease burden estimations based on the spatial distribution of populations, exposure-response curves and ADMS pollution concentration maps are being included in the PITHEM software, based on the methodology outlined in Mitchell, Namdeo, and Kay (2000). The spatial forms may then also be quantified in terms of ‘disease-burden reduction’ and ‘health gains’ in local areas.

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