

Integrated National Transport Strategy: a call for ideas

Respondent details

Q1. You are responding as an:
organisation?

Organisation details

Q8. What is the name of your organisation?
Transport East

Q9. You are:
content to continue contact via email dan.johnson@transporteast.gov.uk

Q10. What is the approximate total number of employees in your organisation?
2 to 9

Q11. What best describes your organisation?
Another type of organisation: Sub-national Transport Body

Joined up working

Q15. In your opinion, how could the transport network be better 'joined-up'?**Unified Standards and Policies:**

Establish national guidelines for local transport authorities to encourage consistency in planning and delivery.

Integrated Ticketing & Payment Systems:

Enable seamless travel across modes (e.g., buses, trains, bikes) through universal ticketing and fare systems like Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS). For example, enabling wider/national roll-out of the Project Coral Broker Solution and/or the Cornwall Bus Partnership model, which have proved highly successful, albeit integration across modes would be a requisite development. Similarly, wider integration across EV payment systems is necessary. This should be considered from a user experience perspective – the Plug-in Suffolk open payment model is a good example of how this can be achieved:
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport-planning/plug-in-suffolk>

Coordinated Timetabling:

Align schedules between different transport modes to minimise wait times and make journeys smoother.

Multi-modal and Multi-Service Hubs:

Develop multi-modal transport hubs that facilitate easy transfers between modes, supported by high-quality walking, cycling, and public transport links. Co-locate key services to establish integrated and connected multi-modal / multi-service hubs.

Active Travel and Public Transport Integration:

Prioritise first- and last-mile solutions like cycling and walking infrastructure that connect directly to public transport services and hubs. Develop strategic walking and cycling networks at local and sub-regional levels to facilitate this.

Data and technology**Q16. How could data be used to improve the transport network?****Sustainability Insights:**

Leverage data to evaluate carbon emissions and promote low-impact travel options. For example, at a policy/strategy level, this could be through utilisation and development of the Carbon Assessment Playbook (CAP) tool: <https://qcrinfo.wordpress.com/>

Accessibility Mapping:

Develop tools to highlight accessible routes and facilities for people with mobility challenges, e.g., TfL's PTAL, DfT's Connectivity Tool, GBR's Station Accessibility audit, etc.

Performance Monitoring:

Continuously analyse network performance data to identify inefficiencies and prioritise improvements.

DRT:

Use data analytics to optimise dynamic scheduling and routing for flexible public transport options. For example, further expansion of successful case studies such as the Essex DigiGO service:
<https://www.travelessex.co.uk/about-demand-responsive-transport/ddrt>

Real-Time Data Sharing:

Enhance journey planning through real-time updates on service availability, disruptions, traffic conditions, and alternative routes or modes.

Q17. How could technology be used to improve the transport network?**Advanced Mobility Apps:**

Improve MaaS platforms to include features like integrated ticketing, route optimisation, and sustainability metrics. Apps should be optimised for user experience and engagement, inclusive of considerations for incentivisation and gamification.

Digital Twins:

Create virtual models of transport networks for scenario testing and optimising infrastructure investments.

E-mobility Solutions:

Expand access to e-bikes, scooters, and vehicles (drones), supported by adequate charging infrastructure.

Smart Traffic Management:

Use AI and IoT to reduce congestion, prioritise public transport, and manage signal timings dynamically.

CAV:

Pilot autonomous shuttles for first- and last-mile connectivity in underserved areas.

Call for ideas

Q48. How, if at all, would you improve the way decisions are made about the transport network?

Reimagine Transport Assessment & Appraisal:

Rebalance transport & infrastructure needs assessment and appraisal frameworks to better account for social and environmental outcomes, learning from other disciplines (e.g., descriptive epidemiology) in regard to distributional impacts in particular, and embedding these values from concept to delivery and post-operation performance evaluation and monitoring frameworks.

Utilize Emerging Analytical Tools and Techniques, such as Activity and Agent-Based Models (ABMs):

The use of ABMs could enhance understanding of user needs and behaviour beyond the scope of traditional highway modelling, which is particularly useful in strategic planning and case making. ABMs can model how individuals make travel decisions based on factors like travel time, cost, convenience, and personal preferences. This helps in understanding how changes in the transport network might influence travel behaviour. By simulating different policy scenarios, ABMs can help assess the potential impacts of new transport policies, such as road-user pricing, public transport subsidies, or infrastructure investments. ABMs can be used to test and optimise the design of transport networks, including the placement of new routes, stations, and hubs. This ensures that the network is efficient and meets the needs of the population. They can also model the environmental impacts of different transport scenarios, such as changes in emissions or energy consumption. This helps in planning for more sustainable transport solutions. ABMs also consider distributional impacts on agents/populations in terms of equity – who is impacted and how, and they can be used to integrate the full range of transport modes to provide a holistic view of the transport system. This supports the development of integrated transport plans that consider the interactions between different modes.

There is opportunity for the DfT to work with Transport East to expand BERTIE (our regional ABM) as a regional test case for the wider UK, as part of the INTS. This collaboration could provide valuable insights and data to enhance transport planning and integration across the country.

Cross-Sector Collaboration & Integration with Spatial Planning:

Foster partnerships between transport, housing/infrastructure, energy, education, health, and environmental planning to align objectives and maximise benefits/outcomes. This includes cross-government integration, for example on aspects such as transport and spatial planning and the benefits of wider use of analytical and planning tools such as land-use modelling, Travel to School funding and policies, and regional alignment on strategic planning functions (see Ofgem's RESP consultation and TE response). Additionally, initiatives like Social Prescribing in Suffolk (<https://thewaytosuffolk.org.uk/social-prescribing/>) can be integrated to enhance community well-being through transport solutions. The move toward MCAs in devolution may provide a mechanism to achieve this, however, this will need to be supported by increased capacity and capability.

Devolution of Powers:

Devolve powers to the most appropriate level to empower authorities to develop and tailor transport strategies to regional needs, supported by national frameworks and funding. For Strategic Rail and Strategic Road integration, this should be at the STB level, while more local transport should be at the LTA/MCA level. National Highways and GBR/NR investment should align with sub-national outcomes in regional transport strategies and Local Transport Plans (LTPs).

Cross-boundary Integration:

The INTS should emphasise the importance of integrating and joining up transport across geographic (regional and mayoral) boundaries. For example, the collaborative work of England's Economic Heartland (EEH) and Transport East (TE) aims to maximise and realise the benefits of East West Rail. Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs) play a vital role in this space, as identified in the Devolution White Paper, in both supporting development of, and delivering, the INTS.

Integration of Major Funding Streams:

To achieve meaningful integration, it is critical to address the current siloed funding structure. Currently, the largest share of transport funding in England comes from the National Highways and Network Rail budgets. Without directing these significant funding streams towards cross-modal, outcome-focused objectives, opportunities for integration will continue to be missed.

The 2024-25 DfT Main Estimates Memorandum (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dft-main-estimates-memorandum-2024-to-2025>) highlights this imbalance, with NH and NR budgets accounting for a substantial proportion of total transport investment. These budgets must work harder to deliver multi-modal benefits that align with sub-national outcomes in regional transport strategies and LTPs. Aligning these major investment pots with cross-modal, outcome-driven objectives would unlock broader benefits, such as decarbonisation, enhanced connectivity, and improved equity.

Portfolio Approach:

Move away from single mode/siloed investment programmes to a broader devolved portfolio approach. This approach should integrate all investments to deliver against an agreed set of outcomes, underpinned by long-term funding certainty (e.g., 5-years + indicative 5-years) and appropriate governance mechanism (e.g., a Board) to ensure investment balances across modes and delivers cohesive corridor and area-based improvements. This mechanism should enable networks for each

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mode to be delivered in the context of an integrated transport plan. For example, Transport for London's (TfL) Healthy Streets Portfolio successfully adopted these principles, consolidating surface transport investment under an integrated governance framework (TfL Healthy Streets Portfolio, see Diagram 4.1: <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/10-healthy-streets.pdf>) demonstrating how this can be achieved.

Rural Transport:

The INTS should recognise there is no "one-size fits all" solution to transport and that the nuance of place typologies, in particular the differences between rural and urban environs, should be considered independently. Transport East's Rural Connections report (<https://www.transporteast.gov.uk/regional-strategy-hub>), developed through our Regional Strategy Hub, part of our Rural Mobility Centre of Excellence (CoE) as designated by the DfT, identifies that rural mobility, perhaps more so than urban, needs more integrated, joined up thinking. There is opportunity to work in close partnership with the Department in support of this through expansion of the Rural Mobility CoE to establish a national Rural Transport Group, which could perform an equivalent role to the Urban Transport Group (<https://www.urbantransportgroup.org/>).

Supporting Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and Political Will:

The strategy should provide a national steer on the development, monitoring and evaluation of LTPs. It is evident from carbon assessment tools that net zero carbon in transport cannot be met simply through the provision of modal choice and incentives. This demonstrates the need for accompanying demand management measures. The INTS is well placed to guide the appropriate policies and support the required political will to ensure the success of this. There is opportunity for the Government to build on devolution to ensure politicians are equipped and supported to deliver the change required.

Boost Capacity and Capability:

Most LTAs and STBs outside of London and larger MCAs are not adequately resourced to deliver integrated transport. A significant boost in capability and capacity funding is required, including increased revenue funding, to enable the development and delivery of the required pipeline of projects.

Diverse User Needs, Network Safety and Security:

The strategy must account for the diversity of users and user needs, including but not limited to: issues of accessibility (in terms of disabilities both seen and unseen), different habits and travel patterns of users across the transport ecosystem (e.g., trip-chaining, and use of / propensity to use public transport), differences between work/business and social use of transport services and networks (e.g., the 24/7 operational hours of the transport network), safety and security from a user-centric perspective (e.g., incorporating learnings from academic 'lived experiences' research: <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/vio.2023.0027>), and the differences and nuances between rural and urban environs.

Community-Centric Planning:

Engage diverse stakeholder groups, especially marginalised communities, in co-designing transport solutions.

Final comments

Q49. Any other comments?

Long-Term Vision:

Establish clear, measurable goals tied to sustainability, equity, and economic growth, ensuring continuity across political cycles with greater focus on transport as an enabler to achieve these wider outcomes, and the impacts of transport on people and places. Additionally, an objective of the strategy should be to ensure consistency of strategic network connections to all parts of the UK.

Longer Term Funding Certainty & Ring-Fenced Transport Funding:

Ensure long-term funding certainty to support sustained transport development and planning. Allocate dedicated transport funding to ensure resources are used specifically for transport-related projects.

Revenue Funding:

Provide revenue funding to enable the development and maintenance of project pipelines, and further revenue funding to support scheme maintenance.

Coordinated Behaviour Change Approach:

Adopt a coordinated approach to encourage behaviour change towards sustainable transport options.

Prioritising Public Transport:

Prioritise public transport on roads to enhance service reliability and punctuality, ensuring affordable and efficient public transport to encourage use over private vehicles.

Data-Driven Decision-Making:

Prioritise evidence-based policies informed by comprehensive impact modelling and demand forecasts (scenario planning) based on social and environmental outcomes.

Freight:

Address freight transport needs to ensure efficient and sustainable movement of goods.

Alignment of Objectives:

Align objectives across government departments, ALBs, and regional bodies to reflect regional priorities.

Regional Integration:

Recognise that integration in the East may differ from other regions, necessitating tailored structures to deliver effective and appropriate integration.

Private Sector Investment:

Empower LTAs to secure private sector investment into transport systems.

Risk Sharing:

Implement risk-sharing mechanisms to distribute financial risks more equitably.

Transport East, as the Sub-national Transport Body for Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea, provides a collective vision and single voice for the future of transport in the region. We are committed to working closely with the Department and other stakeholders to ensure that an Integrated National Transport Strategy delivers a robust, coordinated strategy for transport across England, supporting housing and economic growth.

We look forward to continued collaboration and are keen to provide further input as the strategy develops.