

## Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation response to the Union Connectivity Review

**Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT), Email: Justin Ward ([justin.ward@ciht.org.uk](mailto:justin.ward@ciht.org.uk)) , Senior Policy Officer.**

*CIHT is a charity, learned society and membership body with over 14,000 members spread across 12 UK regions and four international groups. We represent and qualify professionals who plan, design, build, manage and operate transport and infrastructure networks. Our vision is for world-class transportation infrastructure and services. Our values are to be Professional, Inclusive, Collaborative and Progressive.*

CIHT welcomes the Union Connectivity Review as we have been pressing for a strategy that brings together transport, planning, and development within a wider pan-UK context. As a professional body we are pleased to have the opportunity to provide our professional view and would offer further support, if required, to the review.

To collate members views CIHT assembled a workshop with members from across our UK regions and a survey was developed to canvas additional views.

The review - as set out - is right to look at not just economic factors for investment in transport but elements pertaining to quality of life and environmental factors. The importance of transport investment not being detrimental to biodiversity is vital. The legally binding 2050 target for net zero must bind every decision by every government department to ensure that, the decisions they make, support that aim.

In a UK transport we believe there would be significant benefit in drawing on the experiences from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to enable a UK wide strategy. Questions such as, what does the Welsh Futures Generations Act mean for appraisal of transport schemes. What does that fact that Scotland has a National Transport Strategy based on the principals outlined in CIHT FUTURES work (e.g. scenario-planning).

CIHT FUTURES published in 2016 was important regarding the need for flexibility in future decision making: seeking to reveal and not conceal uncertainty. This stated clearly that future investment regarding transport infrastructure should not be based on past trends. CIHT welcomed the ongoing focus on the future of transport as highlighted in the Government Office for Science report on Future of Mobility report.

Given the development of autonomous vehicles on the horizon, shifting patterns of car ownership (and a potential to shared ownership), and other uncertainties, it is important that the decisions made now have a degree of flexibility around them. A move away from predict and provide was recommended, and a greater use of scenario planning was indicated as of being beneficial.

The covid-19 pandemic has shifted working practices and travel demand, highlighting that events can change how life operates, often in ways that were not

envisaged. As such, investments made now need to take account of changes in working practices, haulage, and potential future demand. An investment approach that supports real options was recommended.

As our membership works across the UK and internationally, we are not going to comment on specific needs for infrastructure, but in general terms. However, examples from our membership, for example the lessons from Dawlish in the southwest highlight that CIHT considers the resilience of the transport network to be of fundamental importance in any investment decisions made to either existing or new transport infrastructure.

Resilience issues relating to a changing climate - where we are likely to see heavier downpours, high winds, and storms - means that climatic factors and the impact on transport networks must be central to future decision making. Future-proofing the UK transport network is fundamentally important. CIHT has called for transport resilience assessments to be made a statutory requirement for all transport asset owners to identify vulnerable areas and for a central fund to be established to support the mitigation of these vulnerable areas.

The move to reducing emissions from transport is also vital, and investment must be put to support not just electrification of the road and rail networks but also supporting hydrogen for HGVs and buses.

There are opportunities for connectivity to be considered: for instance, remote regions may be better served by green aviation – initially smaller battery powered planes (as is the case in Orkney) - as opposed to the costs of investing in physical infrastructure.

The collapse of Flybe and impacts of regional connectivity do mean that consideration of connectivity and possible state support for air transport that is electrified could be considered. However, any final decision made must be based on good evidence and data and informed by strong stakeholder engagement.

It is important to recognise that the transport network has been key to both dealing with the impacts of the pandemic and will play a key role in the next steps of rolling out a vaccine. Longer-term economic recovery will be supported by a good transport system and the success of the UK after leaving the EU.

CIHT has long called for certainty of funding and for a national transport strategy for the UK so would welcome both coming to fruition from the review. The strategy has to be a multi-modal approach as different modes interact and influence each other.

The longer-term nature of infrastructure means the funding needs to allow for this. The five-year funding committed through the Road Investment Strategy was welcomed by CIHT as this enables Highways England to plan over a longer-term horizon and give more certainty to the supply-chain. If similar funding settlements could be delivered for the transport elements within devolved administrations and for the local road networks across the UK then this benefit would be realised more widely across the UK.

Getting funding right for existing networks is key. There is a risk sometimes with focusing on new infrastructure: there is also a vital need to invest in our existing infrastructure to ensure that it is safe and reliable and future proofed. This should ensure existing links are maintained across all modes.

CIHT believe that without a UK wide transport strategy it is difficult to answer some of the questions below.

## Assessing the need for cross-border connectivity

- 1. If you represent a place, what is your current strategy for growing the economy and improving the quality of life there? Please provide a summary, but you are welcome to append or link to published strategies.**

N/A

- a. What is necessary to achieve this strategy and what evidence do you have that improved connectivity is needed in this instance?**

N/A

- 2. Please provide any information you hold about current multi-nation journeys within the United Kingdom.**

N/A

- 3. In general terms, is there a need for new or improved transport links between the nations of the United Kingdom?**

In general terms, CIHT consider there is a need for new or improved transport links between all the nations of the United Kingdom and across all modes. However, before the nature and extent of these connections can be ascertained as there is a need for a UK transport strategy to be put in place.

- 4. What are the main obstacles and challenges in improving transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?**

The lack of a UK transport strategy means that decisions made regarding transport investment can be siloed by mode. Without genuine engagement at a political level between Westminster and the Devolved Administrations there will be a challenge to improve transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom.

**5. What evidence exists to demonstrate the potential impacts of improved transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?**

The benefits of transport investment are well documented from unlocking economic opportunities to improving peoples' health. A wide view of the potential impacts of improve transport connectivity and this includes the steps to achieving net zero and moves to decarbonisation of transport systems.

**6. When making transport investment decisions which aim to improve connectivity between the different nations of the United Kingdom, does the current appraisal framework capture all the potential impacts?**

CIHT believes that the appraisal framework must take account of moves to achieve net zero.

## Opportunities for Improved Transport Connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom

**7. Which specific journeys would benefit from new or improved transport links?**

CIHT will not comment on specific journeys in our response but note that the first step will be develop a national transport strategy that works for the whole of the UK.

**a. What would be the benefits of improvements to these specific journeys?**

N/A

**b. Are you aware of any work that has been done to assess the need or feasibility of improvements to all or part of these specific journeys?**

N/A

**c. How would the costs and benefits of the identified improvements be distributed?**

N/A

**d. How will demand for these journeys change in the future?**

CIHT FUTURES advocated the need for a scenario-based approach to making future decisions regarding transport as there is a degree of uncertainty around future changes and therefore demand for transport.

**e. In your opinion what is the preferred means by which to improve these journeys?**

The health benefits of transport investment should not be missed, and schemes should consider active travel measures such as walking or cycling. Within the context of net zero and moves to decarbonisation of transport the schemes should support environmentally friendly modes of transport.

**f. What would be the environmental impact of improving these journeys in the way that you have identified?**

N/A

**g. Are there any interdependencies with other policies that may impact the deliverability of the identified improvements?**

CIHT notes that the net zero commitment is a major component of decisions made regarding existing and future transport infrastructure. Allied to this are aspects such as biodiversity and impact on habitats that any measures put in place should not be to the detriment of those.

**8. Is there a need for the development of a national strategic transport network to replace the European TEN-T network within the UK?**

A national strategic transport network would be a fundamental part of the UK Transport strategy that CIHT calls for. The networks that formed part of the TEN-T network would form a key part of this strategy alongside other modes.

**a. How should such a network be defined?**

As part of a UK Transport strategy

**b. What would be the potential impact of such a network?**

The benefits/impacts outlined in the UK Strategy

**c. How should a network of this nature it be managed or financed?**

As part of a clear long term management and funding plan linked to the UK Transport Strategy

**d. Do you have any further comments on the potential development of a national strategic transport network?**

CIHT has long called for the government to set out a clear vision and strategy that sets out how transport will contribute to key policy areas.

## Connections to Northern Ireland

**9. With reference to the unique geographical position of Northern Ireland please set out how best to improve cross-border transport connectivity with other nations**

CIHT will not comment specifically on this question but any transport appraisal should consider maritime, air and rail or road via a fixed link.

**10. Other than geographic, are there any other specific restrictions to improving connectivity between Northern Ireland and other nations in the United Kingdom?**

N/A

## Final questions

**11. What else can be done to support greater transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?**

**12. Do you have any further comments?**

