ITP Response to the Call for Ideas for the Integrated National Transport Strategy

Established in 1998, and part of the Royal HaskoningDHV family, ITP's award-winning multi-disciplinary transport planning team researches, designs, implements, monitors and evaluates sustainable transport initiatives. Our UK-based team focuses on promoting walking, cycling and public transport options for people's everyday journeys. ITP's work helps local and national governments around the world to develop and implement transport strategies that improve the way the world moves, whilst aiding private sector clients with sustainable planning and delivery of new commercial and residential developments at all scales.

In November 2024, the Department for Transport (DfT) signalled its intention to develop a new ten-year Integrated National Transport Strategy that defines an overarching framework for the design, construction, and operation of transport systems in England. The DfT invited individuals and organisations to share their views, by responding to specific questions focused on central topics, including:

- Ways to create a more interconnected transport network.

- Smarter ways of using data and technology to enhance the system

- Methods to improve decision-making processes

Our multidisciplinary team has shared their perspectives on local public transport, sustainable travel behaviour change, infrastructure design, local transport strategy, major scheme business development, and integrated land-use planning.

The below details ITP's response to this 'Call for Ideas'.

1 Question: In your opinion, how could the transport network be better 'joined-up'?

More integrated land use and transport planning

Subpar development in inappropriate locations, coupled with infrastructure focused on highways, tends to dominate and hinders the use of active and sustainable transportation modes. To achieve optimal results for accessible and equitable access to opportunities, land use and transport planning must be more closely aligned. This issue is particularly pronounced in areas where lower tier authorities handle planning, while upper tier authorities manage transport design and infrastructure, leading to a lack of coordination between the two parties.

Effective land use planning is crucial, especially in decisions regarding the transport network, particularly around planned residential housebuilding, which is a current government priority. New developments must ensure that options and connections for public transport, car clubs, and active travel are readily available and designed into the development at initial design stage, offering direct (rather than convoluted) links to key locations such as nearby schools, shops, and medical facilities. Providing secure cycle storage (including for non-standard cycles) at homes and apartments is essential to enable residents to choose active travel. Often, housing developments are constructed first, with active and sustainable transport measures added later. Similarly, amenities such as schools, local shops, and medical facilities are also added later, by which time many residents have already established car-based travel patterns or have had to travel further for schooling due to the lack of alternatives when they moved in.

The national connectivity mapping tool being published by the Department for Transport (DfT) should be utilised to identify the most suitable locations for development. Areas outside of appropriately defined 'well-connected' zones should not be included in Local Plans unless they are of a New Town scale with clearly identified active travel and public transport infrastructure. Similarly, applications for such developments should be refused except in exceptional circumstances. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) should incorporate this approach and be strengthened with clear guidance on what vision-led planning entails, shifting the focus away from transport network

capacity, congestion, and highway mitigation (as outlined in paragraphs 115 and 116). There should be a clear expectation that sites are allocated, with scheme proposals developed based on a vision, with transport modelling being just one part of the evidence base, in line with the recommendations of the Fixing Transport Assessment Working Group.

Devolved authorities, as outlined in the Devolution White Paper, should have the proposed powers to prepare Strategic Development Plans and determine applications over a certain scale, with the ability to call in local decisions as needed. Additionally, these authorities, along with new and strengthened Development Corporations, should have enhanced powers to buy land at agricultural value and borrow against receipts to ringfence land value for forward funding infrastructure and long-term stewardship. Local Plans should incorporate Local Design Codes consistent with the National Design Code. Clear national guidance on development density should be established, such as a minimum of 50 dwellings per hectare (dph) for New Towns and 60 dph in urban brownfield sites, except in exceptional circumstances. This approach would increase density, which is critical for good travel outcomes and community creation, such as viable local facilities and community cohesion, and result in a greater mix of housing types.

Multi–modal Connectivity

Consider a joined up multi-modal policy that considers people rather than 'pedestrian' 'bus user' 'motorist'. People rarely just use one mode in silo.

Public Transport Interchanges: Improved infrastructure and facilities at interchanges will help to join up the transport network. This includes safe, accessible access to interchanges and cycle parking, quality cycle parking at railway and bus stations

(catering for non-standard cycles to allow those with adaptive cycles or child-carrying equipment to secure their cycles), and combining cycle lane infrastructure with bus stop improvements**.** The inclusion of micromobility cycles and scooter hire schemes should also be encouraged to allow passengers onward travel via sustainable modes.

Travel Information and Ticketing: Ensuring the use of simple multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing products, including fare capping, is essential. Integrated ticket purchasing platforms should be provided to simplify customers' understanding of journey cost across different transport providers, including e-scooter and bike schemes and Demand Responsive Transport. The same applies to travel information. It is important to have integrated journey planning, real-time information to instil confidence in all users, and the ability for disabled individuals or those with special needs to reserve assistance for all legs of their journeys. The inclusion of booking cycles on to trains more easily should also be considered. Consistent processes for assistance, complaints, lost property, and other customer service functions are also necessary. Confidence of being able to undertake a journey in its entirety, particularly using multi-modal transport is key. Information can help ease anxiety related to connections; tickets; parking/storage facilities; and accessibility.

Timetabling of Public Transport Services: Understanding how people want and need to travel is key to the design of public transport services. Designing an integrated network, with effective timetabling for connections will provide more opportunities to travel. With this, is a need for safe, comfortable interchange points, and a high level of service reliability to ensure connections are met. Better integration between public and education bus services can deliver more sustainable solutions and

enhance the overall efficiency of the transport fleet.

Local routes for walking, wheeling and cycling

For active travel modes such as walking, wheeling, and cycling, while routes that facilitate mass movement from point A to B, like cycle superhighways and busy road corridors, are important, it's also crucial to enhance local connectivity on a smaller scale. Caregivers, parents, and elderly people often make multi-trip journeys within their local areas, but the lack of connected routes between places like educational facilities, local shopping centres, and other key destinations hinders these short journeys, typically under 5km, that could easily be cycled or walked. More emphasis on linking existing routes is required, ensuring they are connected, safe, and accessible, and enabling people to access more destinations by these modes. Small-scale interventions, such as resurfacing or widening narrow, poorly surfaced, or overgrown footpaths and cycleways, can also significantly enhance safety and ease of travel.

Additionally, greater focus on rural connectivity for walking and cycling is necessary. There are numerous opportunities to improve existing footpaths, disused railways, and bridlepaths to create traffic-free trails between rural and suburban areas, suitable for both utility and leisure purposes. Providing traffic-free routes would also address road safety concerns for cyclists, as a high proportion of cyclist injuries and fatalities occur on rural roads due to fast-moving traffic on narrow country lanes. However, these routes must be accessible, well-surfaced, well -lit and free of barriers such as steps, A-frames, and other guard rail barriers to accommodate non-standard cycles.

2 Question: How could data be used to improve the transport network? Data can mean having better information about journeys, such as but not limited to departure times, journey planning, traffic information and accessibility information.

Data can significantly enhance the transport network by providing better information about journeys, including departure times, journey planning, traffic updates, and accessibility details. Real-time information at stops and via apps, including push notifications for delays or diversions, can improve user confidence. This data can also inform iterative timetabling processes to manage journey time variability, especially for interchanging modes and services.

Journey speed data can aid decision-making in highway management and public transport prioritisation. For instance, real-time journey planning, based on live service updates, can meet immediate travel needs more effectively. In addition, ticketing data patterns can identify end-to-end usage, aiding future network planning and ensuring the best value for users through iterative price and product reviews. This data can also support the development of products for multiple users and groups, and a demand-based pricing model to encourage modal shifts.

Highlighting 'busy' vehicles or carriages in advance can smooth network peaks and ensure comfortable journeys. This could also include real-time updates on the availability of wheelchair and pram/buggy spaces which can reduce stress for users

with mobility impairments. Additionally, real-time status updates on space, availability, and pricing for cycle storage facilities and cycle/scooter hire services should be provided.

Vehicle type and mileage data can help understand emissions, improving air quality across the network. Coordinated EV data outputs can inform the charging and lifecycle of new technologies, while EV charging facility data can identify community charging hubs and optimise facility availability. Finally, data from driver monitoring systems and CCTV can be coordinated to enhance safety and security for both users and transport service employees.

3 Question: How could technology be used to improve the transport network? Technology means new and innovative ways to complete journeys, for example but not limited to the use of autonomous vehicles, electric scooters and e-hailing rides.

Technological infrastructure to support multi-modal trips is essential for making modal changes easier and understanding end-to-end journey options simpler. This infrastructure can streamline the process of switching between different modes of transport, enhancing the overall travel experience. This could include real-time journey planning, based on live service updates including the availability of shared use electric scooters, cycles or taxis at interchange points.

Employing the data-processing capabilities of AI can provide more meaningful insights from big data. In the transport sector, AI can support innovative data analysis, such as predicting peak flows on the network more accurately by using larger, more complex historical datasets. AI can also optimise vehicle charging times for electric buses or commercial fleets, especially where space and the number of chargers is limited. Additionally, real-time data on train occupancy can improve rail ticket offerings.

There is also an opportunity to make practical changes and better optimise the flow of traffic along signalised traffic corridors and junctions. Changes to Chapter 6 of the Traffic Signals Manual could remove current barriers to innovation and allow the use of cloud-based and AI-driven tools to optimise traffic signals and traffic flow. For example, our Flowtack system could positively alter traffic flow and provide numerous other benefits. Our Haskoning team is in discussions with members of the Department for Transport (DfT) to explore these possibilities further.

4 Question: How, if at all, would you improve the way decisions are made about the transport network?

Infrastructure Funding

A common problem lies in funding the wrong type of infrastructure due to an orthodoxy that assumes car travel will increase, and that building highway capacity delivers positive economic outcomes. For instance, whilst there is a lot of good thinking in more recently published Local Transport Plans, when it comes to development, many highway authorities default to a predict and provide approach to test the impact of proposals.

The planned Integrated Transport Strategy should reform the tools used to make decisions, shifting the focus away from highway-focused models, traffic forecasts that embed unsustainable growth, and journey time savings in business cases at all levels of government. For instance, in the context of something like a 'Well-being of Future Generations Act' for England, there should be a requirement to plan for an evidenced (i.e., spatially sensitive) lower car future that is consistent with published carbon budgets.

Government funding allocations should align with national mode share targets. Current funding allocations are also too short term, too competitive and too political at all levels, often resulting in a panic to implement sub-optimal solutions because their design is the most mature at the right time. A significant proportion of the National Highways Road Investment Strategy (RIS) funding should be reallocated as a priority to active and sustainable modes and mode share targets should be established at a sensible geographical level that reflects national guidance and carbon budgets. In addition, local authorities should publish their capital funding breakdown by mode in a consistent way and provide justification where active and sustainable capital funding falls far below the travel mode share target. This would also provide more transparency to the public who often underestimate budgets spent on schemes for motorised road users and overestimate funding allocated to active travel modes.

Decisions regarding network planning and socially necessary transport provision should incorporate a financial weighting that accounts for the costs of social isolation, deprivation, emissions, and other intangible factors, not just operational costs. It's essential to include input from frontline transport operators who have a deep understanding of user needs. Furthermore, decisions should be made with a mid to long-term perspective, rather than focusing solely on meeting in-year financial budgets or key performance indicators (KPIs).

Those in decision-making positions should have relevant and recent experience in transport operations in a meaningful role, and decisions should reflect the needs of the user rather than any political purpose. Decisions should also be informed by results from previous monitoring, where it is available. For instance, there is a wealth of existing evaluations of pilots and schemes that provide targeted next steps, but these are often not acted upon, leading to recurring issues when new schemes are rolled out. In addition, more meaningful consultation with underserved communities is needed, as current consultations often fail to reach populations such as those with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, or those on lower incomes. The DfT's recent publication of their 'Best practice guide to consultation and engagement' is welcomed, as efforts to make consultations with those from underserved communities should lead to more community buy-in on proposed schemes and their subsequent delivery.

Decisions that are more equitable

The existing transport networks are designed, constructed and maintained through the lens of motonormativity – e.g. incoherent active travel networks, limited bus priority, public subsidy of car parking through free or low-cost provision of parking, limited or no provision for gritting or regular clearance of overgrown foliage on footways and cycleways that many users rely on to travel. There should be a thorough overhaul of the Network Management Duty, ensuring that network management is consistently aligned with adopted mode share targets, rather than focusing on maximising the movement of motorised traffic.

There must be a recognition that in the UK, the challenge of congestion on our networks is not one of capacity but of demand. Only once all solutions to reduce demand are exhausted should new highway capacity be considered. For instance, any additional highway capacity should be carefully evaluated within the context of a 'Well-being of Future Generations Act' for England and only approved in exceptional circumstances.

There should also be a requirement within urban areas for kerbside space to be managed for the benefit of the whole community and in a manner consistent with mode share targets and carbon budgets. This approach should draw inspiration from Lambeth's Kerbside Strategy, which sets minimum standards for walking distance to a range of facilities at the kerbside, not just car parking, such as parklets, car clubs, and cycle parking. This would encourage more active travel modes and help overcome barriers such as cycle theft, or lack of space to secure cycles at accommodation such as flats and terraced housing. The rise in car clubs has also been shown to enable many families to eliminate the need for a second vehicle.

Footway parking should be banned and enforced.

5 Question: Any other comments:

Skills Shortage

The transport sector is facing a significant skills shortage that needs urgent attention. There is a pressing need for government support to address the rapid digitisation of transport and the gap in employees with the necessary digital skills to keep up with the demand for data-enriched services. This includes roles such as data scientists, developers, and general technologists. Increased government support and

investment in transport-related apprenticeships would be beneficial in overcoming these skills shortages. Whilst some progress has been made with the establishment of various academies, such as the recent opening of the Transport Rail and Infrastructure Academy in the West Midlands, more investment is needed.

Safe and accessible transport systems

Transport systems must prioritise user safety. This includes road users feeling confident they won't be physically injured by others sharing the space, alongside users not worrying about personal safety such as harassment or violence when using public transport or active travel modes.

For pedestrians, cyclists and motorised road users, the importance of design such as speed limits, fixing potholes and improving junctions are crucial to help reduce areas of conflict that can contribute to collisions. Influencing improved behaviour of road users will also play a part such as national campaigns to highlight the dangers of speeding, drug/alcohol driving, using mobile phones, pedestrian priority when crossing side roads and ensuring the passing of cyclists with at least 1.5m space; this is an important tool in making the roads safer.

Improving the design of pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure can also address personal and social safety issues which are disproportionately experienced by women and other vulnerable users such as those from ethnic minorities and LGBTQ individuals. This can be achieved by ensuring routes are well-lit, have natural surveillance, avoid blind corners, and have multiple entry and exit points. Similar considerations should be made for public transport users, including appropriate surveillance, lighting, and well-located parking for cars and cycles to support

onward journeys. Public transport must also have measures in place to ensure users feel safe and can report incidents easily and quickly as they occur. Continued investment in police presence, training for public transport staff to handle incidents, increasing the diversity and representation of people in the transport industry, and targeting resources at high-incident locations are essential.

Accessing transport systems remains a significant barrier for many users. For example, numerous cycle routes are inaccessible to those using adaptive or non-standard cycles, which are often used by individuals with disabilities or parents transporting children. Barriers such as guard railings, posts, steps, or A-frames frequently prevent these users from cycling. Although the latest LTN/20 guidelines advise against using such barriers in new infrastructure, and Sustrans is actively removing many of these obstacles from the National Cycle Network, numerous routes still have barriers that pose issues for many users.

Accessing public transport remains unpredictable for many disabled users, with frequent instances of users being prevented from boarding trains and buses due to a lack of physical infrastructure, such as broken ramps or out-of-order lifts, or a shortage of transport staff to assist them. As a result, many disabled users often cannot guarantee their journey times or even whether they can complete their journey at all. This is of particular concern given these are often the most vulnerable users.

Behaviour Change Campaigns

In addition to the points mentioned above, it is crucial that the Integrated Transport Strategy recognises the importance of behaviour change campaigns to raise awareness of sustainable and active travel modes. The reasons behind people's travel choices are complex and influenced by

various interrelated factors. Well-designed travel behaviour campaigns can encourage a shift away from single-occupancy car use. However, these campaigns need to be targeted to specific audiences, and it is essential to work with underserved communities, such as those with disabilities, lower-income groups, and ethnic minorities, to ensure their effectiveness in encouraging sustainable and active travel amongst these groups.

For instance, research demonstrates that physical inactivity contributes to a wide number of negative health outcomes, both physical and mental, and places a burden on the health care systems. Behaviour change campaigns are essential for all socio-demographic groups, due to the wider societal benefits. However, those from underserved communities often require more nuanced and complicated approaches and have, in the past, often been neglected in behaviour change campaigns as a result.

Road Danger Reduction approach

The Integrated Transport Strategy should consider a change in emphasis away from road safety towards road danger reduction. Traditionally, road safety is based on reducing the number of reported casualties. However, a reduction in casualties of cyclists/pedestrians could be due to people withdrawing from riding their bikes or walking because it feels unsafe, rather than because measures have been undertaken to make the conditions for cyclists and pedestrians safer.

A road safety approach also emphasises vulnerable road users taking responsibility for their own safety. For instance, pedestrians and cyclists are advised to wear high-visibility or reflective clothing, helmets, and avoid certain routes deemed too dangerous for their mode of travel. However, these measures often fail to prevent most collisions, which are frequently caused by other road users

driving at high speeds, not adapting to conditions, using mobile phones, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In contrast, a road danger reduction approach focuses on the source of the danger. This would promote the implementation of more 20 mph zones or speed limits, presumed liability, and stricter enforcement of careless or dangerous driving. Behaviour campaigns should target speeding, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and ensuring drivers give cyclists at least 1.5 meters of space when passing. Driver training, particularly for professional drivers such as PCV, HGV, fleet driver and delivery drivers would be encouraged, particularly with an emphasis on interactions with pedestrians and cyclists in both urban and rural areas.

Recent results from the Welsh Government's trial of a 20 mph speed limit on residential roads have shown promising reductions in casualties amongst all road users. This is a prime example of an effective road danger reduction measure.