

Transport Committee

Oral evidence: [National Networks National Policy Statement](#), HC 903

Wednesday 19 July 2023

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Members present: Iain Stewart (Chair); Mike Amesbury; Jack Brereton; Sara Britcliffe; Ruth Cadbury; Paul Howell; Karl McCartney; Grahame Morris, Gavin Newlands.

Questions 64–101

Witnesses

I: Steve Gooding, Director, RAC Foundation; Martin Tugwell, Chief Executive, Transport for the North; and Julian Worth, Chair of Rail Freight Forum, Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Transport for the North](#)



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Steve Gooding, Martin Tugwell and Julian Worth.

Q64 **Chair:** Welcome to the Transport Committee. We will start with the usual procedural point: for the purposes of the record, will you state your name and organisation, please, starting with Julian?

Julian Worth: I am Julian Worth of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. I chair the rail freight forum and am a member of several cross-modal policy groups within the institute.

Martin Tugwell: I am Martin Tugwell, chief executive of Transport for the North.

Steve Gooding: I am Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation.

Q65 **Chair:** Thank you all very much for your time this morning. We are using the abbreviation “triple NPS”, because otherwise it is a bit of a tongue twister. I will start with a general question to each of you.

As we look at the review, what did your organisation want from the draft policy, and does the draft deliver on it?

Julian Worth: I think that there is a lot to like in it, and the section on strategic rail freight interchanges is excellent, with a few minor qualifications. We all get the fundamental importance of the strategic networks to the economy and society, but I think that our overriding reaction to it, and our disappointment, was that it is not sufficiently radical on decarbonisation.

Given that transport is now the biggest emitter of carbon in society, one might have expected a more focused and radical approach to the fundamental climate change problems that we face. It is clearly not an easy conundrum, balancing the other programmes against carbon, but given that the transport decarbonisation plan was a really good start to what the Government intend to do, and that that was followed up very well by the “Future of freight” policy document, one might have expected to see more of a move on with the NPS, particularly as it will take us through to the sixth carbon budget period in 2033-37, by which time we are supposed to have had a 77% reduction in the carbon we emit—so we will be halfway to net zero 2050 by the end of the period that the NNNPS covers.

Of course, the SRN, in particular, is a major emitter of carbon. Probably about 12% to 15% of all UK emissions of carbon are generated by the SRN, and that will increase as local short-distance transport increasingly switches to battery and other sources of power.

We felt there was more to be done in terms of the critical decarbonisation aspects of where we should go under the NNNPS.

Q66 **Chair:** Thank you. I will pick up on some of those points in a minute. Martin, what is your general view of the review?



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Martin Tugwell: Building on what Julian said, I think it is a step in the right direction. Our concern would be whether it gives the sense of urgency and pace for the change in the way we invest in infrastructure. If you are going to embed the “vision and validate” philosophy in thinking about how you identify priorities, you have to have a real sense of where we are trying to get to, and why investment is going to help in getting there.

The other thing that struck us particularly was that in some ways it is still quite modal in its considerations. We need to invest in both the road and the rail networks, moving forward. There might be different types of investment in some of those networks, but it is about how the investments in the two work together to deliver economic, social and environmental outputs.

There is more that could be done within the NNNPS to set out where the outcome is. What are the objectives that we are trying to achieve for the transport system, and what needs to be invested in either the road or rail network to help us to get there?

Steve Gooding: I suspect I have been invited here because you need a little ray of sunshine. I will do my best on that.

I think that the team has done a very good job. I was involved in the creation of the first NNNPS, back in the days when I was an official. I think they have done a good job in updating it.

I think it is comprehensive. I was part of a panel that published a report earlier this year, with professors who said that key questions need to be answered specifically in relation to road investment. I have been through the document, and those questions are posed, so we are happy about that.

It is up to date, which it desperately needed to be, post Paris and post some of the challenges that my colleagues giving evidence have mentioned.

It is important, certainly from the foundation’s perspective, that the document emphasises the importance of transport links for supporting the economy and giving us the quality of life that we aspire to.

A lot of the debate that I have seen about this, and some of the points that have been raised with the Committee, run more to process than the NNNPS itself—the Government’s aspiration and ambition. I take the point that there is always a case for looking at whether, in discussing roads separately from rail, more could be done to think about connectivity in the round.

If there is one thing I would like to have seen mentioned—the word is not there—it is “transparency”. I accept that that is more of a process point than a content point, but it is about some of the issues that have arisen in the last couple of years over DCO processes. Things might have gone more smoothly had promoters been a bit more open a bit sooner. That



could have been encouraged in the NNNPS that we have in front of us as a draft.

- Q67 **Chair:** Thank you. In a previous session we had some debate about whether it is wise to have individual policy statements for each mode—picking up on Martin’s point about the intermodal aspect. Is there a missed opportunity here—Martin, you alluded to this—to look right across the modes, or is it wise to keep it individually on each mode of transport?

Martin Tugwell: If I take as an example, Chair, the trans-Pennine routes between the west and east coast, we have the M62 providing the strategic road network—it is an important road link—but also the trans-Pennine rail links, north and south. Understanding how those operate as a system is really important. I suspect that Julian might have a view about how we maximise the rail freight, for example, port to port, from Liverpool across to the Humber. That has implications for the type of investment you might make on the M62. It does not remove the need to continue to invest in maintaining the resilience and reliability of the M62, but if you think about unlocking economic growth and potential, and how you decide to invest in those road and rail corridors to achieve a common objective—connecting the west and east coast of the north—that suggests to me a need to look at it in the round, rather than individually.

- Q68 **Chair:** Julian, would you speak up on your point about it being good as far as it goes but there being a missed opportunity to look at decarbonisation targets? What would it look like if it was in its ideal form, for you?

Julian Worth: Instead of something that feels like more of the same with a few tweaks, there would be a much more fundamental approach, picking up the TDP imperative.

On the point you asked Martin about, surely, at policy level, at least, there needs to be a cross-modal, pan-modal approach. Delivery, of course, can come down to modal-specific things, but, certainly in a time of constrained financing, we need to decide how and where we spend our money, and we need to do that transparently.

Both in terms of the policy objectives and how we transmit those into action on the ground, this pan-modality is a really key part. For example, National Highways and Network Rail did a very good study on the A34 corridor from Southampton to the midlands, highlighting where the best and most cost-effective opportunities were to invest in each of the modes. That is the sort of thing that probably ought to be standard practice going forward. We would like to see in the policy document that all those major corridors were assessed on a pan-modal basis to determine where the best BCR lay for the country and community.

That leads into the SRFI piece, about interchanges between road and rail, and their critical importance to the functioning of the freight and logistics system in the UK. It is perhaps worth noting one statistic: the warehousing stock in the UK is about 40,000 warehouses, and less than half of 1% are over 500,000 square feet, but they represent 10% of the



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total floor area. In the next category, of 250,000 square feet, 2% of the buildings represent 20% of the warehouse floor space in the UK. That tells you how important they are in terms of transport and logistics, and how many lorries or container movements they generate. We need to look at that in the round. Business looks at logistics and supply chains in a multimodal, pan-modal way, and probably it would help if Government did the same.

Chair: Thank you. Karl, you want to come in with a supplementary.

Q69 **Karl McCartney:** I do, Chairman, very much. Julian, I would love to talk to you about supply chains, but I want to pick you up on some of the stats that you threw out in the introductory comments. You talked about pollution. Yes, on pollution per se, I think we all accept that 50% of the pollution in this country is caused by domestic heating boilers. Talking about CO₂ though, you just lumped transport all together. Do you know the breakdown of CO₂, which is not a major part of the air we breathe, that is down to road or rail transport, as opposed to aviation or shipping?

Julian Worth: Yes. Rail is about 1% of emissions, for about 10% of passenger transport and 9% of freight transport. Road is about 30%. It varies a little bit, but I think we can take 30% as a reasonable sort of cut mark. Then, within that, the SRN is about a third of all traffic movements and two thirds of HGV movements. Of course, it is HGVs that are particularly heavy emitters of carbon, because of their weight and the distance that they travel. That is how we can derive that 12% to 15%, broadly, of all national carbon emissions are generated on the SRN.

Q70 **Karl McCartney:** Do you accept that shipping and aviation—but obviously shipping is the biggest?

Julian Worth: Absolutely. Yes, they are both massive challenges, but given that the NNNPS is about road and rail and not sea and air—

Karl McCartney: That was the point I was trying to get to. Thank you very much indeed. Thank you, Chair.

Q71 **Chair:** Before I turn to other colleagues to pick up some more specific issues, in general terms do you think that the draft NNNPS will give the industry that relies on the national networks the stability and assurance it needs?

Julian Worth: In a word, no, because logisticians and business are looking for more certainty about which way the infrastructure of this country is going, in terms of how they plan and design supply chains.

On road, the really desperate wish now is to see a clear charging strategy rolled out, both at depots and warehouses and on motorway service areas, and on rail it is for some clear indications about electrification. The private sector stands ready to invest many hundreds of millions of pounds in electric locomotives, but cannot possibly do that unless there is an assurance about infrastructure on which to use them. Otherwise, it will be left with stranded assets.



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Some of the work that we have been doing recently about the cost of electrification brings down the cost substantially to about a third of what Great Western cost, and about half of what is being achieved in Scotland. We are getting to the point where electrification is perhaps more achievable and affordable for the country than it was previously perceived to be.

These are key decisions. The lack of clarity on these decisions is holding back business investment, in terms of how businesses themselves want to decarbonise.

Q72 Chair: Steve and Martin, do you have any additional points?

Steve Gooding: I think the point is whether we are talking about private investment or in some sense state-supported investment. The thing to remember is that we are citing the NNNPS as part of a bigger framework and the sense that I get from my contacts—I am also a vice-president of CILT—is that, yes, businesses would like the certainty that the Government are in favour of adding road and rail transport capacity as a way of supporting the economy, but they would also like to know how much money the Government have, if we do promote schemes, to support them.

I get a sense that there is more uncertainty budgetarily than over whether the Government would stand behind particular schemes.

The other point is, of course, that ultimately a lot of the arguments that happened were because of the relative weights that are applied, in particular, to environmental detriment or—to take Stonehenge as an example—damage to architecture or ancient monuments. Can we give certainty on that? No. That is why we are having a DCO process. Somebody has to weigh up whether all the correct things have been taken into account. There will always be a judgment to be made.

Martin Tugwell: I think, from my perspective, there is a conundrum here. We often talk about wanting to make things happen in the here and now, when, actually, we understand the timescales associated with strategic infrastructure.

We are feeding the work that we have done in the north to underpin our regional decarbonisation strategy into the strategic transport plan. We have applied the “vision and validate” approach through things like future travel scenarios, and have understood how you bring together the desire to unlock the economy—helping people to realise their own opportunity, and therefore addressing social exclusion—with doing it in a way that is environmentally sustainable.

You see that there is a need to shift the focus of investment. That is where you get to a point where you can say that, for the north, over the next 30 years we need to double if not triple the rail capacity. We still need to invest in the road network, because it will still be an integral part of it, but it might be a matter of how we use that road capacity. That is why, with investment to support improved local bus connections or active



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travel, you start to get a sense, in the north, of the focus and shift in emphasis that I think you would need to get that kind of confidence in the public and private sectors.

Chair: Thank you. Just before I turn to Jack, Karl, did you have a quick supplementary?

- Q73 **Karl McCartney:** Yes, and I am sorry but I am going to come back to Julian, but only because I think you have a wealth of knowledge. The three of you are talking about strategic decisions and whether the Government or whoever will invest in new railways, as Martin just said, or new roads. That perhaps takes away from putting infrastructure in for electricity charging or running trains or lorries, or whatever. Do you have figures for how much electricity is being used at this point in time on the infrastructure to charge vehicles, compared with if—in my view it is a very big “if”—net zero is reached in 2050? How much electricity would be needed to charge all the vehicles that would supposedly be run on batteries—and railways?

Julian Worth: I do not, but I will happily write to the Committee subsequently and let you have that. Clearly, the direction of travel is a very substantial increase on both modes, and that begs major questions about grid capacity and local feed-in as well. It is probably a bit of a generalisation, but this is probably another issue that could usefully be considered pan-modally—about where the extra feeder stations for the rail network could match up reasonably closely, if not in precisely the same location, with major feeders into the motorway network and other key locations for road.

- Q74 **Karl McCartney:** Would you take less electrification? From Martin’s point of view, I know that an east-west railway running across the northern part of the country is really required, and if the investment for that were to take away electricity infrastructure on the roads or other parts of the rail network, would you prefer that?

Julian Worth: I do not think it is an either/or. I think we have to do both, because clearly both modes will have a role going forward.

- Q75 **Karl McCartney:** You are obviously not an elected politician, then.

Julian Worth: For that, I think I probably apologise.

Martin Tugwell: I might be able to help Mr McCartney on that, because when I was in my previous role working for another sub-national transport body, England’s Economic Heartland, we did a bit of work with—I apologise for the acronym—NISMOD, the national infrastructure systems model. We asked that very question: if we needed to achieve decarbonisation by 2050, what would the impact be on the strategic infrastructure? It is an order of magnitude at this stage, because obviously technology would change it, but for that area we were talking about taking the current domestic energy consumption and doubling it. That doubling was the additional energy supply that you would need to achieve a fully decarbonised transport system and economy.



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As I said, over time, technology will improve the efficiency, so I would not say that you would necessarily need that in 2050, but I think it gives a sense of the order of magnitude.

As to the premise behind your question—dare I say that the Committee might come back to it in a later inquiry?—when at Transport for the North we looked at our EV charging infrastructure, we worked with National Grid, the energy supply companies and the Energy Saving Trust to understand the relationship between what is currently available and what will be needed. Then you get into the role of the Government, to be able to help to join that up through regulatory processes.

Q76 **Karl McCartney:** That is most useful. Thank you very much indeed. Julian has something to say, I think.

Julian Worth: Perhaps as a useful example of that, charging trucks reasonably quickly at motorway service areas requires megawatt charging. That will mean that at motorway service areas the electricity demand for that one location will be roughly the same as the consumption of a small town. Very substantial amounts of power will be required, at locations that are sometimes quite well out in the countryside and not near main transmission lines. It is a massive issue.

Q77 **Karl McCartney:** And there are roughly 100 service areas on our motorway network.

Julian Worth: You could probably hone it down to about 40 or 50 that would really need that sort of area, but it is still a big number.

Q78 **Jack Brereton:** The statement of need says that “at a strategic level there is a compelling need for development of the national networks”. Do you agree?

Julian Worth: Yes, because the economy will continue to grow and the pattern of consumption will continue to change and grow. That will almost inevitably require much more transport. So the mission, if you like—the output—is pretty much a given, I think; but we need to think very carefully about how we satisfy that need.

The document goes quite a reasonable way to doing that. There is a danger of criticising it completely, and that is not the intention, because it is certainly directionally correct in what it says; but I think we need more thought about how we get there. On need, I would not take any fundamental difference with what is said.

Martin Tugwell: I concur. Fundamentally we need to invest in our infrastructure. The point I made earlier that is the most pertinent, here, is about the balance between the various networks to deliver a transport system as a whole. I think that that is the element in the statement of need that worries me a little bit. It is a little bit about road and rail. I think it is about combining that investment to deliver outcomes in terms of the economy, social inclusion or the environment.



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The one aspect of the statement of need that I found a little strange, perhaps because I have been in the business for far too many years, was that it talked about the phenomenon of induced traffic being relatively poorly understood. I seem to remember many a conversation in the late '80s and early '90s about induced traffic and, equally, about what happens when you change the availability of choices. People do make different choices. I thought that was a little surprising, given that we are trying to move to achieving outcomes, rather than thinking about what we have done in the past.

Steve Gooding: I would echo that. I agree that there is a need to invest. I think it is good that the document recognises that investing does not necessarily mean adding physical capacity in the way we might have thought it did 10 or 20 years ago. Indeed, it recognises that schemes might reallocate road space between, say, motor traffic for cars and traffic for coaches and buses—so getting the best out of the network.

I agree with Martin that it rather ducks how, if you add capacity, you manage it in the most efficient way. We could undoubtedly debate for the rest of the day the difference between induced traffic and latent demand, but ultimately there is an issue about adding capacity that quickly fills up. If your ambition was more efficient use of the network and less congestion, more traffic moving more slowly is not really what you want.

Q79 **Jack Brereton:** Do you think—Martin, you might want to come in on this—that there has been enough consideration of the way national networks interact with local networks? Obviously, the document is focused very much on the prioritisation of those national networks, but in many, particularly urban, areas—including mine in Stoke-on-Trent—a lot of the pressure on the strategic network is from its use by local traffic that would probably be better served by more effective local public transport. Do you think that enough consideration is being given to the impact on and interaction with local networks?

Steve Gooding: More could almost certainly always be done. There is a judgment about how much that needs to be up in lights in the NNNPS as opposed to, for example, in the road investment strategy instructions that the Government give to National Highways, the previous two of which have been very clear about the need for a more joined-up approach. Effectively, before National Highways comes to Richard Holden, or Ministers, with a proposal on the national network, the expectation is precisely that it would have gone through the process you describe, to make sure that the proposal makes sense viewed not just from the national network perspective but from a Stoke-on-Trent perspective as well.

Q80 **Jack Brereton:** Martin, you mentioned public transport a minute ago, and the role that it could play in helping to reduce pressures on the national network.

Martin Tugwell: I think it is fair to say that in the time that National Highways has been working on its road investment strategies the



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relationship with TfN and the other sub-national transport bodies has got stronger. I think that that is to be welcomed.

I think we are asking the wrong question. If that road or piece of infrastructure is being used and is delivering high economic value, and it provides a choice that allows businesses to operate, it needs to be put in the context of the other traffic use there.

Q81 Jack Brereton: Businesses do not see it siloed between the local and strategic network. They just think, "How can I get my products from A to B?"

Martin Tugwell: Absolutely, and I think that, again, that is where it comes back to understanding that as a user, whether a business or an individual, you do not differentiate between who owns the piece of infrastructure.

One of my colleagues commented in an earlier inquiry about thinking in terms of strengthening that relationship. The National Highways licence could include an obligation to actively seek the advice of a statutory sub-national transport body, because, through our partners, we are able to make some of the connections more real and understand the relationship—

Q82 Jack Brereton: It would be you as a body, now, taking greater account of some of that local public transport, and the role that that can play.

Martin Tugwell: Absolutely, and that is certainly what we have been building as part of our analytical capability—not just the road and rail networks, but increasingly building into that the networks operated by bus. When it comes to public transport, the local bus networks are far and away the most important contribution. We know they are suffering at the moment. Being able to look at things in the round, but in the context of economic, social and environmental outcomes, gets you away from something for which it sometimes feels the shorthand would be "strategic has to be long-distance". For me, a strategic road delivers economic output, and social and environmental benefits. That is a slightly different lens to look through.

Q83 Jack Brereton: Julian, is there anything further you would like to add?

Julian Worth: There will always be this problem of people using strategic roads for short distances. It is almost impossible to prevent, but the more you can give good alternatives the better it will be. For example, in Oxfordshire, some of the money that has gone in on the back of high-tech industries has been used to very good effect to strengthen the local bus service. That has had a meaningful impact on travel-to-work patterns for things like the local trading estate—particularly with the younger generation. That is worth noting; perhaps they are more open-minded with less ingrained ideas about travel-to-work patterns, and things like that. We are back to the holistic approach to the challenge and problem of transport for passengers and freight.

Q84 Paul Howell: Before I go on to the question, I will develop that thought



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a little, because there seems to me to be a conundrum involving rural traffic patterns, where probably the roads are insufficient, and it is about getting the bus services to go with them, to fill the gap.

That probably leads on to the question I want to ask. The evidence that we have seen is about the NNNPS not really being ambitious enough for rail. We all go back to our own communities, and in north-east England there are certain things on the restoring of railways that we would like, such as the Ferry Road connection that goes back into Middlesbrough and Teesside. That would be game changing because of where it is, but it takes a long time to deliver such things. How do you think we manage that? Is there enough focus on local rail, as a platform for the future? Do you think the rail part of the NNNPS is ambitious enough?

Julian Worth: There are quite strong synergies between local passenger transport in particular and longer-distance opportunities, particularly for freight. In the north-east, the Blyth and Tyne reopening is a good example of that. We had a long-standing mineral railway, which is still functioning as a freight railway and is becoming a key part of the local passenger transport network.

The same is true in south Wales, where the valley lines have morphed from being coal carriers to being commuter carriers into the service industries in south Wales on the coast. We certainly should not look at a piece of infrastructure in a silo, as it were.

I think your point about rural areas is quite interesting because these routes, both road and rail, go through a lot of rural areas, so the pollution and some of the negative effects impact as much on rural as on urban areas.

Q85 **Paul Howell:** To build on the conversation and give direction to it, one of the big connections that is missing from the north-east is the Leamside line project. That could link things like the big Amazon warehouses and those flows. Do you think enough thought has been given to the demographic changes in lifestyle that are driving the need for different warehousing and, therefore, should be driving the need for different transport infrastructures?

Julian Worth: The STVs, of which Martin is one, are really well placed to do that; they are probably better placed than a national policy statement, but there are some national principles that we can lay down.

A lot of freight originates in rural areas; it is not just agriculture and forestry. For example, quarries are in rural areas—you will know Ferryhill—so there are some very important investment and policy decisions about how we incentivise key parts of the transport system like quarries and warehouses with better rail facilities, ideally on site, which in turn can help with other facilities for passengers, whether it is capacity or potentially a new route.

Looking at it in the round is key. We have to prioritise, do we not? We do not have the money to do everything everybody would like to do.



Probably the best way is to look at where the need is greatest. Certainly, with freight logistics, it is the big generators of freight; it is the quarries and the big warehouses that I talked about earlier. If you invest in those, you have a disproportionately large benefit in taking traffic off road and on to rail in a lot of those cases, which frees up more capacity than maybe some of the smaller schemes per se, but it is clearly challenging to go from that national policy perspective through to more localised ones. I genuinely think that the STVs are well placed to do that for the sort of thing you are talking about.

Q86 Paul Howell: One of the challenges, particularly for northern MPs or those outside major conurbations, is the biggest bang for your buck. The biggest bang for your buck that you have referred to is the economic benefit of getting rail moving or decarbonisation of massive traffic flows in a certain area. If you are looking at it from the point of view of social benefit, the impact on users in a specific locality can be disproportionate in saving a few minutes in a rail journey. It always irritates me that on the tube down here we are told it is running late when it is three minutes late.

Julian Worth: Another example, if I may offer one, is the freight electrification programme that we have proposed of about 800 miles. We think that the cost, give or take, is £1.9 billion. Set that against the A303 Stonehenge scheme, which costs £1.7 billion. Therefore, we get 800 miles of rail electrification for one admittedly very big and complex road scheme. That is absolutely not to say that the A303 Stonehenge project should not go ahead, but in terms of bang for buck we need to be cleverer, more sophisticated and pan-modal in how we look at what we spend.

Martin Tugwell: I think it comes back to some of the points we have already covered in response to your question about whether we have been sufficiently ambitious.

The ambition within the NNNPS to be embedding “vision and validate” is really good because it focuses on outcomes. Maybe this is where we can help with our experience in Transport for the North, because we have done that with our regional decarbonisation strategy. We embedded, as part of that, four future travel scenarios looking at four plausible futures, not looking to choose one over the other—that is a matter of choice and how society develops—and started to identify things that you would do under all four scenarios.

What it tells us in the north is that you need to double or triple the capacity of the rail network. You need to invest in the road network because, with economic growth, there will still be that demand for use of the road network, not least the freight and logistics sector. What you start to get is a sense of the emphasis and direction of travel to achieve those outcomes.

On the point about broadening beyond just the economic picture and reducing social exclusion as an economic opportunity, the work that we



have done as Transport for the North, looking at transport-related social exclusion, shows that as of today 3.5 million—nearly 22% of the population—are living in areas at high risk of being excluded from society. They do not have access to basic functions or opportunities.

Therefore, when you start looking at why you are investing, it is not just economics; it is realising that uplifting and giving people opportunities is just as valuable, arguably more valuable, because, if you unlock the north's economic potential you are taking away some of the support you would otherwise need.

We are starting to see the work we are doing being built into some of the analysis. We fed some of the initial work around transport-related social exclusion into the business case work on Northern Powerhouse Rail. Could we do more? Absolutely. Could we do more work around some of the environmental opportunities that the whole agenda brings? Again, absolutely. That is where the NNNPS could point to some of the examples of good practice and things that could be built upon and, with the support and work we have done with the Department, see how we can perhaps push that a little bit further and faster.

Steve Gooding: Coming from the RAC Foundation, I hesitate to comment on rail per se. The document does convey a Government ambition that there should be capacity. I suspect that what is in the mind of the authors is the affordability of that capacity and the desire not to over-stoke ambition for what can actually be delivered. We have to set the NNNPS alongside the Government's instruction and statement of funds available to Network Rail, which is where one might look for the sort of ambition to which some of your witnesses have referred.

Optioneering gets a mention in the report but could be developed a bit further in the NNNPS statement in assuring whoever takes the decision, alongside whether this scheme should or should not get consent—which, after all, is what this is all about—that the path that has led to the scheme has properly weighed up the different options for how that money could best be spent to the public benefit that my colleagues have raised.

Q87 **Paul Howell:** In terms of the vision for the north, you said that there are four different scenarios and that there are certain facets to all four. As for getting on with it, for want of a better phrase, should we be starting on some of those pieces?

A broader question is whether groups across the country are doing similar things to what you are doing in the north and would be in the same place, which we could evaluate at a more national level. I get accused of being too northern-centric at times.

Martin Tugwell: There are two points there. As for getting on with it, I think that is why the NNNPS is quite important. I think we have all agreed on having that need established at national level so that when a promoter takes it forward into delivery you establish the basic need. That is one of the things we have to hold on to in the NNNPS. It is about



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saying that these things are so important for the country; the need for them has been established.

There needs to be a proper process for the alternatives and how you deliver the detail. There needs to be that engagement, as there is for the DCO process, to make sure all the issues and concerns are rightly taken into account and, if necessary, examined. That is why the NNNPS is such an important document, and we need to make sure it delivers.

As for sharing, in England we have seven sub-national transport bodies. TfN is the only statutory one, but we work together. Indeed, we actively work to share our experience and good practice with our colleagues elsewhere. That is something that we do naturally and are encouraged to do by the Department. For example, we have been sharing the work we have been doing on EV charging infrastructure with our colleagues in the other regions to help them to catch up or build upon some of their own ideas and take ours to make collective progress.

Q88 Gavin Newlands: The RAC published a report fairly recently that said that relying on cleaner vehicles to reach net zero by 2050 without reducing car usage or vehicle miles would require a combination of technological factors working in our favour. I think you said that the migration needed to be dramatic to meet those figures. How do you see the draft NNNPS impacting those findings?

Steve Gooding: The starting point is the underlying analysis on which the document rests—the Department for Transport’s projections. Indeed, the Climate Change Committee’s projections are that there needs to be a reduction in road traffic growth, but neither of them has called for an absolute reduction in traffic. That is their best estimate. They have produced ranges that suggest that. Therefore, at scheme level—what the NNNPS is endeavouring to sit behind are decisions at scheme level—the Government’s position is, “We don’t think that at scheme level the traffic impact will be such as to undermine the achievement of our carbon obligations.”

We have said that we do not think there necessarily has to be a reduction in car traffic, which we specifically looked at, to get to where the Climate Change Committee says we need to get to, but certain other things have to be lined up. At the moment, we still have a mountain to climb. The NNNPS does not really admit of the mountain to climb but, in requiring the decision maker to check that all the relevant questions have been asked and addressed by the scheme promoter, that is where that could come out.

Q89 Gavin Newlands: Do you think it is possible or realistic that we will reach those targets for 2050 without a drive to reduce car usage to some degree?

Steve Gooding: I think it is realistic. It is not at all straightforward, and it does require us to tackle the big issue about the take-up of zero tailpipe-emission motor vehicles. We have a big issue with freight, which I suspect the Committee has touched on before. The issue is: how on



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earth do you move freight vehicles around that do not lend themselves to battery propulsion?

As for motor vehicles, Mr McCartney and others have picked up the fact that at the moment plug-in battery electric vehicles look like the winner. There are issues with the supply train, but it is also entirely possible that there could be scientific breakthroughs. A lot of money is being thrown at synthetic fuel and hydrogen. It is plausible, but hard.

Q90 **Gavin Newlands:** Scotland has a target to reduce car usage by the end of the decade by 20%; in Wales it is 10%. Do you think England should have a target to reduce car usage?

Steve Gooding: That is a decision that undoubtedly Mr Holden will discuss with you shortly. Our position is that, based on the analysis we have done, there is nothing that says you absolutely have to do that. The issue goes beyond carbon. The rationale for those targets in Scotland and Wales relates to a whole bunch of things about social and other environmental impacts that the devolved Administrations want to achieve.

Q91 **Gavin Newlands:** I did not expect a different answer from that, but do Martin and Julian have any comments?

Martin Tugwell: It is a very good question to ask, particularly at this moment, because TfN is currently consulting on our revised strategic transport plan. As I touched on, it is driven very much by the economic, social and environmental outcomes.

To help us to drive that change, we have identified in the draft a number of what we call right-share metrics—things we can measure and use as a way of judging how good we are getting on that journey.

Touching on the point I made earlier, one of those metrics is a zero overall regional increase in private car mileage, comparing 2045 with 2018, which is consistent with what I was saying earlier. We need to continue to invest in the road network, but the increase in long-distance capacity and service is in public transport, the rail side.

I think that what you are seeing with the work we are doing in Transport for the North is embedding that “vision and validate”—the outcomes—and using metrics like vehicle kilometrage as a way of measuring our success and progress, to be able to give advice to the Government of the day about what the investment priorities are in a five-year funding investment.

Julian Worth: We underestimate modal shift in this area. We tend to focus on what we can do within each mode. We can do a lot to switch modes. It is difficult with passenger transport because you have millions and millions of individual decision makers with their own motivations, but it can be done. The Elizabeth line is probably quite a good example.



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The elephant in the room is road user charging, which will almost certainly have to come because, as the Treasury's income from fuel duty diminishes, we will have to have another mechanism for charging for use of the roads. That could play a significant part in acting as a regulator in the demand for road transport.

Freight is different because, instead of millions and millions of decision makers, in the UK you probably have about 100 people making decisions on the vast majority of freight that moves on the UK's roads and railways. They are professional, rational people, so you can take policy measures and put in place incentives to induce them to change, and they will if it is sensible from their perspective, which obviously will be bottom line. We should not underestimate the fact that all large companies have very strong ESG policies. They are very amenable to doing the right thing for broader societal and environmental issues, as long as it is not seriously against their economic interests.

Therefore, we could, without undue difficulty, put in place modal switch measures for freight and expect them to be picked up and used, which has been the case in Scotland. Scotland and Wales now have a freight facilities grant, which has been used to very good effect in both countries. Unfortunately, the scheme is suspended in England at the minute, but that is the sort of measure we can use to induce modal switch and take significant numbers of vehicles off the roads.

On the freight side, we have done some analysis in the institute and looked at HGV road movements using DfT statistics. We think that for about one third of all HGV tonne kilometres it is feasible to switch to rail. That is across all roads. It would be higher on the strategic road network because of the prevalence of SRN moves by HGVs.

A more detailed analysis of that and a suite of incentive measures could have a significant impact. It is the sort of thing one would like to see in policy development going forward.

Q92 **Gavin Newlands:** Martin, in your written evidence you suggested that the NNNPS continues "predict and provide". Many have produced something called a predict and provide core surrounded by decarbonisation language, or something to that effect. We have also heard of issues about limited scenario planning within the NNNPS—it would not countenance a reduction in car usage within the NNNPS to see how that would work out. How could the NNNPS reflect a "vision and validate" approach rather than a "predict and provide" approach?

Martin Tugwell: We would be very happy to share our experience in embedding that approach within the strategic transport plan that we have produced with TfN. We did have the development of those future travel scenarios. We worked with our partners to test them. We are obviously working within the remit of achieving nearly net zero by 2045-50.

We have also looked at a lot of evidence to underpin this. We have talked about the economy and environment. We have updated our Northern



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Powerhouse Rail independent economic review. When we say we understand the scale of the economic opportunity, it comes from an evidence base. When we talk about the scale of the opportunity to improve social inclusion, it comes from our work on transport-related social exclusion.

We have these powerful economic, environmental and social pieces of evidence. We know the outcomes that we are trying to achieve because it is about bringing those together. You can then start, as we did with the regional decarbonisation strategy, to drive that into what that means for the big networks.

What are the things that are right and true irrespective of those scenarios? It comes back to the fact that the road network will still have a serious role to play, but how do we use it and do we give it different priorities in different places? We need to increase capacity and have the connection and agglomeration benefits of connecting the great cities and towns of the north. Our objectives or outcomes are best achieved by delivering Northern Powerhouse Rail in full, as originally set out by the TfN board, including the Leamside line for the economic impact it provides.

We have been through a bit of a journey over the past two to three years trying to bring that “vision and validate” approach. In no way would I say we have finished that journey, but there is some experience that perhaps can be shared to help to improve it and get the kind of impetus we need with the NNNPS to achieve the shift, if we are to deliver those outcomes.

Q93 **Gavin Newlands:** Finally, perhaps you will provide yes/no answers, or as close to that as you can. This reflects some of the questions from the Chair in the opening section.

You are currently drafting an overarching strategy for the north. Does the lack of an overarching transport infrastructure strategy, which we have in Scotland and Wales, hamper the efficiency of the transport infrastructure that we are planning, if it is still siloed, and the drive to modal shift? Does it hamper those efforts?

Julian Worth: We must have clarity at national level and we must have clarity about land use planning as well as transport, because the two are inextricably linked.

Martin Tugwell: I think the short answer is that we could go faster and further if we did have that overarching policy direction. I suspect that is probably what you will explore in a future inquiry, but the reason we are having that debate is that there is a sense we could go further and faster in our approach, and maybe be more efficient as well.

Steve Gooding: I risk irritating you because I am going to say “maybe”. I say that because in my time I have worked on several national transport strategies. What that work reveals is that no two people seem to agree on what it is they want to put in them, which Martin and I have been discussing at some length.



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Gavin Newlands: We go into recess on Thursday. You cannot irritate me this week!

Q94 **Ruth Cadbury:** Steve, the RAC represents motorists. Referring to those who criticise the Government's strategy and talk of not increasing capacity and so on, is that a war on the motorist?

Steve Gooding: I would distinguish between the war on the motorist—a phrase that the media are very fond of—and the war on the consequences of motor traffic. What every Government I have worked with and for aspires to is to enable people to make the trips they need to make rather than telling them necessarily, "We would like you to make the trips that you are choosing to make, but don't do that," or, "You're bad because you are a motorist," or, "You're failing to recognise your social responsibility by driving your car."

In part, that is because the media are very fond of referring to what motorists think, but none of us is a motorist 24/7.

I think that, for the NNNPS specifically, the recognition of the importance of road traffic is welcome. The key is what schemes, if any, that translates into. I suspect a lot of people feel that there is a bit of a war against them as motorists, and that probably relates far more to the plague of potholes and the condition of the local roads than to the sorts of schemes that will be going ahead, because the number of nationally significant schemes in any one five-year period is relatively small and many people will not encounter them, whereas they will encounter the potholes in the roads where they live.

Q95 **Ruth Cadbury:** The other thing motorists and freight drivers experience a lot of is sitting in traffic jams. Why do you think that not increasing capacity will make traffic jams worse? Do you want to say a bit more about whether or not increasing capacity reduces traffic jams?

Martin Tugwell: That is not an easy question to answer, but I think the more fundamental point here, as we have set out in our strategy, is that there will be a need to continue to invest in new roads. An example of that is that the strategy we are setting up fundamentally supports investment in the A66 across the north of England because it addresses a real need and some very real economic, social and environmental consequences.

The point about looking at these things in terms of programmes at scale, whether it is national or sub-national, is that I have no problem with investing in the A66 because we know we have more potential in our bigger cities to have a more rapid shift in the choices people can have. I do not think those two things are irreconcilable. That is why we need to avoid—I think the National Infrastructure Commission has made this point—too much focus on individual schemes sometimes and think about programmes or envelopes where we are trying to achieve those big strategic outcomes, which is where the NNNPS does need to come.

Q96 **Ruth Cadbury:** You have all talked about the importance of modal shift



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or outcomes. You have used different language and words, but effectively all of you have said that just increasing road capacity is not the answer to our transport problems, and nobody is 100% a vehicle driver. Many people are never vehicle drivers. When you have pushed the points you have been making today to Government about seeking more holistic solutions to transport challenges in this country, what has been the response? In particular, on issues around addressing induced traffic and latent demand, what has been the feedback from Government?

Julian Worth: My approaches to Government have been mainly on freight. I have to say that at official level it has been very positive; they have been very open-minded and willing to listen, not superficially; they have been meaningfully engaged.

Clearly, the problem the DFT faces is lack of funding. The Treasury's control at the minute is preventing officials and, no doubt, Ministers doing what they would like to do, even with some of the small schemes that we would all like to see happen. There is something here about where we all want to get to. Generally speaking, we do not do it in great leaps; we do it in small increments. We need to understand that small amounts of funding now in constrained circumstances set the way forward for hopefully larger schemes as the funding envelope gets better and more favourable.

Linking that to your point about multimodal approaches, this is absolutely not about either/or; it is knitting together modes in the best way. Clearly, people will still want to use their cars, but the trick, if you like, is to induce them to drive their battery car to the station and get on the train for the long journey.

With freight, the concept we are trying to advance is: trunk by electric rail and distribute by battery truck. Therefore, it is about the balance between the two, and therefore the modal split within the Department is probably not helpful to consider that.

However, the straight answer to the question is that there is a good, positive response from officials.

Martin Tugwell: If you focus on outcomes that are place-based and put the user at the heart of it, you may start to see a need to address the complexity of the funding regimes. Local authorities quite often have to bid for their funds, with no guarantee of success. Therefore, they have less certainty about what they can achieve.

I think that the National Infrastructure Commission made the observation that local transport authorities have something like 17 funding schemes to bid for. What happens is that you bring those together in a place. I think the National Infrastructure Commission talked about having something similar to what you have in the metropolitan areas, where there is more certainty of funding for the five years and maybe beyond that. I think that shifts the emphasis and empowers local authorities to



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think about what they can do with the funding they have to deliver outcomes for their people. I think that starts to move the debate.

Steve Gooding: In some quarters the reference to induced traffic is that it is induced and, therefore, clearly bad because of the negative impacts it has.

There is another way of looking at induced traffic, which is that by providing capacity you are making possible a trip that someone might never have thought they wanted or needed to make. It might be to access a job they would not otherwise have got, or to be an employee with a particular skill set that an employer would not otherwise have been able to get. I think my former colleagues in the Department for Transport wrestle a bit with: "As an economist, where does the net value come in here? Am I facilitating something that I actually want to happen, and is that sufficiently good that it outweighs the negatives?"

Q97 **Ruth Cadbury:** I was particularly interested in what you said because, as you say, you naturally represent the motorist. The responses to our questions today have been very interesting, and one would assume that traditionally a motorist organisation would say that. I am interested to know what the feedback has been when you have made the points you make today to Government and how you have been received.

Steve Gooding: The thing we always have in mind—I would use the example of the M25—is: do those of us who have the pleasure of using that road from time to time wish it had never been built? Probably not, but if we are trying to get past Heathrow on a Friday afternoon we will be in a jam. Do we think we want to go beyond six lanes in each direction? That does not feel like a good answer. Do we want extra capacity? I am not sure where it is going to go, and that creates a conundrum: now what do we do? I do not think any of us has a particularly happy answer to that.

Q98 **Sara Britcliffe:** Moving to scheme development, the Committee heard evidence suggesting that there is not enough scrutiny of potential alternatives for NSIPs at an early stage, and that by the time they reach DCO application stage they are presumed to be the best option. How could the NNNPS help to widen consideration of alternative options?

Steve Gooding: I think this goes back to the point I made at the start about transparency. It has been an issue. There has been a dawning realisation among scheme promoters that a more visible process of optioneering serves them well when they get to the DCO process, because, if they do not have it, that is the point at which objectors or advocates of alternatives come in. The first time they become engaged is when someone says, "I've been through all that and have already decided this is a good answer." I would definitely say that a more transparent process would be a good thing.

Martin Tugwell: Some visibility about the financial envelopes within which you are working would help with that transparency. It comes back to the fact that the complexity of our funding regimes does not help us.



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You may think that the answer is a big road investment, but, if you are comparing a multimillion-pound road investment with no certainty about what funding might be available to support local bus services as an alternative, that makes it harder for people genuinely to explore the options in delivering that outcome.

Building on Steve's point, having some transparency around the financial envelopes means you can genuinely look at the alternatives.

Julian Worth: I agree. We should encourage and require promoters to demonstrate that they have genuinely and fully considered all the alternatives. With route schemes, that should be relatively straightforward because they will be within the public sector most of the time. Therefore, the DFT and others can themselves be required to do a proper evaluation, like the A34 example I gave earlier with a joint road and rail investigation.

It is quite interesting that, where you have a private sector development for something like a strategic rail-freight interchange, they have learned quite quickly that, if they do not do the job properly, their DCO is likely to be rejected or pushed back, and several have been. I think they are getting the message, but the policy lead ought to be: please ensure that you can demonstrate you have considered all the alternatives, not just the obvious ones. It is almost like: what is the critical friend role here? It is not just your inward view of what you would do in your own company to get this project over line; subject it to some challenge from people who understand your business, but want to get the right balance. Encouragement to do as much as possible there is where we need to be going.

Chair: Before we let you go, Martin, I am afraid you are in the hot seat because it would be very remiss of us not to take this opportunity to get your thoughts on the integrated rail plan that came out last week.

Q99 **Paul Howell:** We have touched on a couple of things with regard to Northern Powerhouse Rail, social benefits and a holistic approach. As I am sure you saw, the Government's response to the report that we put out, where we said it is more about levelling up and all these pieces, is that they will apparently give an updated answer on a range of different network options. What are your thoughts on the Government's response? Have any conversations taken place with you on the next steps? Are there any issues on which you would like further clarity?

Martin Tugwell: I am about to go to a meeting with the Department around the co-sponsor arrangements, so I suspect we will talk a little bit more about some of those things.

Generally, our reaction as TfN has been that this is a step forward. The recognition that we need to review the previous decision on Bradford, for example, is to be welcomed.

The publication of the terms of reference for the HS2 to Leeds study came out yesterday or the day before, so we need to look at that. I



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suspect that the partners' view across the north will reflect our own. We have done an awful lot of work in the past, so I am not sure it needs to take two years to be able to do that. We really ought to be able to move forward faster.

We must also not forget that there is a need to continue to make the case for midland mainline electrification because that is very much part of getting HS2 to Leeds and that connection with south Yorkshire.

As for looking at some of the options, we can continue to work with the Department on that.

As for the Golborne link, we need an alternative proposal, and again we are very happy to work with the Department in moving that forward as quickly as possible, because, as we have discussed here, we need clarity on some of these things. We have seen the benefit, even before HS2 has been delivered, of certainty in places like Birmingham, particularly around Curzon Street. I think that what the north is looking for is that kind of confidence and certainty that we can move forward and give some signals to the private sector.

It is a step forward. We will continue to make the case as TfN for Northern Powerhouse Rail in full, including the Leamside line, but also electrification to Hull and the improvements to Liverpool. Going back to that fundamental point, to achieve the £117 billion extra GVA and do it in a way that is sustainable and unlocks the community, we need to have a step change and transformation across the entire north, building on what we already have in the pipeline.

Julian Worth: Following on Martin's point about the Golborne link, Lord Henley's recommendation for a review of that was to come up with something better essentially, and it was most unfortunate that what actually happened was that it was dropped completely.

In terms of the whole of the north and Scottish piece of connectivity and economic development, the railway between Crewe and Wigan and on to Preston would be very stressed indeed with the sort of growth potential that is there. It is a matter of some national strategic urgency, not just the northern dimension, that we have a solution for the Golborne link sooner rather than later.

Q100 **Mike Amesbury:** I think that a number of the questions have already been answered, but what conversations have been had about the next steps?

Martin Tugwell: As I said, after this meeting I am going to a meeting of the NPR co-sponsor board, where I will be talking about some of these issues with DFT officials. We will have a debate as well with the members of TfN in the autumn, but there is a lot to get our head around at the moment. We see the response as a step forward, but there is still much more we need to do, and we will continue to make that case.

Q101 **Mike Amesbury:** We have been quite robust in our support for the case



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of Bradford. What is your assessment of it?

Martin Tugwell: We need to understand a little bit more from the Department about what that work will be. I think it is positive that we have that step forward. There is an opportunity for us to pull in some of the more recent work we have done. I have talked about the economic uplift and the social dimension. We have some strong evidence there.

This is where maybe the Committee, as part of a future inquiry, might want to think about how some of these things are reflected within the Treasury. One of the things we continually struggle with is something called additionality, whereby you are comparing the economy as a whole and, if you are trying to level up the north, you want to grow the north as well as support the south, but there is a shift there. Some of the rules around additionality that we encounter do cause us problems and we need to keep fighting on that score, but that might be for a future inquiry.

Chair: I am sure we will pick that up. I thank all three of you very much indeed for your evidence and time this morning. It has been really helpful in shaping our inquiry.