

Transport Committee

Oral evidence: Urban congestion, HC 760

Monday 27 February 2017

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Members present: Mrs Louise Ellman (Chair); Clive Efford; Robert Ffello; Stewart Malcolm McDonald; Huw Merriman; Will Quince; Graham Stringer; Martin Vickers.

Questions 175 - 266

Witnesses

I: Kevin Travers, Transport Project Manager, Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership; Bob Gallienne, Chief Executive Officer, National Joint Utilities Group; and Pete Williams, Head of External Affairs, RAC Motoring Services.

II: Roger Geffen MBE, Policy Director, Cycling UK; Andrew Braddock, Chairman, Light Rail Transit Association; Tom Platt, Head of Policy and Communications, Living Streets; and Tony Campbell, Chairman, Motor Cycle Industry Association.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [National Joint Utilities Group](#)
- [RAC Motoring Services](#)
- [Cycling UK](#)
- [Light Rail Transit Association](#)
- [Living Streets](#)
- [Motor Cycle Industry Association](#)

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Kevin Travers, Bob Gallienne and Pete Williams.

Q175 **Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to the Transport Select Committee. Could I please have your name and organisation?

Kevin Travers: I am Kevin Travers, transport project manager of the Enterprise M3 local enterprise partnership.

Pete Williams: I am Pete Williams, head of external affairs for the RAC.

Bob Gallienne: I am Bob Gallienne, CEO of the National Joint Utilities Group.

Q176 **Chair:** Mr Williams, Professor Begg told us that urban congestion charging, at least in the way it was levied in London, was “dead.” Do you agree with that?

Pete Williams: We do not directly agree with that. It is important to look at the example of London, where the congestion charge has been in place for a number of years, yet we have seen congestion levels, journey times and traffic volumes increase. We have to examine the impact and learn from the lessons of London before any major roll-out of congestion charges in other locations.

Q177 **Chair:** What about having variable charges rather than a flat-rate charge?

Pete Williams: I think motorists would consider the options if the benefits were clearly described to them. When we do not see any impact either environmentally or on actual levels of congestion they will challenge that. Clearly, different road users are incentivised by different penalties or incentives. We have to look at the kinds of journeys people are making when they come into city centres. Perhaps charging accordingly would be a possibility, but it would have to be clearly understood by drivers, businesses and fleet operators.

Q178 **Robert Ffello:** That is all very well if you have a choice about when to travel. For example, if a plumber has to fit in so many jobs during the day and drive their van into, say, London city centre at a particular time, the only effect is that their costs will go up, or if there is a variable charge, at peak times the unfortunate customer will have to pay even more. Do you agree that it is all very well having variable charges, but it will unfairly hit people who have to be at work for 8.30 in the morning and do not have the option of using our expensive public transport system? It will hit them more than somebody who can roll into work at two in the afternoon.

Pete Williams: Absolutely. It is very difficult. You have to consider all these things. As you say, we want to try to spread journey times and perhaps encourage people to be flexible in their working arrangements, or consider whether they really need to join the rush hour traffic to make



HOUSE OF COMMONS

a journey to see family or loved ones; maybe they can delay it. The challenge is: what are you trying to achieve from the congestion charge? Will it have the desired effect, and how are motorists going to respond to that? They feel that they are already being heavily taxed for using their vehicles. While there is great sympathy and support for the motives behind the congestion charge, when people are losing out in their pocket it tends to fall over.

Q179 Robert Ffello: Do you think that to some degree motorists already feel rather annoyed that their congestion charge payment is being used to reduce the tarmac available to them, when driving in and out of London, for example?

Pete Williams: That is a really important lesson we have to learn in London. It is exactly that. We have revenue of about £174 million from the congestion charge. Where is that going to improve the road system and journey times and reduce congestion? That is probably why you get such reaction to a cycle super-highway that appears to be stealing road space, yet for much of the day is not utilised in the same way as we see in the traffic volumes on the diminished roads.

Q180 Graham Stringer: Do you think that the justification for the congestion charge has disappeared? It is not reducing congestion. It could be prosecuted under the Trade Descriptions Act, couldn't it? The experience of urban areas around the world is that, as congestion increases, traffic speeds get down to, say, 8 mph and that's it. That is where we are in London at the moment, isn't it?

Pete Williams: That is an interesting point, but where would we have been without the congestion charge? Would the volumes have been much greater and traffic even slower? People do not choose to come in and pay a congestion charge; they have no choice. That is why they are driving. We do not have a public transport infrastructure that necessarily meets everybody's needs. Obviously we have a better system in London than elsewhere in the UK, so we always have to be mindful of that. We are where we are with congestion. As you say, it has the impact of reducing vehicle speeds, which in turn has an impact on emissions and air quality, because at 8 mph a vehicle engine is not performing at its optimum.

Q181 Huw Merriman: Looking at it from the reverse, bearing in mind the congestion problems we have, why on earth would you not charge on the basis of use rather than one flat fee, whether someone does one mile or 100 miles in London?

Pete Williams: It is interesting. You would then have to look at the challenge TfL would face in levying that charge. How would you understand which people were travelling many more times the distance of other drivers? What costs would be involved? The cost of setting up the congestion charge was very high. If you expect the motorist to pay for a scheme that charges them more for doing more miles, that is a real



challenge. You have to be mindful about how you communicate with motorists and get their support, if that is how you are looking at it.

Q182 Huw Merriman: I am sure the technology is there. If we can be tracked as we come in and leave, we can be tracked throughout London as well, but maybe the starting point is whether we should have flat congestion charging, which is what has occurred. When we look at it, clearly it is not working because congestion and pollution is such an issue. Surely, we should applaud those who try to look at it again and think about the next phase of its evolution.

Pete Williams: I think we should look at it. Certainly, the technology is available easily to track vehicle miles and the routes motorists are taking, but you have to bring the motorist along with you and maintain their trust. Is just slapping on a further charge going to get the end you want? There is a real issue for society. We are a growing population. We have more and more cars on the road, and 83% of people say they cannot live without their car; it is vital to their lives—to get to work and get their kids to school. Often, they find that the public transport options are not sufficient for them to carry on their lives. That is the situation. You have to maintain the trust of motorists who feel they are paying very heavily for being car users.

Q183 Robert Ffello: Following Mr Merriman's question, is not the point that, according to TfL and others, the number of cars has declined dramatically? The reason congestion is increasing is not that there are more vehicles but that there is less road space.

Pete Williams: That is key. Initiatives like cycle highways, bus lane routes and some of the roadworks in the capital to improve things are causing congestion. That is where all of us have to work together to communicate to road users exactly what the benefits are of more bus lanes and segregated cycle highways. They are a good thing for safety, but, if they are not utilised all the time and they take away road space, it is a challenge.

Q184 Chair: Mr Gallienne, you made some comments in your written evidence about the use of road space.

Bob Gallienne: Clearly, utility work in the streets contributes to reducing road space. We are very much focused on minimising that road occupation and making sure that the footprint, in terms of both the time and space we take up in the street, is minimised as far as possible. As Mr Williams said, the challenge is that we are trying to shoehorn the same number of vehicles, or very close to the same number, into a smaller space, and that is why from a utilities' perspective our ability to do things in a smaller space in a shorter period of time is key to helping to ease congestion as well.

Q185 Stewart Malcolm McDonald: Mr Williams, you said that a survey found that 83% of car drivers reported they could not live without their car. What are the reasons for that? It is astonishing.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Pete Williams: The reason is that the car is integral to many people's lives. We are here in London where—

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: They cannot live without it.

Pete Williams: We asked them to give us their opinions on operating their lives—getting their family to work, to school and so on—without a vehicle. The RAC report on motoring was a UK study. Many people, whether in urban areas, towns or the countryside, are highly dependent on the car; they have no public transport options. In areas where people have public transport options, they have an issue with the location of bus stops and with timetables. It does not fit with their lives. If you have to get to the airport with luggage it will not work; it is going to be very difficult if you have children, if you have toddlers and a pram.

Q186 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Would you like to see that number come down? That is such heavy reliance on cars; you said 83%. That is enormous.

Pete Williams: To be honest, I think it is 93%. I think I gave you the wrong figure.

Q187 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** I am an MP from Glasgow, not London, but at one primary school in my constituency folk say to me every week, "A kid is going to be killed outside the school because of car congestion." I know for a fact that parents drive the length of their street to drop off their kids, return home and get ready for work. How do we reduce such journeys? How do we stop people using cars? I do not drive and have no ambition to learn to drive. I live in a city centre; I can get around using rail, bus and all the rest of it. Why are folk so reluctant to use that when it is clearly available and easily accessible to them?

Pete Williams: They would say otherwise. The reliability of public transport is not proven to many people and, therefore, they tend to rely on their own resources and their own vehicle. The RAC campaigns on child road safety. We encourage our members to consider how healthy it is to walk children to school or, when they can, get themselves there. We fund campaigns with schools positively to encourage people to avoid taking the car to do the school run, but overall it is about convincing people that public transport options are there and that they are effective and reliable.

Q188 **Will Quince:** Thank you for bringing me in, Chair, before I have to dash off. I am very keen to find out whether the witnesses think the congestion charge in London is fair. For example, if one of us drives in at peak time, parks the car in Westminster all day and then leaves at peak time, we will pay £11.50, but others come in and drive round all day. For example, a van driver pays exactly the same amount when making deliveries. Do you think that is fair? What do you think we can do about vans to try to encourage more deliveries to be made outside congestion times as opposed to inside, because clearly £11.50 is not putting them off?



Pete Williams: You have to remember that those people also pay a very high level of fuel duty, which goes to the Treasury, and business owners themselves pay taxes, at the same time as they are being encouraged to upgrade to more fuel-efficient and better-quality vehicles. You have to consider all the costs that business owners are incurring. We need to consider a way that it could be done fairly and would be accepted by motorists and business owners. It seems to make perfect sense to try to encourage deliveries outside peak periods, but often that is very difficult for a supermarket making multiple deliveries. They are encouraged to make multiple deliveries from their warehouses to stores, but it ends up being quite a long day if you are doing all those drop-offs.

Q189 **Will Quince:** Looking to the future, it is inevitable that with Amazon, Hermes and all the different parcel companies—we are ordering more and more online—more and more will be delivered, and more and more vans will be going round our capital and across the whole country. What can we do to try to drive behaviour change, because most of us would much rather deliveries were made early or even late evening when we are likely to be home, as opposed to getting a little slip through the door and having to pick it up or rearrange delivery?

Pete Williams: That is a very valid point. We need better co-ordination between some of the delivery companies. An awful lot of different distributors are taking vehicles on to our roads. Maybe we are getting to the point where it would be more efficient to take a single car to do a big family shop, where you can also buy your electrical items and everything in one go, rather than having two or three vehicles making a drop at your house. You have a very valid point, and probably the Committee should encourage all those working in that sector to co-ordinate and talk about it.

Q190 **Chair:** Mr Travers, a lot has been said about the economic costs of congestion. Is that something businesses are conscious of?

Kevin Travers: Very much so. It seems that if you have a successful economy you will have congestion, but businesses are aware of the cost. At national level, a survey that was done in 2014 estimated that the economic cost to the economy would be £300 billion by 2030. That is a ridiculously high amount. Businesses are aware that congestion is a significant issue and it affects business decisions; it affects what they are going to do. We carried out a survey of businesses in our area in 2011; 10% said that congestion was a barrier to their growth. It was stopping their business developing and going forward, so they are fully aware of that.

Q191 **Huw Merriman:** I take into account that this is urban congestion. I represent a rural constituency and readily accept that a car is essential where I am, but I lived in London and I have children in London. I do not accept that you need a car to get around in London, unless you are transporting somebody who is mobility-impaired or you have quite a lot of goods to carry. I am not talking about suitcases and going to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Heathrow. Mr Williams, I want to come back to your point. It is peddling a myth that you need a car to get round London.

Pete Williams: It is not peddling a myth; I am just reiterating what motorists have told us.

Q192 **Huw Merriman:** How did you ask the question? I am quite interested. Quite often, we can ask a question to get the answer we want. How was the question put?

Pete Williams: I will have to come back to you. I will send you the question. I cannot remember it for sure; we simply asked about their reliance on vehicles and how they would feel about not having a vehicle available to carry out important journeys.

Q193 **Huw Merriman:** I would be interested to see that. The other point is the constant refrain that we have lost space on our roads when actually what we have done is ask the car to accommodate other forms of transport, such as bikes, buses and so on. That is another thing I find quite frustrating. If we want modal shift, and we want people to get around and connect, of course we have to borrow space, which means the car has to give up in areas where I would say you do not necessarily need a car.

Pete Williams: The RAC is fully multi-modal; 80% of our members say they are cyclists as well. As to whether they are all commuters, I do not think so. We recognise that there is a place for the car, but we also have to see a growth in public transport, better public transport, with more space for buses and more alternatives for people. Then they will make the leap from the car. We talk about London in isolation, because it is very different from the rest of the UK in terms of car ownership and use. There is far more reliance on Uber, and alternatives such as car clubs and car-sharing schemes. It is way ahead of the rest of the country, rightly so, but the reality is that it is the capital and it still draws in a high volume of motorists from outside central London as well as those who live and use cars in central London.

Q194 **Clive Efford:** Mr Williams, isn't it true that in London there has been success in shifting people from private cars to public transport? The congestion we are experiencing now arises because other demands for road space have filled the gaps. We have not got faster; in fact, we have got slower. The average speed was 11 mph when the congestion charge first came in; it is now about eight. Hasn't it been a success in making road space available for public transport in London?

Pete Williams: In that respect, I believe it has. I do not know whether more delivery vehicles are filling that space, but the reality is that we still have an awful lot of traffic coming into London, but it has encouraged people to seek alternatives.

Q195 **Clive Efford:** We have seen quite a substantial increase in the use of buses, for instance, during that period. We have made space available



HOUSE OF COMMONS

specifically on the roads for buses, and because they have become more reliable we have seen an increase. That is correct, isn't it?

Pete Williams: Absolutely.

Q196 **Clive Efford:** I assume that the 93% in your survey relates to people who own cars. What is the percentage of people who do not own a car?

Pete Williams: It was a poll of UK motorists, so it is representative of the whole country.

Q197 **Clive Efford:** People who own a car are saying they cannot do without their car.

Pete Williams: Yes.

Q198 **Clive Efford:** When you get that sort of response, what is the responsibility of the RAC to ensure that people make only necessary journeys and do not use their cars unnecessarily? What is your reaction to a survey that says that 93% of people cannot go to the corner shop without getting into their car?

Pete Williams: It is not saying that they cannot go to the corner shop without getting into their car; it is saying that they could not envisage living their life without a vehicle, whether that is to get to a hospital appointment, deal with an emergency, do the family shopping, get to work, do a business trip or see family and friends. They are saying that, for their life, they cannot envisage dropping the car altogether. It is not a comment on whether they are happy, or have the option, to get the bus or tube to work, or to get on their pushbike.

Q199 **Clive Efford:** If we accept that at face value and say that is what people want, without taking some responsibility for the fact that if everyone continues to have that point of view we will not be able to move anywhere on our roads, because there is a finite amount of road space, then we might as well give up and go home. Even organisations like the RAC, which are, dare I say, populated by petrol heads, have to protect the road space for the people who genuinely need it.

Pete Williams: Absolutely. I counter that we are all petrol heads. The reality is that we represent and support motorists. We have been doing that for over 120 years. The document simply reflects the views of UK motorists on their experience of using the roads and their concerns about the behaviour of other drivers and levels of taxation. That is what it is about. It is not for the RAC to preach to its members that they should not be using their cars, but we are very proactive in supporting initiatives. Our previous report heroed a multi-modal chapter that looked at how people were utilising other forms of transport.

Q200 **Clive Efford:** If you are not suggesting to people that perhaps they should question whether they use their cars as frequently as they do, why not? I suggest that the people who are most frustrated about congestion are those who are stuck in it—motorists. Isn't it in your



interests as the RAC to do your best to reduce the number of people who use their cars, because, as you indicated earlier, there are times when it is far more preferable that people do not use their cars? Isn't there a role for the RAC, because it is representative of people who use road vehicles, to promote the efficient use of our road space?

Pete Williams: We point out what alternatives are available. We support utilities when they are improving the quality of our roads. We take a reasoned approach to things like cycle lanes. Certainly, we support the segregation of cyclists from motorists; it is the right option from a safety point of view. At the end of the day, we are a breakdown organisation that supports people on their motoring journey. We do not fall on one side of the fence or the other in telling them whether or not they should use their car. We fully support investment in public transport alternatives and hope they reach an effective and well-run state and represent a valid choice for people.

Q201 **Chair:** Mr Travers, the LEP's primary objective is to do with promoting economic growth.

Kevin Travers: Absolutely.

Chair: How can you support that by dealing with transport issues? Are you focused on transport issues in relation to congestion or in other ways?

Kevin Travers: We are focused on a wide range of transport issues. As you say, we are very much about promoting economic growth, and transport is key to that. You need efficient transportation to help to secure economic growth. As I said earlier, the costs of congestion are significant. The LEP does a variety of things. We look to invest in infrastructure so that we can improve bottlenecks where there is congestion and try to address it. We look potentially to invest in sustainable transport projects so that we can provide viable alternatives as well. We also try to work with local businesses to see what sort of options and opportunities they have. The car is not necessarily always the first option. We work with a number of our local business parks to see how their employees get to work and how we can provide infrastructure, and whether businesses can invest in services for their employees. For instance, in one business park we are providing a new bus lane, and businesses are providing the funding for a service. That service will go to the railway station and people can then use the train rather than having to drive to the business. That is just one example.

Q202 **Chair:** You work with local transport authorities in doing that.

Kevin Travers: Absolutely; very much so. Most delivery is done through local authorities. We have funding, but local authorities deliver it. As well as working with local authorities, we work with bus and rail operators. We work closely across the whole area with strategies that local authorities, through their local transport plans, have identified for their investment, and we add benefit to that.



Q203 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Mr Travers, you mentioned earlier that you thought businesses were aware of the cost of urban congestion. Do you think they, and individuals—perhaps Mr Williams could answer this as well—are as much aware of the impact on public health and finance of high emissions? Do you think businesses have a grasp of that issue?

Kevin Travers: It depends on the business. Some certainly have; some maybe less so. The immediate impact is related to addressing economic growth as it applies to their companies, but clearly if it impacts on the health of their employees there is a negative effect on them as well. I think they are aware of it. Certainly, as a LEP we are aware of it. We are very keen to promote sustainable economic growth, not economic growth at all costs. You have to consider quality of life as well, because it is only if you have healthy and stress-free employees that business will flourish and get more out of them.

Q204 **Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Do you think individual drivers have a grasp of the issue and of their own personal contribution?

Pete Williams: Very much so. They say they are interested in the environment and are very concerned about local air quality. They have made decisions to upgrade their cars. As revelations come around—as the demonisation of diesel has come to the front—we have to look at how we encourage and incentivise them to upgrade and change their vehicles to less polluting and less problematic ones from an air quality perspective, but they are certainly very aware.

Q205 **Chair:** Mr Gallienne, you are involved in utility works that are critically important but are often blamed for causing disruption and congestion. Do you agree with having more lane rental schemes? Do you think that is a way of dealing with it?

Bob Gallienne: The important point is that there is a great deal of legislation and regulation governing street and roadworks in the UK. We have all the necessary regulation and legislation we need for highway authorities to manage effectively the allocation of space to road and street works. What is most important is that there is proper collaboration between the highway authorities and the utilities, with proper planning and consistency of approach across different highway authorities so that there is better understanding of what is required. It would be really useful to have better alignment of the planning and funding cycles of utilities and highway authorities. Utilities tend to have a much longer timescale vision of their funding and planning, whereas for highway authorities it tends to be much shorter term, which causes a problem in co-ordinating works and making sure we make the best effort to get as many utilities in the same space at the same time when work is being done on the roads.

The Department for Transport commissioned a report on lane rental by Ecorys, which could not identify any real benefit from the lane rental system in London and Kent that could not have been achieved using the



existing noticing and permitting regimes. Lane rental risks being another level of cost and administration that is unnecessary if the existing legislation and regulations are used properly.

Q206 Robert Ffello: As a preamble to my question, I think Mr Efford's points to Mr Williams a moment ago show quite starkly the difference inside the M25, where there is a public transport system, albeit in places very expensive—for example, the tube relative to other places—whereas outside the M25, in places like my constituency, Stoke-on-Trent, you are reliant on the car. It shows the difference very starkly.

Mr Gallienne, on the back of what you have just said, I agree with you that lane rentals and all those issues are not just an unnecessary cost but perhaps a distraction from the real issue. Take the example of works going on around Victoria station at the bottom of Victoria street. Down Victoria street, there are a couple of sets of pedestrian traffic lights and a box junction where works are being done that seems to be out of use; certainly, the paint has faded and nobody seems to be taking any notice of it. There are three or four sets of traffic flowing into one.

It strikes me that the real collaborative answer—to go back to your point—is that there should be some traffic flow management work done in advance of roadworks such that the traffic lights a little further down the road are discontinued temporarily, or the sequencing should be changed, or whatever. We should be taking a holistic approach to roads rather than saying, "We will just charge you a little more so you speed up the work."

Bob Gallienne: You are absolutely right. Under existing legislation it is quite clear that the highway authorities have the responsibility to co-ordinate and utilities have the responsibility to co-operate. Those are the words in the legislation. That requires people to take those responsibilities seriously. There are many examples where it works well. Unfortunately, there are not as many examples as we would like.

Q207 Chair: Can you give us any?

Bob Gallienne: The Bristol code of conduct, which is a voluntary scheme in the city, was brought about by a situation a local councillor suffered. He was having trouble getting to his local newspaper shop on a Sunday morning due to street works. That resulted in a major initiative that incorporated all the utilities that work in Bristol, the major contractors and the highway authority working together to reduce the number of days of disruption caused by road and street works in the city. In the last two years, they have managed to save over 250 days of disruption, which is very significant.

Another example is Staffordshire County Council working with the Future Cities catapult. They have created a planning hub where utilities and highways staff can sit together in the same room, discuss planning and have a much better chance of getting a co-ordinated output than they otherwise would have. They have created a separate physical



HOUSE OF COMMONS

environment where that can happen. That is very successful and is saving days of disruption.

Q208 **Chair:** Some bus companies say that street works are not co-ordinated with them and that causes problems for buses. Do you agree with that?

Bob Gallienne: We are very cognisant of bus companies and the problems street works can cause for their timetables and so on. I come back to the co-ordinating and informing role of utilities. We are very aware of that. There are quarterly co-ordinating meetings generally held by highway authorities. I believe that in some cases bus companies are invited to those; sometimes they are not. I suggest they should always attend them. There is a website called roadworks.org, which identifies pretty much all planned and active roadworks in place. It can identify roadworks that will affect particular bus stops. It is also looking at the opportunity to see how that will affect timings or flows on bus routes as well. I would argue that it is very important that the website link is embedded in highway authority sites and elsewhere. I believe it covers over 98% of highway authorities' existing roads. A number of utilities have embedded the site into their public-facing websites.

Q209 **Chair:** Are you saying that the problems that could be caused by street and utility works can be resolved by better co-operation and it does not require any different regulations or legislation?

Bob Gallienne: I am certainly saying they can be resolved by better co-ordination and co-operation, and we do not need additional regulation and legislation to do that. We need to ensure that the existing legislation is properly enacted by the participants. In many cases it is. We are aware that utility street works cause congestion, but our aim as a trade association is to enable our members to carry out that work more effectively, with shorter occupation of the streets and a smaller footprint, to enable the use of innovation and get innovative processes, products and activities into the acceptable area for highway authorities, which is not so much the case at the moment. We need to speed that up. We can now use keyhole technology on gas mains; there are mini-robots working inside live gas mains doing repairs. That significantly reduces the space taken up in the road to do those works. The regulator on the gas side is very proactive in enabling utilities to make speculative investment for that sort of thing to happen. It is not true across all regulators.

Q210 **Martin Vickers:** Mr Gallienne, I am relieved to hear that you do not think any further rules, regulations and legislation are required. Over the years I spent as a councillor I remember that at regular intervals new Highways Acts, or whatever, would come in that were going to solve that particular problem. None of what you said about people getting together in the same room and that sort of thing is rocket science. Why do we still have these problems? Why are motorists, bus companies, hauliers and everybody still as frustrated as they ever were?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Bob Gallienne: There are a number of underlying factors, which we talked about previously. The volume of traffic has increased. As I understand it from Government statistics, they are talking about a further 40% increase in the volume of traffic between now and 2040. We are not talking about a significant increase in local roads, so we are still talking about shoehorning greater and greater volumes of traffic into existing local roads. The underground assets that my utility members deal with are under local roads; generally speaking, they are not under strategic roads—certainly not motorways. The Highways England work, which a lot of motorists see on the M3 and other strategic roads like that, are not related to utility work; they are related to highway maintenance. It is important to recognise that there is expanding usage of the streets, and that is why we are so focused on trying to minimise road occupation. We are one aspect of it, but it needs all the participants to find a way to contribute, because the volume of our local roads will not increase significantly.

Q211 **Martin Vickers:** One assumes that all the local participants would benefit from a better co-ordinated approach with fewer road closures, less time being taken and jobs being completed quicker, yet we go on talking about it year in, year out. I accept the fact that particularly in urban centres volumes of traffic and congestion have increased and so on, but from what I have heard this afternoon I still do not get the feeling that anything new is going to happen.

Bob Gallienne: There is certainly a lot of innovation that will enable utility street works to take up less space to carry out the work. That is for certain. There are increasing pressures for more co-ordination. We spend a lot of time trying to spread best practice around our members, both within our membership and HAUC—the Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee. We run annual best practice awards and spread that message. It is increasing; it has to because there are not many alternatives, to be perfectly honest.

Q212 **Chair:** How should we measure the success of segregated lanes, whether for cyclists or buses?

Pete Williams: There are several factors. It is about improved journey times, a better safety record and greater satisfaction for all parties concerned. Segregation is the right approach to encourage more people to cycle and feel they can do so safely, but at the same time it has to be managed to ensure that it benefits all. If it is causing problems on the roads, that will cause an issue for the number of cyclists getting out there.

Q213 **Robert Ffello:** A lot of motorists are frustrated when they see cyclists not in a cycle lane; for example, they are driving along Embankment and the cyclists are on the road among the traffic rather than in the cycle lane. Is that something you have picked up from your members?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Pete Williams: We hear that frustration. It is important to look at the research beforehand. We work quite closely with Sustrans, which is very good at doing surveys about cyclists' behaviour and what they want. Before there is wholesale development of cycle super-highways we have to look at demand and how that will ultimately be achieved, and what the negative impacts will be.

Q214 **Robert Ffello:** That brings me nicely to my second question. We seem just to accept that cycle lanes are a good thing in protecting cyclists when they are out and about. Without any evidence, I am sure that is a good thing, but, more widely, do you think we should have a much more evidence-led approach to building new cycle lanes—where they will be, whether they take road space or pavement space or both, and how they are positioned—rather than blindly going ahead with the sacred cow that we must have more cycle lanes?

Pete Williams: Absolutely. It has to be evidence-based. We have to measure demand and look at potential traffic volumes and when people are actually using it. We need a much more flexible approach to how we share the space, whether it is pavement or road. Can we have temporary cycle lanes in the rush hour when there is big demand and high traffic volume, and could they be relaxed to allow for congestion from vehicle traffic during the day?

Q215 **Robert Ffello:** Is anybody on the panel aware of any research that the health of cyclists is adversely affected by the reduction in road space? Because traffic is going slower and therefore emitting more pollutants, is that having a detrimental effect on cyclists, pedestrians and indeed vehicle users? Is it having almost a perverse impact on people's health?

Pete Williams: I believe that evidence is out there. I do not have access to it, but I can certainly check our records and see if I can send you details. Clearly, with vehicles travelling more slowly, engines are performing less well and the volume of pollutants they are emitting is greater.

Robert Ffello: In a perverse way, it is potentially harming the cyclists we are trying to protect and save with cycle lanes.

Q216 **Chair:** Mr Travers, do you want to comment on that?

Kevin Travers: No.

Chair: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Roger Geffen MBE, Andrew Braddock, Tom Platt and Tony Campbell.

Q217 **Chair:** Good afternoon. Welcome to the Transport Select Committee. Could we have your name and organisation, please?

Roger Geffen: I am Roger Geffen, policy director for Cycling UK.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Andrew Braddock: I am Andrew Braddock, chairman of the Light Rail Transit Association.

Tom Platt: I am Tom Platt, head of policy at Living Streets.

Tony Campbell: I am Tony Campbell. I am the chairman of the Motor Cycle Industry Association board and managing director for Piaggio Group.

Q218 **Chair:** Mr Braddock, projects like the Edinburgh tram system had huge construction and cost overruns. Is that atypical and can we have confidence in light-rail systems?

Andrew Braddock: To me, it is not at all surprising that there is a public inquiry into what happened in Edinburgh, because it ought not to have happened. My firm belief is that 80%-odd of the problem was politics and 20%-odd was construction naivety, poor contracting and bad control of the project. There is a huge tale to be told of Edinburgh, but please do not regard it as typical.

Q219 **Chair:** You are saying that it is the exception.

Andrew Braddock: Yes.

Q220 **Chair:** How do the benefits of tram and light-rail systems compare with having, say, bus priority measures?

Andrew Braddock: All the evidence shows that a fixed-track system like rail is not only more attractive to potential users of the service directly, but is much more attractive to those involved in the built environment, for example. You are more likely to get inward investment for redeveloping and renewing city and town centres if you have at least a semi-permanent transport system in place. We can look at examples all over Europe, particularly the French example, where a huge number of new tramways have been built in towns and cities, with considerable success. Congestion has been almost eliminated. There is certainly a great deal more use of public transport—buses as well as the new tramways—as a result.

Brave steps are needed to achieve that. In most cases, of course, in French cities, it is the result of restrictions on private car traffic and considerable curtailing of the freedom, which we tend to enjoy too much in the UK, to have online delivery vehicles and Uber all over the place. We have doubled the number of private hire cars in London, which is absolutely crazy. They are all diesel. Why are we doing that? Investment in a fixed-track system such as a tramway will produce far better results. It is much easier to integrate with the built environment and a good deal more attractive to people, to get them out of their cars.

Q221 **Chair:** Are the appraisals—the assessments of the benefits—of light-rail and tram systems that are done in this country adequate? Do they reflect the benefits properly, in your view?



Andrew Braddock: It is a very interesting point. Until recently, one of the great constraints on introducing a new and beneficial light-rail system in the UK was HM Treasury's view that these things are likely to be successful and reduce car use, and that will reduce the fuel tax intake to HM Treasury. That is really not the way to go about things, but we used to do that. Our old friend Norman Baker had something to say, and it is now set aside. We need to take a more realistic approach to cost-benefit analysis.

Q222 **Chair:** How should it be changed?

Andrew Braddock: In many cases, we are always looking for fast. Somebody says, "In order to invest in a thing like a tramway, it's got to be fast." The most successful public transport in the world is to be found in Switzerland, and it is not fast. It is very comprehensive and extremely reliable.

Q223 **Chair:** What should be looked at? I am trying to establish how you feel the current appraisal should be changed, if you do think that. In what way should it be changed?

Andrew Braddock: Simply by doing three things. The first is to stop measuring traffic flow by vehicle movements and look at people movements. The second is to be much tougher on the whole issue of private motoring especially, and commercial vehicle use in cities. We must give cities back to the people and not have them taken over by traffic and congestion all the time—exactly what the Committee is looking at.

Chair: Those are the changes that you would make.

Q224 **Robert Ffello:** Just as an observation, I note that generally traffic is filled with people, but I will move on from that. Surely the issue is the up-front cost. It would be lovely to have a tram system in a city such as Stoke-on-Trent. It would be lovely to have some light rail back on all the Beeching-cut railway lines—on those track beds. The issue is the up-front costs. For a city like Stoke-on-Trent to invest in a tram system would, at the very least, set hearts racing. Over what sort of time period do trams and light-rail systems start to look attractive, compared with just putting on a new bus route?

Andrew Braddock: Normally, 20 to 25 years. You have to be very clear about what your whole-life costs are. We know that a bus is a cheap thing to buy compared with a tram, but the operating costs of a bus over 50 or more years, and the environmental impact of a bus over 50 or more years, will be very different from those of a light-rail system. In principle, the more people you can carry per member of staff, the more efficient you will be and the lower your overall running costs will be. Trams are generally bigger vehicles. They offer higher capacity. They attract more use. We are not very good at considering whole-life costs. We tend to say, "Of course, it should be buses, because they are only



HOUSE OF COMMONS

£200,000, compared with almost £2 million for a tram.” The bus will not last 45 years, but a tram will.

Q225 **Robert Flello:** It is short-termism.

Andrew Braddock: Effectively. If you link together the benefits that come from investment in transport infrastructure—I’m sorry; I sound like George Osborne now—you begin to see that you unlock the potential for renewal and revitalisation of our cities. There is better connectivity—for example, from HS2 stations.

Chair: We’ve got your point. Other members want to ask questions.

Q226 **Graham Stringer:** The point you are making, Mr Braddock, is sound. If you do the cost-benefit analysis over 20 years and put in a subsidy to buses, so that you put in the actual cost of the buses, over that 20-year period—it might be a bit less—trams come out with a much better cost-benefit ratio. Why do you think the Department for Transport has been so hostile to trams?

Andrew Braddock: It is a very good question. Alistair Darling seemed to be particularly hostile.

Graham Stringer: Mr Darling was hostile because he came from Edinburgh.

Andrew Braddock: Maybe so. In fairness, there are others from Edinburgh who have been more positive. It is interesting. If you go to Edinburgh, travel on the trams and talk to the people using them, that is what really counts. The users love the product, and they want more of it.

Q227 **Chair:** Why has the Department been so hostile?

Andrew Braddock: Because they do not fully understand the business they are in. In my view, the Department should be promoting better, more environmentally friendly public transport. They have tended not to do that. We need a lead.

Q228 **Chair:** Why are they so hostile to trams? It has been a long-term phenomenon. Is there any particular reason why you think that is the case?

Andrew Braddock: It is very hard to say. I do not think that there is any one thing. It is probably true that, over the years, we have had the Transport Department less and less involved in transport. Issues like deregulation of the bus system mean that the Government are less involved. You have said, “It is all up to you, private companies. You must do what you must do.”

Q229 **Graham Stringer:** That would argue in the opposite way, wouldn’t it? If they were less involved in the bus industry, you would expect them to be more pro-tram. In fact, as the bus industry has been deregulated, they have got too close to the Bus and Coach Association; effectively, they have been in the pocket of the Bus and Coach Association. I would be



HOUSE OF COMMONS

interested to hear your comments.

Andrew Braddock: Wearing another hat, as chairman of the promotion group of UK Tram, which is the equivalent of CPT, I think it would be nice to have the Department in our pocket. I am not sure it really works like that. The absolute truth is that, in countries like France, since the 1980s there has been a clear policy at national Government level that they need to do something about congestion, they need to improve public transport in cities and they need to get their economies moving. As a result, the French transport department was the one going out and saying to cities, "You need to invest in trams."

Chair: We are trying to work out why it is all different here.

Andrew Braddock: Honestly, I do not know.

Q230 **Huw Merriman:** I must confess that I am a huge advocate of trams. I wonder whether part of the problem is this. Is there a profit organisation behind the tram lobby pressuring Government to put schemes on, in the same way as the rail industry and the bus industry do?

Andrew Braddock: No, I do not think so. It is almost the contrary; the industry tends to hide its light under a bushel. The reality is that these things are not cheap, but I say again that their whole-life costs give significant benefits. Graham Stringer said 20 years. I would advocate 40 or even 50 years—not as the payback period—

Graham Stringer: The turnover point is at 20 years.

Andrew Braddock: Fair enough. I accept that.

Q231 **Graham Stringer:** Obviously, the figures get better the longer you go on.

Andrew Braddock: Yes. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The Transport Focus studies of passenger satisfaction across the six tram and light-rail networks in the UK show stunning results. Marks & Spencer would die for them. They are better than bus results. There are some very good bus companies, but, on the whole, passenger satisfaction with trams and light rail is higher still.

Chair: But no notice is taken of that.

Q232 **Huw Merriman:** Our papers talk of the disappointment with respect to Leeds. Is there another city—or, indeed, cities—that you believe would benefit, not just in transport, but in development potential, from the introduction of a tram or light-rail system?

Andrew Braddock: Almost all of them.

Huw Merriman: Perhaps you could give us some examples.

Andrew Braddock: There are significant centres of population. Alongside Leeds, I would list Merseyside, where there have been one or more attempts to get a fixed-track system going. In Bristol, there were



several attempts in the days of Avon County Council, but now the local authorities in that area cannot agree on anything, not even the day of the week. In the devolved Administrations, there are places such as Aberdeen, where there was an extremely good tramway, sacrificed in the 1950s—wrongly, of course. I say this because the LRTA literally began as a campaigning body to prevent the abolition of trams in London. Now we are the guys with the smug expression and the Cheshire cat smile saying, "Told you so." We should have kept them, as countries like Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland did.

Q233 Martin Vickers: London and the big cities are a special case, as compared with our provincial towns—areas such as those that I represent. You talk about giving the centre of town back to the people. My residents tell me they want it to be easier to get to the centre of the town by car. The retailers in the town centre tell me that they want to make it easier for motorists to do that by eliminating parking charges. Why are they wrong?

Andrew Braddock: They are wrong on environmental grounds alone. If we continue to have fossil-fuelled vehicles running up and down our high streets, we will go absolutely nowhere. We are also killing people. Take somewhere like Freiburg, in southern Germany. Its population is about 150,000 or 160,000. It has a perfect public transport system. No one needs to drive. There are areas of the city where you cannot have a car. That is the contract you sign to live there. People are queueing up to be there, because it is so good environmentally. We are stuck with the mentality that retailers believe that cars bring them traffic. Actually, statistics show that buses bring more traffic, and trams would bring more still.

Q234 Clive Efford: I will move on from light rail, if that is all right. I want to ask Mr Geffen and Mr Platt about the wellbeing effects of cycling and walking. Is there clear evidence that active modes of transport substantially reduce urban congestion? Can you give us some specific examples?

Roger Geffen: The whole issue of what we mean by congestion needs to be unpicked. Yes, there are very clear examples where investing in cycling has reduced traffic volumes, but that is not the same thing as reducing congestion. We need to be clear about the terminology. There is a big academic debate about how you define and measure congestion, but, effectively, it is a symptom of excess of demand over supply of road space. Simply reallocating the road space will not eliminate that excessive demand. What you will do is enable more people to move more efficiently along a given amount of road space, with less demand for that movement to be by motor vehicles. In turn, that will reduce pollution and congestion over the network as a whole.

Q235 Clive Efford: Could you give us an example of where that has happened?



Roger Geffen: I can give you some examples of where we have reduced congestion in a localised way. There are examples from New York, Germany and the Netherlands. In New York, introducing cycle facilities on Eighth Avenue reduced journey times by 14% and on Columbus Avenue, also in Manhattan, by 35%. In the German town of Gütersloh, there was a 4% reduction in motor vehicle trips. In the Netherlands, a network of 675 km of extra cycle lanes reduced motor vehicle use by 3.8 million hours over a year. There was an assumption that, if more of that was by e-bikes, it could nearly treble.

The important point is that we should not confuse what could happen by achieving a complete network of cycle facilities—the level of demand that that can achieve—with what happens when you introduce a specific link. It is a bit like the difference between having only one accessible tube station—not a lot of disabled people can use a network with one such station—and what happens when you get a complete network. The same is true of cycle facilities. The more links there are that have good cycle facilities, the more it increases the cycle use in the previous links in the network. You get a progressive improvement in the efficiency of cycle schemes, as you get a more complete network.

Q236 **Clive Efford:** Let me take you back to the figures you quoted. You gave some examples where, along certain routes, there had been a reduction in the number of vehicles. If you have dedicated a chunk of road space to a bus lane or a cycle lane, isn't it inevitable that you will get fewer cars going down those roads? Is that a measure of success or just a measure of fewer cars getting to travel down a road?

Roger Geffen: If the link is already congested and you reallocate some of the road space, you will end up with fewer motor vehicles, but you will increase the total capacity of the link. Transport for London has already produced very good figures that show that the number of people who can use the lanes now allocated to the cycle super-highways is five times greater than the same lane being used for motor vehicles. The road as a whole is now carrying 5% more people than it could before the cycle lanes were introduced.

That does not mean that it is all win. It means that, in the short term, people who are still using motor vehicles will face longer journey times, until demand and supply start to balance out, and some of the people who are using the link and have not yet switched will decide that it is better to shift to doing something else—travelling at a different time of day, travelling by a different means or not travelling at all. It is all about supply and demand. At local level, reducing road space on an already congested link will enable more people to travel. There will be fewer motor vehicles and less pollution, but longer journey times in the short term for people who are still in the motor vehicles, until it all balances out again. Then we will end up with less traffic over the network as a whole. We need to make the distinction between short and long term and between localised and globalised effects.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Q237 **Clive Efford:** What would you say to someone who said, "That is all well and good, but why don't we just encourage more people to share their cars and create more space in that way?"

Roger Geffen: That, too, is a very good thing. There are all sorts of things that we need to do. I am not saying that cycle facilities are a single magic bullet. They need to be part of a wider package, along with promoting walking, public transport and the shared use of cars. Let's face it; typically, each individual privately owned car sits stationary for 23 hours a day. That is inefficient. It needs to be seen as part of a wider package. If we want to tackle the excess of demand over supply, we also need pricing mechanisms. Then the cycle facilities and so on enable people to have alternative choices that allow them not to feel that they have to depend on their cars. The previous evidence that people feel dependent on their car is a massive indictment of the current failures of transport policy. We should not allow ourselves to be imprisoned by that situation. We should create conditions where people feel able to get out of their car.

Q238 **Clive Efford:** Mr Platt, how many journeys in urban areas could realistically be walked?

Tom Platt: It is very difficult to give a figure for urban areas, because each urban area is very different. The first thing, which backs up some of the points that have been made, and was hinted at in your first question, is that, when we are looking at congestion, we are of course looking at how we improve the quality of life and the prosperity and health of our cities. That is what we want to achieve. Any solution to congestion must also answer those questions, rather than be measured just by how much traffic goes down a certain lane.

We know that we cannot build our way out of traffic. I am sure that you have seen lots of evidence about induced demand and things like that. We must use the limited space we have as efficiently as possible. Our view is very much that if we want to improve quality of life, health and air pollution, and to use the limited space as efficiently as possible, there is no real and credible solution other than to reduce the number of motor vehicles and to increase the number of journeys that people do on foot or by public transport. It seems to me that you have to do that.

In all the examples where cities have been successful in doing that, they have taken an integrated approach. They have not necessarily said that it is just about walking or cycling. They have said, "We want to improve the air or the health of our people. Therefore, we are going to invest in public transport, but it will be connected to good cycling routes and good walking routes. We are going to allow our children to walk to school." It is about those things in the round. That is the only way you will really deal with congestion and improve the quality of our cities.

Q239 **Chair:** How important has it been that health was seen as an objective?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tom Platt: Potentially, it is really big. There is a very nice example in London, where they have a new walking and cycling commissioner—for the first time, a commissioner who is really leading on walking—and have adopted a healthy streets approach. They have said, “Rather than go out there to improve our streets for a person driving, a person walking or a person cycling, we are going to improve our streets for the health of people there.”

That is a good way of approaching it. First, it makes you look at the street in the round. You look from building line to building line and think, “How are we going to make people healthier in this space?” Secondly, it helps you to explain to the wider population the changes you are making. There were some really nice examples of cycling schemes in London under the previous Mayor, but there was a bit of a backlash to them, because they were seen as benefiting only a small proportion of people. Actually, those schemes had real benefits to the health of everyone—people walking, people cycling and businesses. There is real merit in recognising the public health benefits and selling them to the public as a reason for encouraging them to use their cars less and getting them walking and cycling.

Q240 **Clive Efford:** Coincidentally, I spent this morning at a school talking about the problems created by parents who insist on driving their children short distances to the school, parking on the zig-zag line and abusing local residents—the most appalling behaviour. How can we solve the problem of getting people to recognise that walking the short distance to school with their children is a healthy thing to do?

Tom Platt: One of the issues is making sure that it is a short distance. We find that most people walk their very short journeys; four out of five journeys under a mile are still walked. The problem is that people take fewer journeys and for longer distances because we have planned our cities and towns to encourage people to drive out to a retail park, rather than to walk to a local high street. It is the same with schools. As schools get further away from where people live, there is a greater distance for them to travel.

Having said that, we know that about a quarter of peak-hour traffic in the morning is on the school run. It would help if we could deal with that. Everyone can tell the difference on the network as soon as there are school holidays and those cars are taken off the network. We run a very successful behaviour change scheme—our “Walk to school” campaign—where we work with schools. We have seen a 30% decrease, on average, in the number of cars driving to school and a 30% increase in the number of children walking to school. There are measures, but they need to be taken in conjunction with planning, and better, safer routes to school.

Robert Ffello: We have to look at this within and outside the M25, because there are two completely different scenarios. I will concentrate for a moment on within London. I would love to see evidence of how reducing road space and thereby increasing congestion, which increases



HOUSE OF COMMONS

pollution and makes people's health worse, is a good thing in itself. Don't get me wrong. Walking is great. I love walking. Given the opportunity, I will walk for hours and for miles—not just when I am knocking on doors and campaigning, but generally. I am not quite such a personal fan of cycling, but I understand that a lot of people really enjoy it, for social as well as work reasons. Yes, we should not be getting people to drive to out of town stores, but the in-town stores are very small, particularly in London, so they need more than one delivery a day and a vehicle will have to go several times a day to the store. Realistically, the store cannot be replenished by somebody on foot or on a cycle. There are some small volume schemes, but, realistically, that will not generally happen across the piece. Delivery vehicles will still be needed.

Utility companies, whether it is the local plumber, a gas engineer or whoever, will still need a vehicle. Some commuters need a vehicle because of their personal mobility problems, or you may have somebody who has just spent £15,000, £20,000 or whatever on a car and says, "I don't want it sitting for 24 hours a day. It is bad enough that it sits for 23 hours a day. I can leave it at home and spend some extortionate amount on the tube, or I can just drive to work." There is a whole series of reasons why people use their vehicles, whether it is a delivery or utility vehicle or just a personal car. I come back to the question: what evidence is there that it is healthier for people to have to put up with increased pollution from increased congestion in less road space?

Roger Geffen: I don't want to go back to—

Chair: What is the evidence? Many people talk about the health benefits. What is the evidence that this is the case?

Roger Geffen: The distinction I want to make is between the localised impacts of a scheme and the evidence across the whole of a town—the population-wide effects. When you build a road, you have a temporary reduction in congestion on the immediately surrounding road network, but you generate extra traffic. That means extra congestion everywhere else. Introducing a cycle facility has the opposite effect. It reduces the total number of motor vehicles by giving people an alternative way of getting around, all other things being equal, and by increasing the capacity of the road network as a whole to get people from A to B.

Q241 **Robert Ffello:** What is your evidence for that? The evidence is that the congestion charge has driven a 53% reduction in private cars in the city. That is clear evidence that the congestion charge has reduced the amount of traffic. What is the evidence for what you are saying now—that the road space will be filled by more cars? If the congestion charge is there, why will it be filled by more cars when the evidence says that the number has halved?

Roger Geffen: I am not sure that I have understood you fully, but let me attempt to answer. Since the congestion charge was implemented, the road space has filled up again.



Robert Flello: There is less road space.

Roger Geffen: It is primarily because we have a growing population. We have also seen the growth of Uber.

Robert Flello: That is not what the evidence says.

Q242 **Chair:** No. The assessment that was done in London was that the problem is less road space, because of different uses of the road and its being allocated to other things.

Roger Geffen: Transport for London has broken it down and said that there is a whole series of effects. The growth in private hire vehicles, road maintenance and the growth in the population of London are all relevant effects. Because there is an excessive demand for movement, it will grow to fill the space, all other things being equal—as with building more road space. If we want to keep the lid on the excess of demand over supply, we have to use pricing.

Q243 **Chair:** Is that just a view? There is no actual evidence that it will work, is there?

Roger Geffen: I am making the case that the evidence says that you need a package of measures. Do not expect cycle facilities alone to tackle congestion. What they can do is alleviate growing congestion and provide a complement to road pricing. They must be part of a package.

Q244 **Chair:** Mr Platt wants to come in.

Tom Platt: You asked specifically about the health benefits in London. A huge amount of work has been done by TfL. Unfortunately, I do not have the report and the figures, but the report came out just last week. The healthy streets approach mapped exactly what they thought the health benefits of getting more people walking and cycling would be. The biggest issue of all is physical inactivity. We talk a lot about air pollution and road casualties, but motor traffic also has a huge impact on how physically active our children are—walking to school and playing in our streets. The huge health benefits are that we can create streets where we reduce the number of motor vehicles and reduce motor vehicle dominance and speed, and get more people walking and cycling. Public transport is part of that. There are really big benefits. That has been analysed. The report looked at the London travel demand survey data. I can send you the link, but I am sure that you can find it as well. There is very good evidence of health benefits in London—exactly the question you are after.

Roger Geffen: The Cabinet Office did a study about six years ago that said that the cost of transport problems in England's urban areas was of an order of magnitude of £40 billion, in round numbers; there was a range of £38 billion to £46 billion, divided roughly equally into shares of £10 billion each for congestion, air pollution, physical inactivity and road casualties. They are all of the same order of magnitude—about £10



HOUSE OF COMMONS

billion—yet we have had 60 years of transport policy that has tackled congestion as if the other things did not matter.

Q245 **Chair:** We are looking for actual evidence.

Roger Geffen: That is a Cabinet Office study that quantified the scale of the problem.

Chair: Okay. Let us move on.

Q246 **Huw Merriman:** Is part of the problem that we are talking about shared space, particularly in the urban centres? In reality, shouldn't we be a bit bolder and say, "We have a ticking time bomb with obesity. We have problems with pollution, so the car is fortunate to be on the roads, as it is"? Let's all be honest about this and say that, from now on, the prioritisation is for modes of transport that will help the factors I just talked about, which means that the car is fortunate to be sharing the space at all. Do you think that we are being honest and open enough about the issue?

Tom Platt: I agree. We need to be bolder. The big issue for city leaders and the people who look after our cities and urban areas is to be bold enough to say, "We are going to reduce capacity and reduce where you can drive. We are going to invest in public transport, walking and cycling."

You touch on something else. Shared space is a typical example; generally, a local authority or a highway authority does not want to spend money or take away road capacity, so they just say, "Cyclists go on to the footway." That does not work for anyone. The cyclists do not use it, because it is bad provision. Where they do, they cause anxiety and fear to pedestrians. If we want to get people more active and to get healthier cities, that is a very bad example of providing good infrastructure. You need to do it properly and to have the political will.

We need to be better at demonstrating examples. Andrew mentioned Freiburg, but there are examples in the UK, too, from which we have seen that, if we design places where there is really good public transport, walking and cycling, not only is it good for quality of life but it attracts businesses. Businesses want to locate in those places.

Q247 **Chair:** Can you give us some examples? Can you name some of the places here in the UK?

Tom Platt: In the UK, Nottingham has had a long period of investing in public transport. They introduced something called the workplace levy, which charged workplaces for their number of parking spaces. That generated funds to invest in further tram works, more public transport and walking and cycling. It has bucked the trend among UK cities on congestion and has really attracted investment to the city.

Q248 **Chair:** Is there anywhere else, apart from Nottingham?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tom Platt: We have talked a lot about London, which has been very successful.

Andrew Braddock: Reading has done well.

Roger Geffen: The OECD has documented this in the United States. US cities are—

Q249 **Chair:** I am looking for examples here.

Tom Platt: Part of the problem is that UK cities have not been very good at investing in public transport or walking and cycling. It is not that it does not work; it is that they have not built proper cycle networks and so on.

Chair: They have not tried.

Q250 **Huw Merriman:** Can I ask about your views on cycle lanes? While I absolutely see the benefits, I think there is a danger, particularly in smaller towns where there is no cycle lane, that people think, "I can't cycle. They don't have a cycle lane." When I was growing up, I just cycled on roads; that is what you did. Is there a danger that we are getting to a point where we think that, unless there is a cycle lane, we should not cycle?

Tom Platt: I have seen no evidence for that. Cycle lanes do not need to be on every street. We need to think about the type of street and the volume and speed of traffic. On a really arterial road, a cycle lane is absolutely necessary, but in lots of places we work with cycle organisations that lobby for things like 20 mph speed limits and preventing rat-running through residential streets. There is a range of measures that we need to take. It is not always about having a segregated cycle lane—absolutely not.

Q251 **Huw Merriman:** This is my last question. Do you believe that the Department for Transport does enough to promote the benefits of cycling and walking? For example, do they work with the Department for Education to say, "If you are a child of this age, this is how much you should cycle, on average"? Do you think that there is enough proactive—

Tom Platt: You would expect us, as a lobby group, to want them to do more. There is going to be a cycling and walking investment strategy. We keep waiting for it to come out.

Q252 **Chair:** Do you think enough has been done?

Tom Platt: I do not think enough has been done. I would like to see more.

Roger Geffen: Nowhere near enough has been done. To give them their due, the officials in the cycling and walking team at the Department for Transport have tried very hard to get cross-departmental links. To be



HOUSE OF COMMONS

honest, there has been a lack of back-up from senior management and from Ministers to make sure that those links happen.

Q253 **Chair:** You think it is about the absence of links.

Roger Geffen: It is about the absence of links between the promotion of active travel and the Departments for planning, education and traffic law and enforcement. That joined-up government is easier said than done. It is really not happening.

Can I go back briefly to Tom's earlier points about when segregation is needed, when it is not needed and when it is okay to rely on 20 mph speed limits and low traffic volumes? We have a guide, copies of which I am happy to pass out, from our "Space for Cycling" campaign. Basically, it says that the higher the volume and speed of traffic, the greater the need for segregation. If you have low traffic volumes and speeds, you do not need it. At low traffic volumes, 20 mph will do fine.

Q254 **Chair:** I want to move on to something else. We may come back to this. Mr Campbell, your view is that motorcycling is not given enough attention. What would you like to see?

Tony Campbell: Absolutely. I enjoyed the opening debate and am enjoying this follow-up. It is quite disappointing, looking across the whole cross-section from walking to cars and public transport, that powered two-wheelers have not been considered. I prefer to refer to powered two-wheelers, rather than motorcycles; motorcycle creates a stereotypical image in the mind of speed, danger, antisocial behaviour and so on. That is not the demographic for the majority of people we represent, both manufacturers and users. I would say that the demographic is represented, in part, in this room.

It is disappointing that we have not been considered. I can quote lots of statistics regarding investment and infrastructure. Of course, there is always the safety argument, as there is for bicycles. Not one penny has been invested in creating a safer infrastructure for powered two-wheeler use. If we think about the cross-section of commutes and about travelling around, unless you are Brendan Rodgers, you are not going to walk as far as we might like to think. For the medium-distance commute, we believe that we have a proposition that genuinely, with little investment, can get people out of cars. Of course, to do that you have to create awareness and infrastructure. We have some fantastic statistics, which I can quote, to say how effective our two-wheelers can be in reducing congestion. I think the main intention of the inquiry is to find cost-effective ways of reducing congestion, with the reduced road space that we have all seen.

Q255 **Chair:** What would you like the Department to do?

Tony Campbell: First and foremost, we absolutely need to be included in the transport policy, which has not happened. We are not considered. In fact, only one local authority—Northamptonshire County Council—has accepted powered two-wheelers as a solution to congestion, in the city of



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Northampton. They are working actively with us on their promotion and encouraging them for people with urban, suburban and rural commutes into Northampton, which has a massive parking problem. That is an example of how it can work.

We have teamed up with Highways England, which is a Government Department now, as we all know, and the NPCC to put together a document, which we shared with you. There will be copies available to take away. We use the word “motorcycles” in it, but it is a document about realising the powered two-wheeler opportunity and what it can bring to improve urban and suburban travel around cities. Of course, our users have become victims of the reduced road space we have heard all about, because they can no longer field traffic as easily as they could. Potentially, that has heightened the safety risk for our guys. We have access to bus lanes. Since that was introduced, there is zero evidence that it has worsened the safety record for motorcyclists and scooter riders in major cities.

From our perspective, we would like to be included and consulted. If I were to give you a quick snapshot, 60% of our users, at the last count, are people going about their everyday business and commuting to work. A decreasing percentage of people would be described as terrorising our roads, as happened in the past. If we think about how European cities have embraced powered two-wheelers, there is a cultural background that has helped. It works massively well, alongside other solutions. It is a multi-layered approach, with trams and public transport. We know that public transport needs a lot of investment, and it is expensive investment. We have a quick fix to ease congestion, if we can have some awareness, some encouragement and a little investment in infrastructure. Post Brexit—dare I say it—we could make access a bit easier in terms of licensing and legislation. We have a great solution.

Q256 **Robert Ffello:** I declare an interest, as the owner of a motorbike.

Tony Campbell: Fantastic.

Robert Ffello: There is an interesting point; you mentioned European cities, and the archetypal image of a European city is of people on Vespas and the like whizzing around the streets and, even in wet weather, being able to cover themselves up. One of the problems for many people wanting to use two wheels in other forms, such as cycles, is the suit and all the rest of it. Do you jump on the back of a bike when rain is teeming down or when Doris has decided to descend upon you? You raise an interesting point. What work, if any, is being done to say to the motorist, “Pull up on the outskirts of London, park your car and jump on to two wheels to come into the city”?

Tony Campbell: From an industry and a manufacturer point of view, we have done a lot of work historically. The company I work for has done an awful lot of work to encourage people out of cars in inner cities. Independently, the company and the industry have only a certain amount



HOUSE OF COMMONS

of money and finance available to raise awareness and attention. If it becomes an integral part of transport policy, by definition, you will end up with the awareness being driven.

We are fully aware of safety-related issues. Our safety record has improved. We had a bit of a negative spike last year, but generally, if I look at the 25-year trend, it is very positive. Obviously, that is with improved technology, improved safety equipment and so on. I did not arrive here on a bike, but I arrived at a station on a motorcycle today; I don't think I look too bad. Nowadays, access and what is available on the market to make it a much more pleasurable experience are both far greater than they were.

One of the barriers we face is that, because it is not part of a transport policy, the inner-city councils—for argument's sake—are not challenged to provide parking facilities for motorcycles. We heard a lot about Westminster, which started to charge for motorcycle parking. Try to find an empty motorcycle parking bay at any point after about 8 o'clock in the morning. What investment are we looking for? For sure, we need improved parking. It goes without question. On average, five or six motorcycles or scooters will take up one car parking space.

Some of those are very easy fixes, with infrastructure that is already in existence. For me, when I listened to the first debate, it was a bit of a no-brainer. I sat there thinking, "Why are we not on the radar? Where have we gone amiss?" Without question, we have gone amiss from historical information, in terms of safety. Cycling was an incredibly dangerous occupation in London until the investment went in. I see that there has been a massive drop in fatalities this year.

Q257 Robert Ffello: Can I press you on that point? One thing, among many, that is designed to wind up the cycling lobby is talking about tests and things like that, but one of the things that absolutely made a difference to the safety of motorbikes was CBT and the like.

Tony Campbell: Absolutely.

Q258 Robert Ffello: It brought about a huge transformation. Do you think that a similar sort of programme for cyclists might save a lot of cyclists' lives as well? I would be interested to hear Mr Geffen's view on that.

Tony Campbell: I would like to see the introduction of CBT for all motor licence applicants.

Robert Ffello: I agree.

Tony Campbell: Without question, it will make you a much safer car, bus or lorry driver. I am from the age when you used to do a cycling proficiency test, as a volunteer.

Robert Ffello: Likewise.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tony Campbell: It taught me an awful lot about road use at school. Part of our policy document is all about education, and educating in the early years. It would help all road users, without question. If we see only public transport, cars, bicycles or walking, an important segment, in terms of distance, is not being catered for. That is where we can slot in very comfortably. Yes, I would like to see it—for sure.

Robert Ffello: Can I come back on another point, Chair? I cannot remember what it was now. It was on the back of one of Mr Merriman's points. Remind me.

Huw Merriman: One of my many good points.

Robert Ffello: Absolutely.

Huw Merriman: Obviously it was something to do with cycling. Was it about cycle lanes?

Robert Ffello: Yes, it was on cycle lanes.

Chair: You will have to be quick, Mr Ffello.

Robert Ffello: We will pass on. We will have to wait for another opportunity.

Q259 **Chair:** I am sure there will be another occasion. Mr Campbell?

Tony Campbell: Can I make one final point? It could be slightly provocative for Roger. One of the largest bicycle communities in Europe is Holland, which has massive use. It is an accepted part of their transport solution, as it is now with us. There, low-powered two-wheelers have access to bicycle lanes. With all the investment we have put in, that could open up and encourage medium-distance use by single users. They could use the main road framework to get into London, where they would have access to the super-highways—maybe as a minimum. That is a consideration. Low-powered, low-speed products could encourage more users.

Chair: Mr Ffello has now remembered his question, so he will put it. Mr Geffen, I will then come to you, because I know you want to respond to some of the points.

Q260 **Robert Ffello:** I knew that it would come eventually; it is the grey matter—I'm getting older. There seemed to be a contradiction, in that separate cycle lanes were needed where the speed of traffic was such as to be a problem, yet with congestion, the speed of traffic was only 11 mph before and is now 8 mph. If the traffic is travelling at only 8 mph anyway, why do you need a separate cycle line as a result of speed? I do not understand that.

Chair: Mr Geffen, that is for you. While you are answering it, let me put something else to you.

Roger Geffen: There is quite a queue building up.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Q261 **Chair:** Many motorists believe that cycle lanes in London, specifically, are not all needed and are causing a problem for cars. You might like to comment on that as well.

Roger Geffen: There is quite a lot to comment on. I will try to wrap up several points in one, hopefully concise, contribution. My earlier point was that traffic volumes and speeds define whether and when you need physical separation. Alongside an inter-urban trunk road, you want not just a kerb, but a hedge to protect you from the gusts of wind from lorries passing you in the opposite direction at 60 mph or 70 mph, and, indeed, from the glare of light at night. Alongside a busy urban road, you still want some kind of separation, but it does not need to be as intense. One of the things cycling organisations are coming around to is that, for the busy urban street, what is known as a traffic wand—a flexible plastic bollard—will probably do the job. We still have to get the evidence, but what we have seen from the States is that the wands provide about 90% of the sense of protection for would-be cyclists, at a fraction of the cost. It is not just a fraction of the installation cost; the main saving is not having to realign the drainage.

That also gives flexibility. One of the problems that we have, potentially, with the cycle super-highways is that they are already proving too narrow for the levels of use. In a way, they are proving a victim of their own success, and that is before they become part of a wider network; cycle use will grow, as more links in the cycle network become apparent. We already need to widen them, but we have built them with hard kerbs. We might have been better off, in the early stages of a cycling revolution, using traffic wands to get the space in for the cyclists and then design them better as time went on.

On the question about the criticisms, some of them are probably unique to the east-west cycle super-highway—the Embankment. Some features of that street are very odd. It is an inner-city street that has very few destinations along it. That is also why it does not have any bus routes. People do not go to shops or workplaces along it—apart from this building, as it happens. There are not many places to go, so it is a route for commuting cyclists and a bypass of the west end and the City for motor vehicles. That is why it is more heavily used during the day by vans than by cyclists. It is very heavily used at peak hours by cyclists, because it is a through route, rather than a destination. We do not have any of the same criticisms of the north-south super-highway, because that is much more of a destination. Therefore, it is much more heavily used during the day, as well as at each end of the day.

To come to the point about cycle training—

Q262 **Robert Ffello:** Doesn't that support my point that there should be evidence before these things are put in?

Roger Geffen: I wanted to say something about your point about evidence. One really useful thing that the Department for Transport has



HOUSE OF COMMONS

done is to sponsor a programme—a piece of software called the propensity to cycle tool. It is not fully implemented yet. So far, it is using only data on journeys to work, because the census data give us the most local-level data, but it is about to introduce journeys to school. When it is fully functional, it will allow us to see the routes, down to individual streets, where there is current cycle use and where there is the greatest mismatch between current and potential cycle use, based on journeys people are currently making that are of cyclable length, but are not being cycled. It gives different scenarios for future growth in cycle use and indicates where the greatest potential for that growth is. That will really help us to know where to invest and where is the greatest justification for investing now—which ones we should do now and which we should leave until later. You are absolutely right about having an evidence base. The propensity to cycle tool will be an important part of that. Do you want me to deal with the cycle training point, or have I said enough?

Chair: Thank you all very much.