Integrated National Transport Strategy: a call for ideas

Respondent details

Q1. You are responding as an:
organisation?

Organisation details

Q8. What is the name of your organisation?
Community Planning Alliance

Q9. You are:
content to continue contact via email communityplanningalliance@mail.com

Q11. What best describes your organisation?
Another type of organisation: Formally Constituted Community Group that lobbies for better community participation in planning, greater environmental protections and the right developments and infrastructure in the right places.

Joined up working

Q15. In your opinion, how could the transport network be better ‘joined-up’?
If the strategic intention is to enable modal shift to more sustainable transport options, this MUST be reflected across all policy areas. This should ensure that new road building is agreed by exception only. All public funds should be prioritised for sustainable passenger and freight transport (and for maintaining existing roads). As an example, there is a plan to add new lanes to the A66 to alleviate traffic congestion. The traffic issues in this location are caused by the huge number of HGVs using this route. A more strategic decision would be to ensure the proposed funding for this scheme is spent on sustainable freight transport, especially given that the A66 is frequently closed to high sided vehicles due to its exposed position and the increasing number of severe weather incidents. It will be impossible to persuade the public to move to less convenient modes of travel unless there are real incentives. This would include ensuring sustainable passenger transport options have high coverage, are affordable (if not free in terms of bus services), are clean, safe and sufficiently frequent to support modal shift. Benefits such as free access to wifi, free device charging facilities and free access to apps for entertainment/educational purposes whilst travelling would also encourage increased usage. From an economic perspective, funding sustainable passenger and freight transport would provide numerous benefits. Many major roads are all too frequently affected by major accidents or incidents. Sustainable transport options do not typically suffer from this huge impact to productivity on a day-to-day basis. Road speed limits need to be reviewed to minimise major accidents, incidents and costs to the NHS. The tax regime should also be aligned with this modal shift goal, offering tax incentives for use of sustainable modes of travel for businesses and car sharing, for example, plus increasing fuel duty/road charging for personal motor vehicle travel.

Data and technology

Q16. How could data be used to improve the transport network?

All the data elements mentioned would be useful for transport users but for strategic purposes more information is needed to support planning for an integrated transport network. This would require analysis of data to encourage and support modal shift. This could include the assessment of various modes of transport when planning new development schemes to determine the likely costs (financial, environmental, economic) not just to various public sector bodies, including the NHS and other emergency services, but also to businesses in relation to the loss of productivity due to congestion, severe weather and major accidents/incidents.
As an example, the proposed New Carrington development in Trafford aims to provide 5,000 homes and 350,000m2 warehousing. The expectation is that there will be over 3,000 HGVs a day using local roads to access the strategic road network. Yet, no sustainable freight transport options have been proposed, despite the development having a former railway line running through it and being next to the Manchester Ship Canal. There is also the opportunity to use pipelines to transport products other than gases and liquids (although the Trafford Green Hydrogen facility will put 700 HGVs on local roads each day because the 'lazy' road-based solution has been adopted rather than the more sustainable pipeline option).
The same development is estimated to result in over 30,000 cars and LGVs a day (in total, including existing traffic). Yet it proposes no train or tram stops in this, the largest of all Greater Manchester's schemes. The allocation area is adjacent to two very deprived communities, with low car-ownership. Trafford describes it as 'poorly served by public transport'. Despite this, Trafford's only commitment is to a new road which benefits the developers but not existing communities!
Evidence should be made available to determine the true costs (including carbon emissions) of each transport option available. It is inappropriate for such large-scale developments to exclude sustainable passenger and freight transport, given the recognised impact of air, noise, light, vibration and water pollution to both human and wildlife populations (and it must be acknowledged that EVs will not address particulate matter pollutants).
Given the aim to secure modal shift, data can also be used to monitor the reduction in car/HGV journeys and the increase in sustainable modes and active travel.
Finally, make it easy to find the right tickets at the least cost for the total journey. The current system is too complex, particularly for the elderly, the disadvantaged and children.

Q17. How could technology be used to improve the transport network?

There should be more incentives in relation to, for example, car sharing to reduce traffic congestion. This could include tax incentives, which would need technology solutions to provide evidence and to make any claims.
There should be more technology deployed to reduce HGV journeys. This could include use of pipelines/tunnels to transport goods other than gases and liquids.
More monitoring stations should be provided to identify the level of air, noise, light vibration and water pollution suffered by communities. These should be funded by, and the results reported by, central government. Analysis should be undertaken by independent experts to ensure increased confidence in the data outputs.

Call for ideas

Q48. How, if at all, would you improve the way decisions are made about the transport network?

All decisions should be evidence based and should be made in the full knowledge of all the impacts of a scheme, for its expected entire life cycle. Sufficient data must be available for decision-makers and communities to understand the implications of all the options (sustainable and unsustainable) – to show the comparative benefits of all aspects of a scheme depending on which transport option is proposed. No road scheme should be approved without the comparative information showing how its benefits measure up to those of at least one alternative more sustainable option (and the 'do nothing' option). Such data would include:
• The full carbon implications of the scheme for its entire life cycle
• Estimated traffic volumes (drawing on current actual traffic data)
• Estimated air, noise, light, vibration and water pollution implications (with current data being assessed via appropriate monitoring stations, with new stations installed if existing stations are more than 2km from the scheme)
• Natural Capital and Ecological impact (drawing on actual data, not just desktop studies)
• Socio-economic appraisal - road schemes benefit the 'well-off' in our society, leaving those who are less affluent with the drawbacks of exposure to air, noise, light, vibration and water pollution without any advantages. Public and active travel favour the 'less well-off'. There are also studies which demonstrate the value of active/public transport to the economy, such as this one from Transport for the North https://www.transportforthenorth.com/blogs/economicvaluesofbus/.
All reports published about a scheme must comply with the Green Claims Code principles, which require that any claims made by the scheme must meet the following:
• claims must be truthful and accurate
• claims must be clear and unambiguous
• claims must not omit or hide important relevant information
• comparisons must be fair and meaningful
• claims must consider the full life cycle of the product or service
• claims must be substantiated.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-claims-code-making-environmental-claims/environmental-claims-on-goods-and-services

Final comments

Q49. Any other comments?

If the strategic intent is to reduce travel by unsustainable modes, the integrated transport network must be fully focused on securing modal shift. This will need various complementary initiatives to secure the benefits, including, for example:
• Reducing the number of internal flights within the UK and introducing incentives for long-distance travel by rail (including reductions in fares)
• Make new road schemes a thing of the past, given the climate and biodiversity emergencies, such schemes should be the exception rather than the first choice (the lazy alternative used because there is no national incentive to move away from the car or the HGV)
• Re-introducing school buses nationwide (this will significantly reduce traffic during peak hours and increase safety for children)
• Establish a fund for community initiatives to enable local groups to introduce initiatives such as cycling buses (ie electric buses with pedals that can be used for both adults and children), which would be a safe and fun way to encourage people to cycle (and to help them to get fit enough to do it)
• Prioritise wheelers, pedestrians and cyclists on all routes – fund more traffic calming schemes, such as crossings, (the elderly and children are particularly discouraged from active travel options by the traffic levels and the poor behaviour of some drivers)
• Reduce the inequality of transport deserts – fund sustainable passenger transport as a priority in such areas, including isolated and rural communities with poor public transport connectivity
• Make public transport the attractive option (bus services should be free to users, they should be safe, clean, frequent and have high geographical coverage)
• Provide tax breaks for those who use sustainable freight transport options and sustainable passenger transport and discourage travel in motor vehicles by introducing road charging and higher petrol duties
• Citizens are an undervalued free talent pool, involve them and their communities in strategic, tactical and local initiatives, using methods such as citizen assemblies, questionnaires and other means to provide input to national strategies, local and regional schemes and the identification and reporting of maintenance requirements for all modes of transport.
• Monitor progress in the reduction of motor vehicle use and the increase in active and sustainable travel.
When appraising road schemes, policy should ensure that there is a 'do-nothing' option AND an active/public transport scenario (fully funded, as the road would be). Treasury Green Book guidance should be followed to ensure option appraisal is robust and externalities are quantified.
A recent media report (https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/mum-flies-malaga-back-pick-9894129?int_source=nba) highlighted that a lady from Cornwall flew to Malaga to pick up a new car in Crewe as it was a cheaper than getting a train up to Manchester. This is a good example of how wrong the current priorities are! Train travel is too expensive and totally out of reach for the most vulnerable in our society.
Meanwhile, we also know that rail freight delivers huge levels of economic and social benefits to the UK annually and could provide much more with the right focus on sustainable freight transport. Network Rail report (https://www.networkrail.co.uk/stories/railway-day-freight-cuts-emissions-across-britain/) that each “tonne of freight transported by rail produces 76% fewer carbon emissions compared with road”, and that a freight train can carry as much as 110 lorries (meaning that an increase in rail freight would reduce Britain’s carbon footprint and cut traffic jams, too).
This demonstrates the urgency of refocusing funding on public transport, active travel and sustainable freight transport.