HOUSE OF COMMONS

# Transport Committee

## Oral evidence: Urban Congestion, HC 760

Monday 13 March 2017

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Watch the meeting

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

Questions 267 - 330

### Witnesses

I: Chris Carter, Head of Transport Strategy, Nottingham City Council; Tobyn Hughes, Chair, Urban Transport Group; Val Shawcross, CBE, Deputy Mayor of London for Transport; and Mike Waters, Head of Policy and Strategy, Transport for West Midlands.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- Nottingham City Council
- Urban Transport Group
- Transport for London
- Transport for West Midlands

# Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Chris Carter, Tobyn Hughes, Val Shawcross and Mike Waters.

Q267 **Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to the Transport Select Committee. Would you give your name and organisation, please?

***Mike Waters:*** I am Mike Waters, Transport for West Midlands.

***Val Shawcross:*** I am Val Shawcross, deputy mayor for transport in London and deputy chair of Transport for London.

***Chris Carter:*** I am Chris Carter, head of transport strategy for Nottingham City Council.

***Tobyn Hughes:*** My name is Tobyn Hughes. I am the managing director of Nexus and I am chair of the Urban Transport Group.

Q268 **Chair:** Mr Hughes, perhaps you could start by telling us how far urban congestion features in the devolution deals. How important is it in those deals?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** Most of the devolution deals will feature congestion at the centre of their work, because most devolution deals focus on the powers to deliver better transport. The devo deals so far come from large urban areas, all of which suffer from congestion of one form or another. Part of the aspirations of the areas seeking devolution deals are to plan transport interventions better and to have better powers and funds with which to make a difference to urban congestion. Clearly, all the devolution deals are focused on growing the local economy. In many areas, the local economy is being held back by congestion, and that is why devolution deals feature congestion and the powers to deliver intervention to congestion quite highly.

Q269 **Chair:** Do you think the powers given are sufficient to deal with congestion?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** We have come a long way. In the continuum from not having many powers as local authority areas to having full powers to combat congestion, we are in a good line of progression. If we look back 10 years when local authorities did not have many powers to intervene in congestion and we look to where devolution deals, particularly those with an elected mayor, might have an opportunity to make an intervention, we are getting there. Combined authorities, which tend to be the areas that are putting forward devolution deals, put transport planning alongside economic planning. That means that transport plans are co-ordinated and focused on dealing with the issues that hold back economic growth.

When it comes to powers to make an intervention, the same authorities are transport authorities and they have the ability to work with councils

to have an impact on local highways management. They have the funds with which to secure local bus services. Many of them have local transport systems themselves, such as trams or metro systems. Many of them are working as a collective whole to make an impact. There are, however, one or two areas where we are still wanting, such as influence over some of the national, strategic networks—for example, the Highways England strategic road network or Network Rail with the national rail network. In those areas, another tier of bodies is being brought forward—Transport for the North and Midlands Connect, to name two—where combined authorities are coming together to have greater influence over the national agencies, so that they can exert some degree of influence while they do not necessarily have the powers.

Q270 **Chair:** Would anybody else like to add to those points or disagree with anything? Looking at the powers in the devolved agreements in relation to congestion, are they enough? Does it need different powers?

***Val Shawcross:*** The situation in London is very different. London already has additional powers. There was a small reference to some additional help in the Budget, in particular in relation to lane rental, where we would very much welcome the sunset clause being removed; the current powers are due to lapse in 2019 and we would like to be able to continue lane rental in the future. We have a very long list of asks to the Government, some of which have been discussed as part of the settlement and others are in discussion with other Government Departments as we speak. We have a very long list of asks. We are finding that getting a satisfactory conclusion to some of those asks is very difficult indeed. Chair, I don't know if you would like me to mention any of those or whether that would be too much detail.

Q271 **Chair:** For the moment, I won't ask you to mention them. It is something we might come back to. Responsibilities for transport and development overlap the different tiers of local authorities, combined authorities and local enterprise partnerships. Do you think any changes should be made in those structures? Should things be concentrated at one of those levels? Should anything be different?

***Mike Waters:*** In a lot of the areas that set up combined authorities, in our case with a mayoral election—a metro mayor—we are essentially on a journey at the moment. A lot has changed in the last few years. The direction has resulted in a great deal more co-operation between the authorities. There are still quite a lot of actors in any given space, but we have a level of dialogue, with the election of the mayor and the powers that come with that over a key route network and so on, and we are able to bring forward many more joined-up procedures, for example, around permit schemes and things that have not been possible around road safety.

Funding remains a mixed bag. It is one of the areas where, to bring any major scheme forward to address urban congestion, we generally have to assemble a cocktail of different funding sources, from devolved funding

as part of an investment programme to a local growth fund and so on. That is something that I imagine will change over time as we prove success with the process that we are putting in place now.

Q272 **Chair:** What should the Department's role be in relation to urban transport planning, given that there is devolution and that devolution takes different forms in different places?

***Chris Carter:*** It is difficult to say about the Department, but Nottingham is an area that currently does not have a devolution deal. We are currently a unitary authority, which gives us certain advantages in terms of having powers for transport and planning. Economic development is all under one organisation so there are advantages to that, but there are disadvantages in terms of geography, in that it covers only our administrative boundary, which is very tight; it does not cover our whole conurbation, so that makes things more difficult. Our big concern in relation to devolution is that areas that do not have devolution deals could be left behind if they do not have access to those powers or if, for example, the funding is top-sliced or taken out for the devolution areas. There may then be a very small proportion of funding left for other areas.

Q273 **Chair:** Do you feel that the Department for Transport should be more active than it is, say, in your area?

***Chris Carter:*** We want them to think about all areas, not just the areas with devolution deals.

***Tobyn Hughes:*** We echo what Nottingham says about that. There is no one size that fits all when it comes to local transport planning. While it might look like a very complex and crowded landscape, that is because different areas have different needs. They had different historical reasons to form in different shapes. The role that the Department for Transport should be playing is to support local areas in taking the right form for them. Rather than discriminating for one area because it happens to suit the Department's particular interests at the time, we would say that the Department's role is to provide funding equally, and let local areas decide on the right form of transport planning for them and the right method of local delivery.

As you have already heard from a number of my fellow panellists, funding is certainly an issue. Competition funding in particular presents an issue for local areas; a lot of time and resources are spent by local areas competing one against the other for Department for Transport funding. Our view would generally be that we want funding to be set in long-term, stable amounts, which we can clearly understand and plan ahead for, rather than changing the way we present our funding every year in order to meet the DFT's particular competition. By setting out a long-term plan for funding we can make sure that we fit in with what the Department for Transport would like to see, but at the same time make sure that our local areas' needs are being best served.

Q274 **Chair:** Do you feel that areas not involved with devolution deals are losing out at the moment?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** It would depend. I do not think I could universally say that for all areas.

Q275 **Chair:** But are there some?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** Some areas certainly would feel that.

Q276 **Chair:** Can you name any of those areas?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** Nottingham would certainly be a case in point. But not all combined authorities have devolution deals signed at this moment in time. Nexus is from the north-east of England, and we do not have a devolution deal that we have entered into at the moment either. The important principle is not necessarily to favour areas with devolution deals and give them significantly more funding than other areas. We would seek to work with the Department so that all areas can bring forward plans that meet their local needs.

Q277 **Chair:** Is that happening, or is attention focused on the devolution areas, or potential devolution areas?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** In some areas it is, but in other areas the Department for Transport will bring forward new competitions that are not necessarily directly related to devolution but nevertheless lead to one area being pitted against another.

***Mike Waters:*** To follow up on the funding point, one of the advantages for us as an area benefiting from devolution is by bringing all our partner authorities together in a more coherent way, and bringing the mayor in. We also have access to longer-term funding certainty. It has been a repackaging of much of the money that we would have got, but with longer-term certainty. That enables us to plan more strategically. I think your original question was about what the Department might be able to do to assist us to operate better.

Q278 **Chair:** Yes. What do you think they should be doing?

***Mike Waters:*** There is a role around the DFT working almost to compel a higher level of inter-agency co-operation, be it around data sharing or some of the planning; to touch on some of the points made by my fellow panellists, it is the planning between Highways England, Network Rail and ourselves, as HS2 starts to deliver. The way a lot of that activity is going to be co-ordinated and put on the network—the local, regional and national network—will have a fundamental impact on urban congestion. There is clearly scope to do that in a really joined-up way, provided that all the major agencies are fully co-operating. We are very keen on that, obviously, and the DFT can have a good role in making sure that it really happens, as opposed to lip service.

Q279 **Huw Merriman:** Using the buses Bill as an example, the powers for franchising are going to be granted to devolved mayors but not, with one

exception, to unitary councils. The Government take the view that devolved mayors have all the powers concentrated in one office, unlike other structures, but doesn't that structure of powers exist for unitaries as well? Why wouldn't you treat unitary authorities in the same way as you treat devolved mayors, and then separate the district council/county council mix where the powers are all slightly overlapping?

***Chris Carter:*** Obviously geography comes into it. We may have the powers within our own unitary area, but in the conurbation of greater Nottingham there are about four different districts and a county council in that wider area. The travel to work area is a much bigger geography and you would have a larger number of authorities involved in the planning. That is where the complexity comes in.

Q280 **Huw Merriman:** Do you believe it would be better to devolve powers to unitaries, and perhaps encourage more unitary authorities to come into existence by giving them the same types of powers as have been given to directly elected mayors?

***Chris Carter:*** Yes, we would definitely favour that. If you could have larger unitary authorities covering those areas, it would make a lot of sense.

***Tobyn Hughes:*** In the specific case of the buses Bill we do not consider that it should be confined to authorities with directly elected mayors. Again, we think it should be a local matter for local areas to decide. Many different areas of the UK have structures that are capable of strong delivery models. Take, for example, my own area. We own and operate a metro system with around 40 million passenger trips each year. Just because we do not have an elected mayor at the moment, we do not understand why necessarily we would not be able to do the same for a bus system.

Q281 **Huw Merriman:** Taking the converse of that, if I may, what do we do with areas where the overlap in powers is such that very little gets done? In the area I am more used to, there is a district council and a county council. Alongside the police, none of them can decide who is responsible for policing on-the-street car parking. As a result no one does it and people park willy-nilly. That is a classic example, where three different powers are all disagreeing and not taking responsibility. What can we do to sort out those types of authorities? It is the complete opposite of the directly elected mayor system.

***Tobyn Hughes:*** It is a matter of trying to build strong local groupings. It does not necessarily have to be one with a directly elected mayor, although there are clearly advantages in a structure like that, as London has shown. Elsewhere, it is having a combined transport plan and linking it, as I said earlier on, with economic growth and a common view of how local communities need to develop. I do not think there is one specific correct answer. Different structures are appropriate in different parts of the country. Bringing all those factors together in one place is what

should make the difference. Combined authorities are certainly bodies that have a responsibility for all those areas, and they tend to be the ones that have a focus on getting the right level of powers. Parking enforcement may be one example, but traffic management enforcement is another area entirely. All the areas in the combined authorities would certainly want the ability to enforce moving traffic. At the moment it is not something they have the power to do.

Q282 **Chair:** Let's move on to traffic management. Ms Shawcross, can you give us any practical examples of how Transport for London's surface transport and traffic operations centre has helped to keep traffic moving?

***Val Shawcross:*** That piece of technology—the control room—is only one example of a whole panoply of opportunities that London has to try to manage its traffic flows. If I may just comment quickly on the last point, I was looking briefly at the figures on road-space use and the number of kilometres travelled by people in London. It is very obvious that there is a huge linkage with our ability to run bus services in a regulated and controlled way; 11% of the road space is taken up by buses and coaches, but 57% of passenger kilometres are so made. It is a huge and important foundation for a sustainable transport policy.

Transport for London, although it is only directly responsible for 5% of the road network—specifically the red routes—runs every set of traffic lights in London, on a technical commission. There are over 6,000 traffic lights, about 4,500 of which are now operated with computer control. They are operated by SCOOT, which is split cycle offset optimisation technology. That is a very responsive way—

Q283 **Chair:** What does that mean?

***Val Shawcross:*** It is a fantastic phrase.

**Chair:** It sounds very good.

***Val Shawcross:*** Basically it means that the technology available allows the traffic lights to give extra time when required. Using its algorithms, it manages the weight of traffic, including people cycling and road-based car traffic, in a way that is more sensitive. It changes according to the demands on the road network.

There is a very conscious ability for Transport for London to intervene through its control centre in what is going on on the roads. For example, if you visit the centre, you will see that it has the most fantastic camera-based technology with very high resolution. Small incidents like a vehicle breaking down on a main road, or illegal deliveries going on, allow Transport for London to home in with the cameras, identify the vehicles and mobilise police and other resources to try to get the incident moved along. We have a serious traffic congestion problem at the moment, as you are probably aware. Research shows us that about 25% of that issue, broadly defined, is caused by immediate incidents, such as breakdowns, roadworks or things that are going on in the network. About 75% is

simply the weight of traffic in the road space. Transport for London's operational centre allows for quite a lot of active management of what is going on in the network.

Q284 **Robert Flello:** I have a couple of questions on the back of that. You touched on this a bit, Ms Shawcross. One of the issues is the interaction of roadworks, however good SCOOT may or may not be. A classic example is what is happening at the moment and has been happening for some time on Victoria Street. There are a couple of sets of pedestrian lights and then the junction where all the work is going on around Victoria Station. There is a box junction, and it is not quite clear whether it is live or not because it is partly faded out and covered in tarmac, and there are five lanes of traffic all meeting. One of the interaction problems is that those traffic lights may have been set up at a time when there were no roadworks, but now, with those works going on, traffic is backing up all the way down Victoria Street.

To what extent are you able, and do you have powers at the moment—if you do not have the powers, would you like the powers—to say to whoever is doing the roadworks, "Right, you need to come up with a proper plan of how it is going to impact on the existing road network and the existing traffic light system"? Perhaps you need to decommission some of the pedestrian crossings. What sort of powers would you like, or do you think it is all fine at the moment?

***Val Shawcross:*** There are quite a few changes that we would like to make in order to empower Transport for London, and indeed the councils, to try to manage that kind of situation. For example, we would like legislation to extend beyond the utility companies to cover non-utility companies, so that crane operators and developers with hoardings could be incentivised to use less road space. It is that kind of issue.

We have two things that we use at the moment. The London permit scheme, or LoPS, which was introduced in 2010, gives us the power to give permission to do roadworks. One of the problems we have with that is that the charges for the scheme are completely undermined by the very low fixed penalty notice charging regime. In business terms it is cheaper to take the hit than it is to pay for the permit, so we think there needs to be some co-ordination of the penalty charging regime. It needs to be boosted in order to make the permit scheme much more effective and a better deterrent. That is also true of the lane rental scheme at the moment. You can pay about £1,000 a day in order to dig up the road, and that incentivises you to get out of there very quickly, but we need things like legislation to address overrunning at the weekends. That scheme is not there.

There is quite a lot of detail about those schemes, which in principle are good and we all welcome them. It was good that the Government introduced them, but some refinement would make them work better for the future. Associated with that, we need to look at the causes of some of the roadwork issues. A couple of things come to mind. For example, we

need a proper system of financial accountability for deep structural damage to the roads. When there is road work done and a repair effected that lessens the lifetime capability of that road, we need better powers to make sure that highway damage is restored deeply and properly.

**Robert Flello:** Can I draw that question out a bit more?

***Val Shawcross:*** Before I forget, Mr Flello, the other thing is the failure to maintain apparatus. We are concerned about the lack of regulatory powers to ensure that utility companies maintain their utilities properly. We have had some really significant water main bursts in London that were probably predictable. I wanted to mention that because it has been a significant problem for us in London.

Q285 **Robert Flello:** Absolutely. Drawing on what you have just said, a moment ago you said you only have oversight of 5% of London's roads. Is that sensible? It strikes me that, if you are trying to operate a London city-wide transport system, a very big part of which is the road infrastructure, you need to be able to say, "It makes more sense for those roads to be one-way, for those roads to flow in one direction and those ones to flow in another direction, and it makes sense to close that one off so it does not slow traffic on that road." Surely having control of more of the capital's roads might be more sensible. It would make sense for other areas as well.

***Val Shawcross:*** The art is in the co-ordination. Fifteen of the 33 boroughs in London joined in with us on the LoPS scheme. The legislation allows that to happen, so that has been very good. Where there is a problem, the boroughs have been very active participants. The lane rental scheme operates on our red route system, which carries 85% of the traffic anyway in London. The red route system is important and that is where it really matters. In fact, we only deploy it in half of our network because, again, it is about picking the areas that are most sensitive. The Mayor has the Mayor's transport strategy power. In early May, we will produce the first Mayor's transport strategy for this Mayor. It will be the third one. It has some statutory impact. The boroughs will be required to produce local implementation plans that fit into the MTS. Having said that, we are very actively talking to them at the moment.

Q286 **Chair:** When will that be produced?

***Val Shawcross:*** We are aiming to get the Mayor's transport strategy draft out for consultation before the middle of May. At the same time we will be producing draft guidance for the local implementation plans. The Mayor's transport strategy empowers the Mayor, for example, if he so wishes and we may well want to do this, to change and upgrade the congestion charging scheme. Equally, it requires the boroughs to bring forward plans that are broadly in compliance with the Mayor's transport strategy. It allows us to use our funding regime to support them when they do projects and schemes that we support.

**Chair:** It is very interesting to hear this, but we need slightly shorter

answers as we have a lot to get through.

Q287 **Iain Stewart:** To follow on from Mr Flello's questions, I would like to ask about when you look at reviewing the sequencing of traffic lights and related matters. In addition to the volume of traffic, what other criteria do you assess? Let me illustrate that with an example. When I stay in London my flat is on the highway leading to Tower Bridge junction. It is one of the main arterial routes into London from the east. Since the cycle highway was constructed—I am not asking you to get into that—the congestion along the highway is enormous. Many of the vehicles are HGVs and industrial vehicles emitting goodness knows what, and the air quality in the vicinity has deteriorated rapidly. There is a primary school nearby. Do you assess those kinds of factors, in addition to the sheer volume of traffic, when you reassess how you sequence junctions and related flow issues?

***Val Shawcross:*** The SCOOT system operates automatically. We are aiming, essentially, to make all the traffic lights operate automatically. The issue of air quality is a very serious one, as you state. We are in consultation to introduce ultra-low emission zone charges. In fact, the first T-charge—toxicity charge—will come into force for central London in October this year. There is a major stepped programme that will mean that by 2020 every heavy goods vehicle in the entirety of London, including buses and coaches, will be charged if they are not Euro 6 compliant. There is already a programme in place to address that, but I agree that a reduction in traffic overall and a reduction in traffic congestion would make a big contribution to improving the air quality in London, and it is something we will be looking at further as part of the Mayor's transport strategy.

Q288 **Iain Stewart:** Forgive me, but that is some way down the line—noble objectives as they are. Is there not something that could be done more immediately? We have an issue right now that could potentially be solved by a different sequencing of the major junction at Tower Gateway. Would that be reviewed as a more immediate measure?

***Val Shawcross:*** The active management that goes on in the control centre of traffic flows in London plays tunes—for want of a better phrase—on the lighting system the entire time. For example, if there is an incident, a demonstration or a breakdown, there is a complex related set of changes to try to manage the scheme very proactively. That goes on daily, and indeed hourly. At the end of the day, the problem is that at the moment the road network is dramatically overstressed by traffic. In the long run what we need to achieve is yet more modal shift and certainly much greater efficiency with light goods vehicles. There has been a dramatic growth in light goods deliveries since the internet age began.

Q289 **Chair:** To what extent will information from connected cars and smart roads infrastructure make a real difference outside London? We keep hearing about potential benefits, but what work is being done and what

can be realistically achieved?

***Mike Waters:*** I am glad you raised that, Chair; thank you. We have taken a delegation to look at the control centre in London. They have done some really good work but, essentially, the SCOOT technology is old; it has been around for several decades in development. What London has done brilliantly well is to roll it out comprehensively.

In the west Midlands we have been working a lot with the automotive and traffic signal industries to look at how we can connect the vehicles to the traffic signal system a lot more effectively. We have been building out a 42-mile real-world test circuit. Vehicle manufacturers such as Jaguar Land Rover, Ford and Tata come to test their vehicles in a real-world test environment, where we can look at real-world issues, such as when it is foggy and when connectivity drops out.

One of the other areas where we can look to get real benefits over the next five or 10 years is to try to optimise traffic signals in a collaborative way as priority vehicles approach them. At the moment, the technology exists to detect a bus, an ambulance or whatever it happens to be and change the traffic signal sequence to suit them. What we can do with better communication between the connected vehicle and the traffic signal system is get the vehicle to change its approach speed, as well as, at the same time, optimising when the lights go from red to green. That is a much more complex problem, as you can imagine.

The benefits of a more intelligent vehicle fleet interacting with the overarching management of the intelligent transport system means that we will be able to move away from some of the things that you observe now in major urban areas. Drivers spot a problem on one of the apps like Waze or Google and everybody flocks to avoid a congestion problem and inadvertently creates a congestion issue that may be more significant than the one they were avoiding in the first place. We have observed that kind of behaviour. The connected vehicle provides the ability to balance that more finely and get an extra percentage out of the system. Additionally, it gives us a route to communicate with the vehicle occupants, if it is an autonomous vehicle, or to the decision maker in a connected vehicle.

Q290 **Chair:** Is this happening now?

***Mike Waters:*** We are trialling a lot of this stuff now in a real-world environment with the manufacturers and the tier 1 suppliers who provide the automotive industry with a lot of the componentry they fit in their vehicles.

Q291 **Chair:** Would anybody else like to say anything about what is happening now in this field, and what more could be done with more assistance?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** I want to make the point, if I may, that most urban areas in one form or another have urban traffic control or management systems. Unquestionably, London is the leader in the country in this and

has done extremely well, but most urban areas have traffic cameras connected to a SCOOT system to one degree or another. They have air quality monitors and number plate readers to track cars through the area to optimise journey speeds. Quite often what is being sought is not necessarily to respond to air quality, which is something we all want to achieve down the line, but to make the reliability of journey speeds more consistent. That allows people to plan more coherently when it comes to their daily trip to work. There is also the movement of freight. The thing that road hauliers and the movers of goods complain most about is the fact that one day it can take them several hours to get around the western bypass around Tyneside, and the next day it takes them a few minutes. They cannot properly plan for dispatch and delivery.

In terms of data for planning and delivery, there are all sorts of new datasets becoming available. You mentioned the point about connected cars, but equally mobile phone data is a very rich resource that we are now incorporating in our traffic planning models. If we are looking at making a particular intervention, be it building a road or making a new timetable adjustment to a bus, we can model how traffic will respond to that rather than basing it on old-fashioned roadside surveys by people with clipboards, stopwatches and pens. We are buying vast tracts of data from the mobile phone companies, where it is available.

Q292 **Clive Efford:** You buy large tracts of mobile phone data. What does that tell you? What does it enable you to model?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** It tells us where people start and end their journey on the road network. We are able to track them through the system. Rather than a sample of one in several thousand, which would have been the old-fashioned roadside sample, we are now able to track the vast majority of people using a road system and work out where they are going as they go through the area.

Q293 **Clive Efford:** I am a bit bemused by that. How do you know which mobile phones are in a car?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** The mobile phone companies make data available. Your phone knows where you are most of the time if you have the right parts of your phone enabled. The mobile phone companies have that recorded and they sell anonymised versions of it, so that we are then able to look at a high level at how many people are doing different types of journeys.

Q294 **Clive Efford:** I am intrigued. Presumably they are able to make assumptions about people because of the movement of the mobile phone connecting with different aerials along the way. Is that what it does?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** We are able to take what has been recorded over a particular period of time and feed it into our models. The models then make assumptions about future changes to traffic movements.

Q295 **Clive Efford:** I talk to taxi drivers who drive around London all the time. They are constantly being challenged by people with their mobile phone

telling them where all the traffic congestion is. One of the complaints about that is that people who are pretty limited in their knowledge of roads tend to stick to main roads. The information that they are getting on traffic is influenced by the limited knowledge of the people who are part of the network feeding the information in. Therefore, it is limited and focused around main roads and is not as smart as some of the companies that sell this information would have us believe. Is that something you have come across?

***Mike Waters:*** There is some truth in that, particularly going back a couple of years. What we find now is that the technology companies—the big disruptors, the Googles, the Ubers and others—are harvesting a great deal of data from a lot of different sources. The dataset that a lot of the guidance and journey planning advice uses, whatever the mode, whether taxi, car or bus, is growing increasingly sophisticated and much more reliable. We have been dealing with a technology that has appeared very rapidly and is developing very rapidly, and will indeed continue to develop at quite a pace. As we see other technologies emerge, and other ways for people to make their choice, that trend will only continue.

**Chair:** We will move on to look at managing demand.

Q296 **Clive Efford:** Does the London congestion charge need upgrading?

***Val Shawcross:*** We think it needs looking at very closely. Hopefully, the Mayor will be saying something about that in the draft transport strategy, when he has signed it off. There are some further things that we could do with the existing technology, because there have been some significant changes, not just enormous population growth in London but changes in our lifestyles. The obvious issue to look at is the fact that the data now show us that on the shoulders of the congestion charging time—the very early morning, in the evening after 6 o'clock and at weekends—it is actually worse than during the congestion charging hours. Taxi drivers are probably telling you that it is really difficult in London in the evening, and that is because the congestion charge zone ends at 6 o'clock at the moment.

There are a number of things we can look at, but they are relatively short term. For the future, we need to look at the technology we have. The technology is basically a camera-based system. It takes note of 120,000 vehicles coming into central London during the day. It uses automatic number plate recognition technology, but it does not incentivise in any way those journeys coming to an end. Once you have paid your congestion charge fee, you can in theory drive around all day. There are lots of things that need to be more sophisticated for the future of the congestion charge scheme. That is something we have to look at in the Mayor's transport strategy for the future. As we are now looking at introducing a regime around low emission charging, over time we will need to carry that function as well.

Q297 **Clive Efford:** We have seen a reduction in private vehicles in London as

a result of the congestion charge but an increase in delivery vans and minicabs. Do you think that in the future the charge needs to reflect those areas of growth—I believe the average speed of traffic now is slower than when the congestion charge first came in—and should we try to anticipate the other areas of growth that might come in and fill the gaps if you were to deal with the vans and the minicabs?

***Val Shawcross:*** I will talk about the problem without jumping ahead to what the solutions might be. We are actively looking at all these things at the moment.

**Chair:** But we are looking for solutions.

***Val Shawcross:*** We are all looking for solutions. You are quite right: I mentioned that 120,000 number plates are captured on the system during the day, and 61,000 of those are chargeable. There has been a big growth in the proportion of uncharged vehicles within the zone.

Q298 **Clive Efford:** What vehicles are in that element?

***Val Shawcross:*** Private hire vehicles are the principal number. The number of private hire vehicles in London has more than doubled in the last three or four years.

Q299 **Clive Efford:** Is that sensible? Should we not have a cap on it?

***Val Shawcross:*** It is not something we have enough leverage over. One of the things that the previous Mayor and the current Mayor asked of the Government is the right to cap the number of private hire licences. At the moment, we basically have a problem going both ways, because there is nothing legally to stop a private hire vehicle registered elsewhere operating in London, and vice versa. The private hire legislation seems to have fallen out of kilter with the technical realities of the day. The growth of private hire vehicles is causing a significant congestion problem. If you look at the efficiency of the road space at the moment, 52% of the road space is taken up by private cars, private hire vehicles and taxis, but they are only carrying 19% of passengers around. There clearly is a problem, and that is something we need to look at.

At the moment, light goods vehicles take up about 20% of the road space in London. There was Assembly scrutiny of that not too many years ago. The general feeling is that the enormous growth of deliveries in London has been very inefficient. People used to go shopping and buy four or five items on one journey. These days, deliveries are multiple and often very inefficient. They are failing; two out of three internet deliveries to homes fail, so there are journeys that are basically fruitless. There is some anecdotal evidence that for companies in London up to half of their post room space is taken up by people having their internet shopping goods delivered at work.

Q300 **Chair:** What is the solution?

***Val Shawcross:*** It is bringing vehicles into London, so clearly we have to look at what we can do with our congestion charging regime. We have seen some very good models of freight consolidation operated by the business improvement districts in the Westminster area. There are some voluntaristic programmes that can be worked with grant aid funding. Companies can be very co-operative about trying to reduce the number of vehicles.

Q301 **Will Quince:** I raised this at the last session. Given the points you have just made about failed deliveries and the sheer volume now of online orders, with delivery vans or cars full of parcels racing around the capital, what can we do to encourage deliveries in the evening when we know more people are in and our roads are less congested?

***Val Shawcross:*** We are always in the business of talking carrots and sticks. Sometimes when you create a stick, you give yourself the potential to encourage. There are a couple of things. The first is that there are some tunes that could be played around congestion charging. Under the current road Act powers, local authorities can make some areas traffic free and delivery only. Voluntary schemes for freight consolidation can be very successful. Companies like UPS, which have a very good interest in sustainable delivery, are looking at how they could move to things like pedicab, cycle delivery and walking delivery. There are local authorities outside the UK that have used powers to try to force that into place.

Q302 **Chair:** Would any of the other witnesses like to tell us what might be happening in their areas on this? It is not just a London issue, is it?

***Chris Carter:*** I can talk about an alternative system we have in Nottingham—the workplace parking levy. It is an alternative way of addressing congestion, which recognises that 70% of peak-time traffic is commuting. The principle of the workplace parking levy is that employers who have more than 10 parking spaces pay a charge for each of those spaces. That charge is currently about £379 per space, and the money goes to the local authority to invest directly in public transport improvements.

In Nottingham, we have specifically invested in extensions to our tram system, to improvements to Nottingham station and to investment in electric buses that basically support our tendered bus network. That has delivered public transport improvements. The principle of the workplace parking levy is that it has two effects. It has a direct effect in terms of potentially influencing the cost of people's journeys, although that is dependent on whether or not the employer passes on the workplace parking charge, because it is on the employer and not the employee. It depends on the actions of the employer themselves, in terms of whether or not they take action to implement things such as travel plans or manage the amount of parking that they provide at their workplaces.

There is a secondary effect, which is basically through the investment in improvements in public transport. That is the bigger effect. It has enabled Nottingham to expand its tram network, which otherwise it would not have been able to do. It has provided the funding. The Department for Transport currently requires us to provide significant amounts of local contributions to such schemes. It has provided our local contribution to that scheme. We have been able to invest in a scale of public transport improvement that we would not otherwise have been able to do.

Q303 **Clive Efford:** Would you recommend workplace charging to other cities? Do you think it can operate in a city like London?

***Chris Carter:*** Definitely. Our experience is that it has been an effective tool. I think it would be appropriate in other cities. I am not saying it would necessarily be the most appropriate tool everywhere, but in certain cities that have strong attractions it is part of the carrot-and-stick approach where you want to influence people's travel behaviour. It is a tool that definitely should be looked at.

Q304 **Will Quince:** This is probably a question for Ms Shawcross. At the moment, if you are driving a delivery van into central London, you pay the congestion charge whether you are delivering one parcel and coming straight back out or whether you drive round all day because your van is packed to the gunnels with failed delivery after failed delivery. Often they are paid per parcel, so it is just going round and round. Is that fair and is it helping to ease urban congestion?

***Val Shawcross:*** It is something that at the moment is an unfortunate phenomenon due to the fact that the technology is 15 years old. Once the technology is more capable, there will be a more subtle and effective system in place. We ought to be encouraging employers to ban private deliveries to premises in central London. We need to be looking at click-and-collect-type facilities in public transport modes so that people can collect their deliveries on their way home.

Q305 **Robert Flello:** There is a risk with all this that we demonise the delivery driver or the delivery company, or the passenger who does not want to be on a massively crowded tube train, or who lives outside Nottingham and has to drive somewhere to get to their workplace or to an outlying station where they can park safely and securely and then get a train. Somebody in Staffordshire might not be covered by Transport for West Midlands even though they are part of the west midlands. They might want to get into Birmingham city centre but do not want to stand on the journey home all the way to Wolverhampton in a packed lobby area with people fainting around them. There are lots of reasons why people decide not to use public transport. It might be because they cannot use public transport. There are single parents who have to get their shopping delivered to their workplace because otherwise they are not going to get it in time to serve their kids tea, or whatever. There are a lot of issues.

I want to pick up on a couple of things, if I may. First, on road space

there has been no mention of the evidence we have had so far of a reduction in road space in London. Car use has dropped by 53%. Yes, there have been more taxis, more Uber and more delivery vans. I question whether there are more taxis, more Uber and more delivery vans because people want to use a type of public transport but they do not want to use the buses or the underground. Given that traffic levels seem to have fallen, even with the increase in delivery vans, we are being told that there is less road space and therefore that is increasing congestion. As my colleague said a few moments ago, that means that the average speed of traffic has fallen from 11 mph to 8 mph. Surely a bigger issue that nobody has mentioned so far is road space.

***Mike Waters:*** London is unique. Looking across the area, vehicles are up, certainly in the west midlands, and a big part of that is van growth. We are seeing changes where younger people default to the taxi over public transport such as buses. The older generation coming into retirement increasingly default to private car use because they are more affluent and more licensed than they were previously. That drives an increase in traffic.

Q306 **Robert Flello:** What is being done to find out why that is happening? Why would people rather pay three, four or five times the cost for a taxi journey than a bus journey? Why would they rather use the car with all the attendant congestion charges, toxicity charges and the abuse with driving?

***Mike Waters:*** I do not think there is a single reason. It varies depending on the demographic or the situation that you are talking about. Obviously bus companies are subject to the same congestion, so they have to spend more to feed more buses into a network that is more congested, and their service becomes less reliable and more fraught. In some sectors of society, we see increasing affluence, where there are more choices and the car is an option, whereas it was not previously. In other sectors of society, there is clearly the opposite problem, but the taxi is accessible. We see the trend with the easy ability to share journeys and split fares in a way that makes it relatively accessible for the youngest.

Q307 **Chair:** Mr Hughes, what can you tell us about what is happening in other authorities?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** It is a common point of principle across all urban areas that bus usage is reducing and that, if everything else is equal, people tend to prefer car usage for some of the advantageous reasons that Mr Flello mentioned. Nevertheless, there are areas where public transport networks and demand for them is booming—in particular, the UK's railways in all parts of the country, and tram and light rail networks. Speaking for the Tyne and Wear area, I can say that we carry 40 million passengers per year and we take at least 15 million car trips off the road each year. In Nottingham's case, their tram system carries around 15 million journeys and demand is growing. We see that across all our

members, whether it is in Greater Manchester, Nottingham or the west midlands.

Where there is a good, attractive alternative to cars, people will use it. However, it is a constant requirement to make sure that the pricing is attractive and that the service is easily accessible in a variety of ways. It has to be easy to find information about using the service, and people have to find it a safe, comfortable and pleasant experience. Certainly, again speaking in terms of bus operators as well as light rail and tram operators, where investment is made to improve a service, such as wi-fi or more comfortable seating, people use it to a greater degree. That might be part of the key to the future in terms of the question that was asked. I can speak from personal experience; people do not want to sit in a traffic jam being unproductive when, alternatively, they can be reading a book or an iPad or whatever it is nowadays or engaging in social activity while sitting on a bus or a railway seat. If we can invest in technology to make public transport more attractive and more in line with people's lifestyle needs, we will have more success in that area. To go back to a point that was made earlier about parcel delivery, it can dovetail with that as well. We have recently installed lockers for parcel collection at Tyne and Wear metro stations. That has been a feature on the tube and many other transport networks. People's lifestyles can come together in one place. We should be trying to target and reduce single occupancy or single parcel car or van usage, leaving road space clear for people who really need it, be it a bus or a van laden with parcels.

Q308 **Clive Efford:** If we have a congestion charge and it is to deal with congestion, should we continue to give a discount to cars such as hybrids or low emission vehicles?

***Val Shawcross:*** We are keeping the congestion charge under active review. The Mayor's transport strategy will be the first really good opportunity to look at how the charge needs to be refreshed in its management.

Q309 **Clive Efford:** This is a question to all of you. Should we be moving towards a national road user charging scheme or can the issue be dealt with at local level?

**Chair:** Would anyone like to comment on that? No one wants to comment?

**Clive Efford:** Is that because you fear losing revenue to the Treasury rather than to local government?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** I think I would repeat our mantra as an urban transport group, which is that decisions like that are best taken at local level to meet local circumstances.

Q310 **Chair:** Mr Carter, you have a lot of experience in another mode of transport—Nottingham tram. What are its benefits and what has it achieved?

***Chris Carter:*** In 2004, when the tram system was first put in, it consisted of a single line that carried up to 10 million passengers. We have now extended that tram with two further lines. That enables us to carry approximately 15 million passengers a year, and those numbers are now going up. The second phase was only completed in August 2015, so we are still on the upward curve in that respect.

One of the significant features of the Nottingham tram network is that we have significant park and ride sites at the end of each of the lines. We have approximately 7,000 park and ride spaces on each of the main routes and they intersect all the motorway junctions into Nottingham and a number of the other main radial routes. That enables people who are not directly served by the tram route to simply drive into those park and rides, park their vehicle during the day and use the tram into the city centre. They are at least using public transport for part of their journey, particularly the most congested part of their journey, and it provides an attractive alternative. One of the debates about trams is that they are more expensive and difficult to implement, but they seem to have an element of slightly more attractiveness for car users in encouraging them out of their cars and on to public transport.

Q311 **Chair:** How many people have been encouraged out of their cars to go on the tram?

***Chris Carter:*** The first line was 2 million and a further 3 million from the additional lines.

Q312 **Chair:** We have been told that small businesses in Nottingham have not received the benefits they were promised from the tram. What would you say to that?

***Chris Carter:*** The issue has been around the construction of tramlines. One of the issues with trams is that there is major construction. There were two particularly densely populated areas through which two of the tram extensions had to be built. One of the lessons learned is that that has a very big impact on people, both residents and small businesses.

In order to address the issues for small businesses, we had a compensation scheme in place. We have given funding to small businesses to help them through the difficulties of the tram construction. We acknowledge that there were some difficulties during the building, particularly with regard to utility works. Some of the utility works took longer than they should have done and it was more difficult to co-ordinate the works than it should have been, and that resulted in more disruption for some of those businesses. We were flexible. We changed some of our compensation rules and we paid out more to individual businesses to help to try to address that, but we accept that those people were adversely affected. Some businesses relocated but, as far as we know, there has been no loss of any business directly affected by the tram.

Q313 **Chair:** Are you saying you could have done it better?

***Chris Carter:*** There are always lessons to be learned with regard to the co-ordination of works and co-ordination of utility works. The way we communicate with the public could have been improved. There are always things you can learn.

Q314 **Iain Stewart:** I am a huge supporter of tram and light rail systems. Taking them out was one of the biggest public transport mistakes that we made in the 1950s and 1960s. There is a mixed picture on how new tram systems are being put in. Some operate very well, but you just have to look at Edinburgh to realise what the difficulties can be. That was a greatly mismanaged project. You have different tram systems in all your cities. What lessons nationally do you think can be learned by other cities that may want to install or reinstall a tram system, or extend an existing network? Is a pool of knowledge being collated so that mistakes in some projects are not replicated elsewhere?

***Chris Carter:*** Obviously we try to share any lessons we have learned with other parts of the industry. I am not necessarily sure that the way the Nottingham tram was delivered is very different from the way it was delivered in Edinburgh. The risk was transferred to a tram construction company, so it was not the public sector that bore the risk. It was incentivised for the construction company to make sure that they delivered the whole of the scheme. They bore the risk in terms of any cost overruns. It was something that was learned from other experience, and it is very important. It did not have an additional cost for the public sector. It took a bit longer to deliver, but now it has been implemented it is operating very successfully; it is operationally reliable and patronage is growing.

Q315 **Iain Stewart:** Do you think there is a role for the Government to do more to co-ordinate those lessons and incentivise schemes?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** Generally, it is for the promoters of tram schemes to make sure that they learn lessons from each other. My colleague has explained how Nottingham learned some of the lessons of previous schemes, but there is something the Government can do with regard to trams in respect of the tram/train project in the south Yorkshire area. We have been waiting many years—something like seven years—for the first tram to run on a train track. The trams have been delivered and are capable of operating, but the infrastructure has not been developed as yet by Network Rail for them to operate on. The Department for Transport can certainly play a role, along with Network Rail, in making sure that the lessons are learned about why it has taken so long and cost a significant amount of money, so that that is not replicated elsewhere.

A means of getting rapid expansion of tram systems in urban areas would certainly be to make greater use of Network Rail over freight lines, or on redundant alignments that could be reinstated relatively easily because they are protected, rather than some of the intrusive ways of building

tram lines through urban areas that require lots of interface with utilities, which is where a lot of the expense can come from. Where there are old railway lines or wagon ways that could be reinstated as a tram line and connected together, we could see quite a significant difference in urban areas, but we need the south Yorkshire scheme to come to fruition before we can progress with that.

Q316 **Chair:** I want to ask you about bus lanes. How do you measure the success of bus lanes? How do you know if they are working?

***Mike Waters:*** As no doubt you are aware, Coventry in our area is currently engaged in a trial to measure the effect of bus lanes in the city. It has roughly 8 kilometres of bus lane and it is running in four phases to trial the impact of those bus lanes as they take out roughly 25% each time. They measure the full impact on journey reliability for private vehicles and bus users for the whole network, and on journey speed. They measure that using some of the mobile phone and GPS data that we spoke about earlier, along with operational data from the bus companies.

A key point is that it is something being tried following lessons and experience, trawling with other authorities around the UK, but importantly with the full co-operation and collaboration of the bus operators themselves. A number of bus lanes could have arrived in an urban area some time back in history and the tendency is for them to stay, whereas the Traffic Management Act directs that we seek the expeditious movement of traffic. That is what we need to do, and if the bus lane assists with that and provides a measurable benefit, which we can actually observe, it is positive. If it is not, and is not helping with the overall operation of the network, it needs to come out.

***Tobyn Hughes:*** A lot of buses nowadays are equipped with quite sophisticated technology. They record an awful lot of information as they progress down the street, whereas previously it would have had to be estimated manually. A bus using AVL and GPS technology can now tell us the speed at which it progresses. There has been a value put on bus lanes as a UK collective by a body called Greener Journeys. It asked KPMG consultants to produce an estimate. The impact was assessed as being that, for every £1 invested in bus lanes, the country's economy as a whole benefited by £3.32. It is quite a precise number, but it is based on productivity gains from people not sitting around in immovable traffic jams but going on a bus and getting to their destination more quickly.

It is not just about bus lanes themselves. Prioritising bus movements can happen in a variety of ways, sometimes less obviously intrusively than a segregated bus lane. Ms Shawcross mentioned traffic signals through the London traffic control centre. There are also bus gates to control movements down certain roads, so that buses can pass through where cars cannot. I can give you two examples where our members measured some of the schemes that they put in place. In Hazel Grove in Manchester, there was a mixed intervention using a variety of different bus priority measures. That reduced the variability of buses. It is not

necessarily the fast or the slow; it is that one day it is really quick and the next day it is really slow. That is what makes passengers very cross when they are at the bus stop wondering where the bus is; the bus is somewhere but it is just a bad congestion day. The Hazel Grove scheme actually reduced the variability from one day to the next by 50%; in other words, the bus was twice as reliable as in the past. In my own area, in Gateshead, we put in place a mixed scheme that reduced the journey time of local buses by 5%. That was by a combination of measures such as gates through which only buses could pass and phasing lights so that buses had priority.

**Chair:** Are there any more questions on bus lanes?

Q317 **Huw Merriman:** This is somewhat loosely related to bus lanes. Mr Hughes, I noted that about five minutes ago you said that car users did not want to be stuck in traffic that is not moving, but as we take a look around we see that people may not be happy doing it but they still choose to. My question to Ms Shawcross on that point is this. On the basis that London has a pretty good public transport system—it may not always work, but it is top rate in my view—is it not time to put policies in place that really say to the car driver, "There is no need for you to be in London unless you are driving large packages around or are mobility impaired"? There is no reason to be driving a car around, and therefore there should be more radical policies from the Mayor of London to prioritise other forms of transport such as bus, cycling and pedestrian movements. He should start to send that message through to the car.

***Val Shawcross:*** The regime that was introduced in 2003 was preceded by huge bus priority developments and the growth of the public transport system. The congestion charging regime and the development of the public transport system were closely co-ordinated. It is true that 15 years on we are ready for the next stage. The growth in congestion, particularly since 2014, has made London very difficult.

In pursuance of that, last month the Mayor issued his new Healthy Streets policy. We are going to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport as a matter of street design and as a matter of policy. Clearly, we want to protect and promote good and efficient freight movements, but it is not an efficient use of our road space for people to take to private vehicles. The problem is also very much in outer London now. If you look at the A13 and some areas on the outer edges of London, traffic congestion has become a real constraint on growth. It is very interesting to compare the growth that is going on in Croydon, which benefits from the tram and light rail system. Croydon is booming and is set to grow and develop, but further along south London places such as Kingston, which have aspirations for growth and development, are very constrained by the congested road network—the Tolworth roundabout, and so on. The road space is not there, and we have no capacity to create road space.

Q318 **Chair:** Are we ready to ban the car?

***Val Shawcross:*** I think we are ready to make a dramatic move forward. It is true that car ownership in central London is very low because the public transport system is very good. It could be better. Come 2018 when the Elizabeth line opens, there will be a 10% uplift in the public transport capacity of central London. We are ready to move on to the next stage.

Q319 **Chair:** What might that next stage be?

***Val Shawcross:*** I will come back in June and tell you.

Q320 **Robert Flello:** If the Mayor turned round tomorrow and said, "Let's ban cars in central London," there would be chaos on the underground and buses because there is not the capacity. It is great that the Elizabeth line is coming in, but if you want to get from Westminster to Euston to get home to Stoke, it is already a very congested line. If all of a sudden those 120,000 journeys are going to be piled on to the buses and underground, it is going to be very difficult, to say the least. It is great to hear blue-sky thinking, but isn't the reality that the system struggles to cope in London as it is?

***Val Shawcross:*** The Mayor would not actually have the power to ban traffic in central London. The congestion charge system is a charging system. It is a disproportionate charge. If you tried to charge a ridiculously high amount of money, it would probably be ruled illegal and the Government would have the power to stamp it out anyway. The question is: what can we do with our charging powers? Potentially the Mayor also has powers for workplace levies. What could we do with our ordinary road powers? What can be done with the boroughs on things like car parking regimes, and what can we do to improve the situation from where we are at the moment? We will always have to think very hard about special exemptions, special needs and making sure that London gets the servicing it needs. I do not think that things that are blanket will ever be on the agenda. However, we need to do more to manage the congestion from which we are suffering in London.

Q321 **Robert Flello:** On the point about bus lanes—I nearly said cycle lanes for some reason—and other forms of restricted lane use, it always makes me smile that a lot of these were introduced, and indeed continue to be introduced, seemingly without any evidence. It just seems that they are a great idea and therefore we must do them. It was reassuring to hear from a couple of people on the panel that evidence is now being gained as to whether they are a good idea or not. It does not seem necessarily to have stopped the flow of restricted use lanes across the country or in central London. Is that correct?

***Val Shawcross:*** I cannot answer for every decision that the previous Mayor took, except that we are totally in agreement that, as the population of London intensifies in the future, we need to transform the city. The most efficient way of moving people around, as well as the healthiest and lowest emission way, is walking, and then cycling and then public transport. We need to be pushing this.

Q322 **Robert Flello:** I hear what you say, but the reality is that if traffic is now moving more slowly as a result, that is surely creating more pollution and is therefore unhealthier.

***Val Shawcross:*** The metric we should be looking at is moving people and goods around rather than traffic. I was on Blackfriars Road this morning and took a photograph. There are 5% more people moving by cycle up Blackfriars Road in the morning rush hour than there are in all other private vehicles. It is a very efficient way of moving people around London. The younger generation very much want to be able to cycle safely, and increasingly older members of the public do as well. Our evidence is that cyclists make very efficient use of the road space. We are strategically planning where the next cycle routes should go. If there is a difference between what the Mayor's predecessor did and what the Mayor will be doing, it is that we will be much more mindful of the impact on pedestrians, to make sure that London is transformed into an environment where it is much easier, safer and more pleasant to walk.

Q323 **Robert Flello:** Before I move to Mr Hughes, so I that am clear, irrespective of the impact on pollution, more restricted access lanes will be built?

***Val Shawcross:*** It will be a very beneficial impact on our air quality to have more cycle lanes and more bus lanes. We will be moving ahead with a big programme of extending bus priority measures in London, because it is the cleanest and most efficient way of getting people around London. Every bus in London will be Euro 6 standard by 2020. We already have electric buses and we are going to pilot hydrogen buses. It is the most efficient way in terms of road space, and increasingly it will be one of the cleanest ways as well.

Q324 **Robert Flello:** But again there is the knock-on effect. Mr Hughes, I want to pick up on the KPMG report that you cited. Far be it for me to suggest that whoever is paying the bill for the report that gets written by such august bodies as KPMG would have any influence in terms of the metrics and systems they use to calculate these things. Do you know whether the figure of £3.32 that you quoted took into account the negative of people whose journeys were slowed as a result of the bus lane? I think you said that for every £1 invested in the bus lane, there was a benefit to the local economy of £3.32. Was that net of the loss to the economy from people whose journeys became slower?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** I am afraid I am unable to answer in detail, but I can certainly forward a copy of the report to the Committee for their perusal.

**Robert Flello:** That would be helpful.

***Tobyn Hughes:*** As a general principle of economic appraisal, the negative effects are netted off against any positive effects. I would expect that to be the case, but I would hesitate to confirm it in front of this august Committee without checking it. It is unlikely, certainly in any modern urban planning, that a bus lane would be put in place just as a

matter of prejudice or desire. It would generally be part of an overall plan for an urban area, a city or even a town, which took into account all sorts of different impacts. Part of it might be the desire to increase the space available for pedestrians. Part of it, in current times, will certainly be in terms of reducing pollution and improving air quality. Part of it might just be the overall appearance and attractiveness of a city centre. When taking into account all these different aspects of urban planning, the ability to move people around and get people to the areas where they need to work or access retail or other facilities is an integral part. That is why you will tend to see bus lanes or cycle lanes, or certain restricted access lanes, as a key feature of urban planning now, and no doubt for some time into the future.

Q325 **Chair:** Do you think that the effectiveness of those plans is assessed often enough to see if they are working or if adjustments need to be made?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** I believe it is. All interventions that are brought in, certainly at the current time, will be assessed as part of the project assessment after they have been put into place. Each area will also wish to make sure that the interventions they have are working effectively.

Q326 **Chair:** But does that happen?

***Tobyn Hughes:*** I believe it does, yes. Again, I cannot speak in detail for every single area, but as a matter of generality, yes, each local highways authority will want to make sure that what they have in place is being effective.

***Mike Waters:*** To build on that point, we have examples of where we are focusing, and I think all my colleagues will too. The end-to-end journey is important. There is a tendency to take a slice out and look at one aspect of the journey, but every car driver tends to start and finish as a pedestrian in their journey. You park somewhere and you walk somewhere. The environment you walk through is important. It is the same for a public transport user.

The measure on any given corridor needs to be tailored to that corridor. While there will be general rules that will work well in one area or one situation, you have to design it appropriately. In some cases, we have built new public transport interchanges and that has been the best possible thing to improve the overall public transport journey. In some cases, it has been the selective vehicle detection we talked about earlier. In some cases, we have actually put new bus lanes in and got some very good results from that. It is about the whole journey and trying to manage the congestion along that corridor.

I would like to raise a point that has not come up so far. One of the major tools we struggle to access is the ability to enforce moving traffic offences locally. That is something Ms Shawcross is able to do a lot more effectively in London than we can do outside London.

Q327 **Chair:** A number of different Governments have said they do not want to do that, because they are worried that local authorities will use those powers simply to raise revenue and upset motorists. Do you think they are right in thinking that?

***Mike Waters:*** It is rather like when we enforce, as we are able to, a bus gate; that money is ring-fenced to the transport system. I do not really see that argument, if I am honest. The revenues raised from any enforcement of moving traffic offences go directly back into the system, be that the continued upgrade of the traffic signal system so that it is functioning as it should, or the condition of the road or whatever. It is something that is recirculated directly. I do not see that argument.

Q328 **Chair:** How much is raised in London through moving traffic offences?

***Val Shawcross:*** Off the top of my head I could not answer that question. I am sorry.

**Chair:** We would be interested to know.

***Val Shawcross:*** Yes, we will write to you, Chair.

Q329 **Clive Efford:** I am interested in what Ms Shawcross said about car ownership in central London. You said it was down to the improvement in the public transport network. Does that mean that you can correlate the starting point for journeys by car in relation to area? For instance, south-east London does not have London Underground and relies very heavily on surface rail. Do more car journeys start in those parts of London as a result of more dispersed public transport?

***Val Shawcross:*** We know that there is a direct correlation. There is quite strong research to show the correlation between public transport access and car use and ownership. We understand that there are some areas that are more car dependent. If we look at our data, we will probably be able to demonstrate that areas in south London are more reliant on the car. If you look, for example, at house prices, significantly the south-east of London has had lower house prices. That is about access to public transport. We very strongly believe that the national rail network in south London is not run and used intensively enough, and that the rail franchising model fails as a model to run an effective suburban transport system for south London. We are on record as saying that.

Mr Flello made a point about car use going down. The point is about modal shift—fewer journeys by car. The population is growing so rapidly in London that we will carry on having a problem. We reckon that by 2040 there will be an additional 6 million trips per day in London. If you consider that there are about 6 million trips per day on the bus system at the moment, we have a huge challenge on growth. We do not have the road space and we cannot afford for those people to take to their cars or to take to their minicabs. Mode shift is still the aspiration we are trying to achieve.

Q330 **Clive Efford:** That is the most powerful argument I have heard for the DLR to Eltham yet.

***Val Shawcross:*** I think that sounds like a good idea.

**Chair:** Thank you all very much.