

## **House of Commons Transport Committee: Investigation into urban traffic congestion ~ Submission from Campaign for Better Transport**

**December 2016**

Campaign for Better Transport is a leading charity and environmental campaign group that promotes sustainable transport policies. Our vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the House of Commons Transport Committee inquiry on the subject of urban traffic congestion.

The issue is timely, with increasing congestion affecting people's lives, not least the quality of the air we breathe and the reliability of the public transport and emergency services on which our communities depend.

Over half the UK's population lives in the 64 largest cities<sup>1</sup> and their growth is projected to continue. As cities become more densely populated, we face a strategic challenge as to what kind of communities we want to build. Trying to accommodate 20th century car dependency in a 21st century city will condemn our towns and cities to permanent congestion, pollution and stagnation.

We cannot build our way out of congestion: new roads generate new traffic, providing temporary congestion relief with permanent environmental damage. Instead we need a radical change of approach, using the design, operation and pricing of urban road space to prioritise space-efficient travel options – public transport, walking and cycling – and to manage the growth in consumer freight deliveries with a comprehensive modern freight strategy.

In fact, there is a wealth of evidence, that it is both possible and desirable to change travel behaviour radically through positive policy interventions. The problems caused by congestion, in addition to those caused by air pollution, carbon emissions and conflicting land use, combine to make the case for such interventions stronger than ever.

Cities around the world are embracing this approach. European cities have long adopted policies promoting sustainable transport and car-free zones, and this continues: Paris is reclaiming streets for walking and cycling, Oslo is phasing out diesel and petrol vehicles. New York has shown how dedicated cycle highways reduce congestion. Even Los Angeles – a byword for car dependency – has now adopted a transport strategy that puts sustainable transport and demand management at its heart.

British cities have also introduced many positive initiatives, including London's congestion charge, Nottingham's workplace parking levy, and roll outs of smart ticketing for public transport, on-street bike hire, and lane rental for road repairs.

By taking the best examples from cities in the UK and abroad, we have the opportunity to create dynamic and liveable communities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup> "People in cities: the numbers" Professor Tony Champion University of Newcastle June 2014  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/321814/14-802-people-in-cities-numbers.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/321814/14-802-people-in-cities-numbers.pdf)

We understand that the Committee wishes to examine appropriate combinations of measures that can come together to form integrated urban traffic management strategies, including:

- bus priority measures
- road-pricing
- parking schemes
- cycling and walking infrastructure
- street-running trams
- use of innovative traffic management technologies.

The Committee is also interested in wider considerations, including:

- managing disruption to local communities and businesses during construction and operation
- construction and operating costs
- approaches to cost-benefit calculations
- implications for the sustainability of the market for provision of bus services
- the safety of road users, particularly cyclists and pedestrians.

The Committee has said in its call for evidence that it seeks to identify balanced approaches that can be adapted to local circumstances, and are fair towards all types of road user.

### **Bus Priority Measures**

Buses are crucial to meeting many of today's challenges. They are helping the UK meet our targets on reducing carbon emissions and mitigating climate change – a role that will only become more important as the proportion of low emission buses on the road increases. They help tackle congestion. Using the bus regularly has significant positive health outcomes – a study by Greener Journeys<sup>2</sup> found that daily short walks to the bus stop made up half of passengers' daily recommended exercise and is equivalent to eleven marathons over the course of a year.

Bus priority measures, including bus lanes, are part of the solution to congestion, not part of the problem. They make a positive contribution to reducing urban congestion by supporting high quality bus services. Buses play a vital role in reducing congestion: every three buses replace approximately 200 cars on the road. The experience of the bus priority measures on the A259 coastal route around Brighton is that buses move 45% of the people along that corridor but make up only 2% of the vehicle traffic.

Buses are high capacity, flexible, and provide far wider coverage than any other public transport option. However, there is evidence that congestion is now impairing bus performance to the point where passengers are switching away from bus usage. Over the last 50 years, bus journey times have increased by almost 50% in the more congested urban areas.<sup>3</sup>

Given the number of people a bus can carry compared to its footprint, tackling bus congestion needs to be given a high priority. There is a direct link between bus priority measures and bus service performance. Dedicated bus lanes can reduce bus travel times by 7 to 9 minutes along a 10km congested route and also improve their reliability. In Edinburgh, the introduction of dedicated bus 'Greenways' saw a 4% improvement in bus time performance over the decade 1986-96, followed by a worsening of bus performance when the bus priority was relaxed in later years.

The Leigh – Manchester guided busway has proved very successful, with a specially constructed route. The busway marked its 150,000th passenger in its first month of operation (April-May 2016)

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<sup>2</sup> Why taking the bus is good for your health: Greener Journeys <http://www.greenerjourneys.com/news/why-taking-the-bus-is-good-for-your-health/>

<sup>3</sup> The Impact of Congestion on Bus Passengers <http://www.greenerjourneys.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Prof-David-Begg-The-Impact-of-Congestion-on-Bus-Passengers-Digital-FINAL.pdf>

and is attracting on average 30,000 users a week. The service can carry 2,000 people on 40 buses in the morning peak, taking up the road space of 80 cars to deliver the equivalent of 2,000 single-occupancy car journeys. It is part of a package including busway Park & Ride, and a parallel walking, cycling and riding route.<sup>4</sup>

As well as bus priority measures, good quality bus information and integrated ticketing are also important. It is estimated that where cashless buses with contactless payment and smart ticketing are introduced, the “dwell time” at bus stops is halved, with consequent benefits from reducing congestion and improving bus service performance.

Current smart ticketing schemes are patchy between different cities and operators. Schemes such as Plusbus are good at integrating bus and rail travel and often offer a discount on the bus travel. However, the Plusbus element for the start of a combined journey is often redundant as passengers typically collect tickets at the rail station.

In general integrated ticketing would offer people much greater flexibility to choose between which was the most appropriate mode at any one particular time. This approach could also be extended to cover membership of car clubs nationwide and even parking and other services, accessed through smart phones and other new technology.

### **Road pricing**

We believe that road pricing is an appropriate, fair and effective way to manage congestion.

Although local authorities have had the powers to introduce congestion charges since the Transport Act 2000, only Durham and London have so far introduced such schemes (and in Durham for only the Durham Peninsula area surrounding the castle and cathedral).

The Central London Congestion Charge is now an accepted part of London life and vital to managing traffic in the capital. Without it, current levels of congestion on the road network would almost certainly be far worse. However, the Charge is now less effective than when first introduced and as TfL figures show, it is now managing traffic growth rather than deterring it. It is important to keep any congestion charge under review to ensure that the pricing level is appropriate, and to ensure that it is collected efficiently.

We note that the argument is sometimes made that such charges would discriminate against lower income users, as any fixed charge is inevitable regressive in nature. However it is important to note that people on the lowest incomes are both least likely to own or have use of cars, and are most likely to suffer the ill effects of air pollution. Pensioners, people with disabilities, young people and other groups also have free or discounted access to public transport, reducing their need for car use.

Congestion Charge zones are appropriate in response to specific local needs: for example, a congestion charge has been suggested for Heathrow Airport. However, we believe that other options such as usage-based road pricing and workplace parking levies may provide even more effective options.

Road user pricing reflects the principle that those who contribute to congestion and environmental problems should help pay for the costs to society this causes.

Owner-drivers make a high cost investment in their vehicle, including purchase price, tax, insurance, depreciation and parking, but, fuel apart, do not pay per use: the greater the number of trips, the

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<sup>4</sup>Guided Busway earns national award - joint news release from TfGM and First Manchester  
<https://www.firstgroup.com/greater-manchester/news-and-service-updates/press-media/guided-busway-earns-national-award-joint>

smaller relative cost per trip to the user. This contrasts with the 'pay as you go' model of car clubs, taxis and public transport.

In utilitarian terms, individual motor vehicles are highly inefficient users of road space, compared with buses, cycling or walking, yet there is no financial reward or incentive on travellers to make that choice. In addition, the lack of a 'pay as you go' model for road transport means that motor vehicles do not pay the cost of their social and environmental impact in terms of carbon emissions, air pollution, noise, community severance or road maintenance.

A usage-based regime moves closer to the concept of 'mobility as a service' where travellers make smart choices for each journey based on convenience and price, rather than being invested in a single mode.

Past surveys indicate that there is public acceptance of road pricing measures, provided that the scheme tackles congestion and the proceeds are seen to be reinvested in sustainable transport alternatives.<sup>5</sup>

The case is sometimes made that road use charging will unfairly impact lower income households. The evidence of car ownership in London shows that the poorest households will not be the most impacted, because they are least likely to have cars. 46 % of London households do not have a car, and the general trend is for household car access to rise as household income increases. Car ownership is lowest in the lowest income households, with a majority of households at or below London Living Wage income having no car. Car ownership is higher amongst men than women (46 % compared to 34 %). This gap is greater in lower income households.<sup>6</sup>

Following the November 2016 High Court ruling on the adequacy of the Government's plans to tackle air pollution, it is likely that there will be an increase in the number of urban Clean Air Zones and/or Ultra Low Emission Zones.

The introduction of such zones could be combined with congestion charges, allowing the introduction of a vehicle passport for city centres, with potential to incorporate Vehicle Excise Duty, parking charges and other insurance and licensing costs. Such an approach would allow cities to tackle both pollution and congestion in a smart and transparent way, while generating vital revenue for greener transport alternatives. The experience of such zones from cities around the world is positive.

Stockholm introduced a congestion charge in 2006, which as of 2014, has seen an average 20% reduction in traffic levels compared to those projected without the charge being in place. Travel times in the morning peak fell by up to a third, and vehicle emissions in the inner city fell by up to 14%.<sup>7</sup> The Gothenburg congestion charge was introduced following the success of the Stockholm scheme, and saw vehicle numbers entering the zone fall by 12% following its introduction.<sup>8</sup>

Rotterdam's LEZ was extended in January 2016 to affect cars and light duty vehicles, with a ban on diesel vehicles registered before 1 July 2001 and petrol and LPG vehicles registered before 1 July 1992. The impact of this scheme has been to reduce the number of severely polluting cars by half.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> IPPR Charging Forwards 2006 <http://www.ippr.org/publications/charging-forward-a-review-of-public-attitudes-towards-road-pricing-in-the-uk>

<sup>6</sup> TfL Roads Task Force – Technical Note 12 How many cars are there in London and who owns them? 2012 <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/technical-note-12-how-many-cars-are-there-in-london.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> "The Stockholm congestion charges: an overview" Jonas Eliasson, KTH Royal Institute of Technology CTS Working Paper 2014:7 <http://www.transportportal.se/swopec/CTS2014-7.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> "The Gothenburg congestion charge Effects, design and politics" Maria Börjesson – CTS, KTH Royal Institute of Technology & Ida Kristoffersson – CTS, Sweco CTS Working Paper 2014:25 <http://www.transportportal.se/swopec/CTS2014-25.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> ELTIS: New Rotterdam LEZ halves dirty cars in a month <http://www.eltis.org/discover/news/new-rotterdam-lez-halves-dirty-cars-month-netherlands>

Milan's combined congestion charge and LEZ (Ecopass) saw incoming traffic fall by just over 30% while during operating hours, public transport operating speed increased by 5.7% for buses and 4.7% for trams.<sup>10</sup>

### **Parking schemes, including Workplace Parking Levies**

In general, parking controls are well-established as an effective demand management measure, with knock on benefits to reducing congestion, particularly if combined with alternative transport provision.

Bern in Switzerland introduced city-wide parking controls in 1999, as part of a package including residents' parking zones, a reduction of 10% in parking spaces and the introduction of park & ride schemes: this combination saw an average 14% reduction in traffic volumes. The city of Helsinki first introduced similar measures in 1983 which have seen an estimated modal shift of 10-14%.<sup>11</sup>

New technology has enabled parking controls to become much more efficient. City of Westminster Council has adopted a smart parking scheme to discourage the problem of motorists idling in search of parking spaces: a combination of RFID sensors on parking bays to track occupancy, with an app to locate empty spaces. Westminster is now issuing e-permits for residents' parking which can be read by the sensors, enabling efficient enforcement of parking controls.<sup>12</sup>

Workplace Parking Levies can reduce congestion directly, by encouraging commuters to car share or switch modes to reduce their travel costs. They can also reduce congestion indirectly, when the proceeds are invested in good quality public transport, cycling and walking facilities, which in turn reduce traffic volume.

Nottingham's experience is a model for others to follow. Using powers under the Transport Act 2000, the City Council levies an annual charge of £375 (just over £1 a day) on each parking space provided by larger employers (those with 10 or fewer spaces and some categories of employer are exempt). The proceeds are reinvested in public transport, helping fund railway station improvements, new tram lines and city-wide bus services.<sup>13</sup>

Despite initial reservations, the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce acknowledges that Nottingham's economy is thriving with growth in jobs and turnover: traffic levels have fallen, and the city has already achieved its 2020 carbon reduction target.<sup>14</sup>

Oxford and Cambridge are among the cities now considering a Workplace Parking Levy. Other cities are well-placed to introduce a Workplace Parking Levy, particularly in urban centres without congestion charge zones, where this would provide an efficient congestion control mechanism which is currently lacking and where good public transport is already in place.

Such a scheme would be an important contribution to managing demand, tackling both congestion and pollution and providing a dedicated revenue stream that could be shared with local authorities, Business Improvement Districts or strategic landowners to enhance public transport and the public realm to mutual benefit.

Local planning can play an important part in managing demand for road space. New developments can not only lead to an increase in densities, they also offer the opportunity to create a positive

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<sup>10</sup> Milan Area C monitoring report [www.comune.milano.it/wps/portal/ist/it/servizi/mobilita/Area\\_C/risultati\\_attesi](http://www.comune.milano.it/wps/portal/ist/it/servizi/mobilita/Area_C/risultati_attesi)

<sup>11</sup> "Parking controls: evidence on performance": Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds

<sup>12</sup> Westminster Smart Parking <http://www.smartparking.com/keep-up-to-date/case-studies/city-of-westminster-london-uk>

<sup>13</sup> Tracks: Workplace Parking Levy Briefing <http://cbtthoughtleadership.org.uk/WPL-Briefing-Nottingham.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> CityMetric: Why other cities should copy Nottingham's revolutionary parking levy August 2016 <http://www.citymetric.com/transport/why-other-cities-should-copy-nottinghams-revolutionary-parking-levy-2382>

congestion dividend. This can be achieved by controlling on-site parking, which if provided at levels lower than previously provided on the site can reduce the number of motor vehicle trips it generates, helping to alleviate congestion the local road network.

Parking restraint in new housing developments has multiple benefits, in addition to reducing congestion by reducing the number of cars on the road: it makes better use of development sites for housing, providing more new homes and reducing pressure on greenfield sites; it reduces land costs per unit, allowing for more affordable housing within viability constraints; it stimulates the local economy for goods and services; it promotes healthier active lifestyles; and it reduces the environmental impact of new developments in terms of carbon and air quality effects.<sup>15</sup>

Car club provision is an increasingly popular alternative to individual car ownership, particularly in larger towns and cities, and makes efficient use of both parking and road space.<sup>16</sup>

### **Cycling and walking infrastructure**

The environmental, economic and health benefits of walking and cycling are well established. In addition, better provision for walking and cycling is effective in tackling congestion.

The Government's draft Cycling and Walking Investment strategy sets out the multiple benefits that better provision for cycling and walking can bring, for public health, the economy and the environment, in addition to the benefits of reduced congestion.

Dedicated cycling routes and an improved public realm for pedestrians, provide the supportive environment that encourages modal shift. This was confirmed by a 2016 study of the health benefits of new cycling and walking routes which found that changing the environment, rather than changing perceptions, appears to be key to changing people's physical activity through active travel.<sup>17</sup>

It is sometimes argued that reallocating road space from motor traffic for walking and cycling will increase congestion. The opposite is the case. The FLOW project studied the impact of walking and cycling in reducing congestion looking at twenty schemes across eighteen EU cities and New York. Ten of the schemes reduced congestion, eight were congestion-neutral: only two schemes increased congestion.<sup>18</sup>

In the case of dedicated cycle routes introduced in New York, key routes saw improved traffic flow as a result of modal shift reducing the number of cars, combined with safer and more efficient junctions: for example, travel times on 8th Avenue improved by an average of 14 %.<sup>19</sup>

The experience from London's Cycle Superhighways and Mini-Holland schemes is that while construction works inevitably cause some temporary disruption, the impact once operational is positive. The Walthamstow Mini Holland scheme found an average 56% decrease of traffic volumes on roads within the scheme, and an overall decrease of 16% in traffic volumes across the area as a whole.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> 'Car free developments', Healthy Places <http://www.healthyplaces.org.uk/themes/promoting-active-communities/active-places/promoting-car-free-developments/>

<sup>16</sup> 'Car clubs in housing developments', CarPlus <http://www.carplus.org.uk/what-is-shared-mobility/car-sharing-clubs/car-clubs-and-housing-developments/>

<sup>17</sup> Sustrans: "Fit for Life" [www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/files/Sustrans%20Fit%20for%20Life.pdf](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/files/Sustrans%20Fit%20for%20Life.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> FLOW The Role Of Walking And Cycling In Reducing Congestion A Portfolio Of Measures [http://h2020-flow.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/FLOW\\_REPORT\\_-\\_Portfolio\\_of\\_Measures\\_v\\_06\\_web.pdf](http://h2020-flow.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/FLOW_REPORT_-_Portfolio_of_Measures_v_06_web.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> New York City Department of Transportation (2014). Protected Bicycle Lanes in NYC. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2014-09-03-bicyclepath-data-analysis.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> LB Waltham Forest <http://www.enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/work-in-your-area/walthamstow-village/comparison-of-vehicle-numbers-before-and-after-the-scheme-and-during-the-trial/>

We strongly support measures to extend pedestrianisation to urban high streets, along with improved networks of walking and cycling routes between local centres and across cities. This must be co-ordinated with bus route planning and design to deliver an integrated public transport system that complements active travel options.

Transport for Greater Manchester, Transport for London and TravelWest all include walking routes in their online journey planners. Walkit.com is one example of an online mapping tool that makes it easier to find the best walking routes around towns across the UK. Providing guidance to all local authorities to provide prominent and easy access to similar tools through their websites would be a useful step.

On roads with traffic, locating crossings at 'desire lines', improving pedestrian crossings with "all green" phases and providing crossing time countdowns, all facilitate pedestrian movement in a way that reduces conflict with motor traffic. The initial trial of crossing time countdowns in London showed reduced traffic queues as well as improved pedestrian safety.<sup>21</sup> Local authority 20mph zones help tackle congestion by improving the capacity of existing roads, in addition to their proven safety and environmental benefits.<sup>22</sup>

### **Street-running trams**

Trams reduce congestion in cities by providing people with a quick, reliable, high-quality alternative to the car. They provide good connectivity into urban centres and integrate well with other forms of public transport.

The number of people using trams has increased by 52% since 1999. Street running trams are now part of the transport network in a number of cities, including Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham, London (Croydon) and Edinburgh.

Trams have higher capacity per vehicle than buses, and being electric, run on low carbon fuel and offer zero emissions at roadside, offering benefits in terms of tackling carbon reduction and air quality as well as congestion. The loss of general road space to tram use is more than outweighed by the benefits in terms of reduced congestion.

At least 22 million car journeys a year no longer happen in the UK because of trams. On average, one in five peak hour passengers on UK trams previously travelled by car. At the weekends, half of the tram passengers used to travel by car.<sup>23</sup>

Trams reduce road traffic on average by up to 14%: the Croydon tramlink experience is that a modal shift from car use as high as 20% can be achieved.<sup>24</sup>

Trams are an urban success story: this is underlined by recent planning approvals for extensions in the tram networks serving Manchester, Birmingham and Nottingham.

However there is unmet potential for trams elsewhere. Leeds is the largest city in Europe without a tram, following a 2005 rejection by the Department for Transport on cost grounds. The 2010 report of the All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group made a number of recommendations as to how the

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<sup>21</sup> Transport Research Laboratory (2011). Pedestrian Countdown at Traffic Signal Junctions (PCaTS) - Road Trial <http://tfl.gov.uk/cdn/static/cms/documents/PCaTS-Note-3-PCaTS-Trial-Results-Report.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> 20's Plenty: 20mph Limits Save Time And Improve Traffic Flow [http://www.20splenty.org/20mph\\_limits\\_save\\_time\\_and\\_improve\\_traffic\\_flow](http://www.20splenty.org/20mph_limits_save_time_and_improve_traffic_flow)

<sup>23</sup> What Light Rail Can Do For Cities, Steer Davies Gleave [www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/WhatLightRailCanDoforCitiesMainText\\_0218.pdf](http://www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/WhatLightRailCanDoforCitiesMainText_0218.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Tram, trolley or guided bus: what are the best choices for London? London Assembly Transport Committee <http://www.robain.com/Tram%20Trolley%20or%20Guided%20Bus.pdf>

appraisal process for trams could be improved to more fairly compare the costs and benefits of light rail with other transport modes, as well as reforming the cost regime for utilities works.<sup>25</sup>

### **Use of innovative traffic management technologies**

Technology offers a range of solutions to congestion: real time information and smartcards make sustainable modes more accessible and attractive, while big data can assist in traffic management and transport planning.

We commend the work of the Smarter Travel Forum, which brings together a range of transport and technology industry partners to develop solutions, for example, making use of mobile phone traffic patterns to help model transport demand.<sup>26</sup>

Gothenburg has adopted a comprehensive Smart City approach, using a range of apps to manage electric bike hire schemes, low emission delivery vehicles, as well as sharing data with private sector partners to deliver integrated transport such as electric buses and park & ride services across neighbouring local authorities.<sup>27</sup>

Modern traffic technology and effective enforcement of highways rules will continue to play a role in managing congestion. Examples of how technology can assist are found across all modes.

For example, bus priority measures that maintain bus service reliability, combined with real time travel information apps, are a vital part of promoting public transport and reducing congestion. As mentioned above, Westminster's Smart Parking scheme uses RFID sensors to detect parking infringements.

There are a number of innovative approaches that can assist with tackling congestion from delivery vehicles, for example sharing apps can maximise the use of empty capacity on return trips for backloads.

New technology enables better deployment of established travel management techniques such as travel planning for individuals and organisations, particularly geared around travel generators. Substantial work has been done with schools, employers, leisure facilities, hospitals and new residential developments, which has seen a reduction in single occupancy car use at these locations.

This approach was exemplified by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund: Campaign for Better Transport has shown that interventions funded by the LSTF have had strong economic benefits in addition to social, health and environmental impacts.<sup>28</sup> We believe that the LSTF experience should be built on with the Government's proposed Access Fund but note that this currently has limited funding.

### **Congestion from delivery vehicles**

Freight is a major component of urban congestion. Light goods vehicles (delivery vans) now make up 13 % of all motorised urban traffic.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Light Rail & the City Regions Inquiry Final Report February 2010  
<http://www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/PTEGLightRailReportFINAL2010.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Smarter Travel Forum <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/smarter-travel-forum>

<sup>27</sup> OptiCitiesGothenburg <http://www.opticities.com/pilot-cities/gothenburg/>

<sup>28</sup> Improving local transport helps the economy – experience from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund  
<http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/Improving%20local%20transport%20helps%20the%20economy%20-%20experience%20from%20the%20LSTF.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Cabinet Office (2009) An analysis of urban transport.

Online purchasing has grown from 9.4 % of the UK retail market in 2010 to 16.8 % in 2016. Unlike shopping in person, there is no incentive to combine purchases in a single delivery and there is a negative cycle of delivery companies deploying additional vehicles to achieve contracted delivery times, thereby worsening congestion.

To address this, we advocate an accelerated rollout of smarter last mile delivery and area-wide servicing plans, to co-ordinate delivery times and promote shared use of vehicles.

The 'Total Transport' concept of co-ordinating shared use of vehicles from different public sector providers could be applied to delivery vehicles operating in particular areas. There is growing interest in sharing apps which can partner empty vehicles with freight to make best use of return trips: local transport authorities could act as an honest broker to assist smaller businesses to access such services.

Encouraging the use of local and hyper-local consolidation hubs for neighbourhoods, housing estates, town centres, or business districts, is a cost-effective approach to manage deliveries, which, combined with the use of ultralow or zero emission last mile delivery vehicles (for example cargo bikes or electric shuttles), addresses both congestion and pollution.

In Gothenburg, the City Delivery scheme provides a central HGV terminal from which city centre deliveries are completed by electric van and delivery bikes.<sup>30</sup> In London, Regents Street has pioneered a similar approach, with a consolidation centre outside the congestion charge zone where multiple deliveries are transferred to electric vehicles for scheduled delivery: the scheme has seen an 80% reduction in retail lorry movements.<sup>31</sup>

Employers can play a role by discouraging workplace delivery of personal shopping: some large organisations report that around a third of the deliveries made to their central London offices are private deliveries from on-line shopping.

There is great potential for consumer rail freight, which reduces road congestion and air pollution. Two important trials have brought trainloads of freight into London Euston at night when the station is closed for passenger services, then transferred to electric or low emission delivery vehicles. A similar approach has been adopted by Monoprix in Paris. Products are brought by rail from suburban warehouses to the Paris-Bercy freight facility, and low emission gas-powered delivery vehicles complete delivery to 90 Monoprix stores across the city.<sup>32</sup>

There is suppressed demand for rail freight due to lack of capacity on the rail network. We commend the rollout of W12 gauge rail to accommodate international freight as an alternative to larger HGVs. Rail freight between cities has much better potential for reducing congestion by using smaller vehicles for 'last mile' delivery than long distance road freight using larger lorries for door-to-door delivery.

As combined authorities set out overarching spatial planning as well as transport planning across city regions, it is imperative that this includes the need protect future potential sites for rail freight interchanges of all sizes.

### **Managing disruption to local communities and businesses during construction and operation**

Construction works are a major cause of congestion, albeit a temporary one. The latest annual INRIX congestion scorecard attributes reduced congestion levels in Birmingham to the completion of some

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<sup>30</sup> City of Gothenburg Urban Logistics <http://forlivochrorelse.se/en/sustainable-transport/urban-logistics/>

<sup>31</sup> Arup Regent Street delivery and servicing reduction scheme  
[http://www.arup.com/projects/regent\\_street\\_delivery\\_and\\_servicing\\_reduction\\_scheme](http://www.arup.com/projects/regent_street_delivery_and_servicing_reduction_scheme)

<sup>32</sup> PTEG Delivering the future report <http://www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/Delivering%20the%20future%20FINAL%20020315.pdf>

major development projects, while worsening congestion in London is attributed in part to the impact of major planned roadworks, citing a 362 % increase since 2012.<sup>33</sup>

Good advance information and advice on alternative routes (including alternative modes, not simply alternative road routes) are essential to manage congestion from planned construction works.

UK operators could consider adopting the Dutch ‘Minder Hinder’ approach: this holistic approach to managing major roadworks includes publicising and incentivising alternative modes as well as alternative routes and working with major employers and attractions nearby to stagger arrival times and provide discounts for customers using public transport.<sup>34</sup>

For utilities works on the highway, lane rental schemes are a good way to manage disruption by incentivising better co-ordination and rapid completion of works.

The London Lane Rental scheme levies a charge on road works at peak times in key locations on Transport for London roads, with higher charges at pinch points. Revenue is reinvested in traffic management infrastructure such as the rollout of ANPR. We support the principle that operators should pay a contribution reflecting the impact of their work on the road network and incentivising working at the least disruptive times.

TfL’s monitoring reports show that the Lane Rental Scheme had a significant impact in reducing congestion caused by roadworks in its first two years of operation (2012-2014). The scheme coverage was later reviewed with fewer roads included. The most recent report (2014-15) shows that journey time reliability has deteriorated across the network, including areas where the Lane Rental Scheme is operating, reflecting the overall growth in traffic.<sup>35</sup>

The scheme should continue to be reviewed to ensure that priority routes, in particular bus routes, are included. To be made more effective, the scheme could be extended through partnership working and better co-ordination to borough roads, with the aim of avoiding simultaneous works on parallel routes.

In addition to roadworks, there is a significant impact from adjacent construction sites taking over parts of the public highway with scaffolding or hoarding. There is an important role for local planning authorities to play in enforcing the Considerate Constructors Scheme as part of all planning consents.

Local highways authorities should be rigorous in issuing, monitoring and enforcing licences for works on the highway to ensure these are only issued as a last resort and that time limits are adhered to.

There is a wide variation in the costs charged for such licences between different local authorities, reflecting different local economic and policy environments, as this sample shows.

<b>Local authority</b>	<b>Cost of 1 month hoarding licence (from individual council websites)</b>
Bristol	£52
Derby	£156
Leeds	£148.30 (plus inspection fee)
Liverpool	£90
London (TfL roads)	Estimated £150 (£300 for ten weeks)
Milton Keynes	£49
Newcastle	£55
Surrey	£104

<sup>33</sup> INRIX 2015 Traffic Scorecard <http://inrix.com/scorecard/>

<sup>34</sup> Learning From The Dutch: Improving Customer Experience During Roadworks <http://www.highways-uk.com/content/huk/docs/ib1-improving-customer-experience-during-roadworks.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Transport for London Lane Rental Scheme Monitoring Report – July 2014 to March 2015 <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/lane-rental-monitoring-report-july-2014-mar-2015.pdf>

By better phasing of construction, developers may be able to contain more of the works within their site boundaries, and this should be incentivised by reviewing costs for highways licences.

### **Construction and operating costs**

Local authorities face constant criticism over the state of the roads, with an estimated £12bn backlog cost of pothole repairs. The £250M Pothole Action Fund is welcome, but does not address the backlog in local roads repairs, on the roads most used for cycling and walking.

This vital maintenance funding contrasts with the larger sums allocated for feasibility works, design and build of new roads, often with funding passed through Local Enterprise Partnerships, creating an unsustainable divergence between the pressure to provide new road capacity and the ability to maintain what is already there.

Potholes caused by poor road maintenance pose a particular risk to cyclists and make conditions unpleasant for pedestrians. A proportion of the proposed Roads Fund from ring-fenced VED should be devolved to local highways authorities, including Transport for London, earmarked directly for delivery of better bus lanes, cycling and walking routes as well as to assist with road maintenance and improvement beyond the Strategic Road Network.

It is important that the construction cost regime for different transport infrastructure modes is reviewed, for example to address the bias against light rail (which has to pay higher costs for utilities works) as opposed to road and heavy rail schemes.

There is also the issue of costs to individual users which inform their transport choices. Public transport offers multiple benefits including reducing congestion, as well as social inclusion, environmental benefits, linking people to jobs and services, and creating more liveable cities.

Even if public transport alternatives exist, current fiscal and pricing measures do not always incentivise their use. The rise in cost of public transport including rail continues to outpace inflation (latest rise is 1.9%), while motoring costs have fallen sharply, despite clear trends showing falling car usage and suppressed demand for increased capacity for rail services (a major solution to congestion).<sup>36</sup>

### **Approaches to cost-benefit calculations**

We share the concerns raised by the Technical Advisers Group (TAG) and others in their evidence that conventional cost-benefit calculations as currently applied tend to favour large scale road schemes disproportionately to their ability to deliver sustainable transport policy goals.

Construction costs of schemes outside congested urban areas tend to be lower, skewing cost benefit calculations in favour of improving connectivity between cities – thereby adding to local congestion – rather than favouring high volume public transport infrastructure within cities, which reduces congestion and serves many more people.

The value of travel time is given too much weight, despite evidence that commuters will take the benefit afforded by reduced travel time as an increase in their acceptable travel to work area, rather than as a direct time saving. Congestion relief achieved through increasing road capacity will extend

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<sup>36</sup> Independent Transport Commission: Recent trends in road and rail travel: What do they tell us? <http://www.theitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/OTM2-Policy-Analysis.pdf>

the catchment area and so be temporary as a larger pool of users accesses the road, contributing to the well-known phenomenon of induced traffic.<sup>37</sup>

Critical environmental policy goals and legislative requirements – including carbon reduction, cleaning up air pollution and reversing the decline in native species biodiversity – are given insufficient weight in scheme cost appraisal, while the additional benefits unlocked by improved access to homes and jobs through public transport are insufficiently valued.

### **Implications for the sustainability of the market for provision of bus services**

Cuts to bus frequencies; and increases in bus fares, mean that passenger numbers fall off, justifying further service reductions, and bus services fall into a spiral of decline. The rise of ridesharing apps such as Uber is also a threat to the bus industry. It doesn't have to be this way – there is an alternative to managed decline.

There are many examples of places both in the UK and beyond where bus use has seen significant increases. We support a range of options in the Bus Services Bill and your Committee's proposals in its report to which we contributed evidence. We believe that enhanced local authority – operator partnerships can increase bus use and thereby reduce congestion, but we also believe that some forms of franchising have their place and powers for local authorities to introduce franchising should be available.

Franchising is often equated with practice in London. Transport for London (TfL) has managed franchised bus services since 1985, and has seen bus usage more than double since then: more bus journeys now take place in London than in the whole of the rest of England. It is difficult to separate out the causes of this – the role of London's population growth, transport funding levels and other factors is undeniable – but TfL's powers to plan a bus network as a whole and to set standards and fares has undoubtedly played a part in the growing London bus passenger numbers. However, London bus passenger numbers have recently fallen, partly as a result of congestion (as noted above).

There are other forms of franchising. The States of Jersey also introduced franchising three years ago, using a very different model to London. There, bus passenger numbers have risen by a third since franchising was introduced in 2013; the level of subsidy required has reduced by £800 thousand per year, five new routes have been introduced and frequencies have improved on some routes. Bus services which used to only run in the summer now run all year round.<sup>38</sup>

Franchising will not be the right model for everywhere, but the new powers in the Bill for franchising and partnerships have the potential to greatly improve bus services for hundreds of thousands of people in England, as well as to benefit the economy, the environment, and wellbeing.

### **The safety of road users, particularly cyclists and pedestrians**

We welcome the aim set in the Government's draft Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy of improving the safety and reliability of walking and cycling journeys.

Walking and cycling are not intrinsically dangerous activities, nor is the behaviour of walkers and cyclists their main risk. The danger comes from external environmental factors to which people are exposed while walking and cycling and which must be addressed.

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<sup>37</sup> David Metz: the myth of travel time saving [http://transportblog.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/Metz\\_2008-2.pdf](http://transportblog.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/Metz_2008-2.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Practical bus franchising: the Jersey model, HCT Group <http://hctgroup.org/uploaded/Practical%20bus%20franchising%20-%20the%20Jersey%20model.pdf>

Air pollution is currently at illegally dangerous levels, with emissions from diesel vehicles the main offender. Enabling and encouraging clean air zones, low emission zones and other vehicle restrictions by local authorities is a vital step to providing a safer and more attractive environment for walking and cycling.

HGVs are five times more likely than cars to be involved in fatal crashes on local roads. We support moves to ban HGVs which do not comply with the safest all round visibility designs. We are extremely concerned by current DfT trials of longer HGVs: if continued these would increase the maximum length of HGVs by 2.05m, allowing lorries up to 18.55m on UK roads. The risks to cyclists and pedestrians posed by the increased tail swing and blind spots from longer lorries and we urge the Government to reconsider this dangerous step.

More generally, we believe that there is a need to manage the movement of larger lorries in urban areas and on local roads, so as to reduce the likelihood of conflict with vulnerable road users. Consolidation centres, freight access schemes and schemes like the Freight Operator Recognition Scheme in London need to be more generally promoted by the Government.

We applaud the aim in the draft Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy of seeing streets as “civilised places where people come first” and commend the approach set out in the Manual for Streets. We look forward to see this approach taken forward in other policies such as Highways England’s Accessibility Strategy, and updated IAN design guidance for walking and cycling provision on major roads, building on the work of the Cycle Proofing Working Group.

Traditionally, congestion has only really been thought about as that affecting road traffic, but pedestrians and even cyclists can suffer congestion if facilities are provided that are too narrow or blocked by a whole myriad of street furniture making navigation of a space difficult or unpleasant.

This not only has a negative social and equalities impact, it can also be bad for the local economy. Good street design combined with careful control of additional features such as A-boards and wheelie bins are essential if street congestion is to be minimised and safety for pedestrians and particularly vulnerable pedestrians such as those with sensory or physical impairments.

We support calls for a 20mph default limit in residential areas. Consistent slower speeds can ease flow and contribute to congestion relief and improved air quality as well as providing safer streets that encourage active travel.

For 20mph roads to be relied on as a safe space for walking and cycling, particularly for children, adult novices and the elderly, more priority needs to be given to enforcement of the speed limits and appropriate guidance to police and magistrates that breaching such limits is seen as a serious offence.

### **Land use planning**

We would also highlight the importance of linking land use planning to sustainable transport planning, to deliver good growth; that is, to accommodate growth in homes, jobs, and economic activity, without equivalent growth in traffic and congestion.

Key to this is locating new homes and jobs near public transport links and ensuring any new urban extensions are designed around high quality public transport, walking and cycling routes from the start. A range of measures can make a positive contribution, such as rolling out the approaches developed in London (PTAL) and South Yorkshire (LUTI) to ranking sites for development based on their access to public transport.

### **Conclusion**

Congestion is bad for the health and well-being – physical, mental, environmental, social, and economic - of local communities and for the people who live, work or visit there.

Happily there is a range of practical measures and policy solutions that can help address this, tackling congestion and delivering smarter, greener growth, and more liveable towns and cities.

December 2016

Bridget Fox

Campaign for Better Transport

Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. Achieving our vision requires substantial changes to UK transport policy which we aim to achieve by providing well-researched, practical solutions that gain support from both decision-makers and the public.

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