

Mass Transit Taskforce – Call for evidence

Q1. What is your name?

Justin Ward

Q2. What is your email address?

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Q3. What is your job title / occupation?

Head of Policy, Practice and Technical Affairs

Q4. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Yes

Q5. What is the name of your organisation?

Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

Q6. What best describes your organisation?

Other (please specify)
Professional Institution

Understanding the benefits of mass transit

Q7. A key objective of this Taskforce is to assess the wider economic, spatial and social benefits of mass transit systems, focusing particularly on its role in supporting economic growth, new jobs and housing, in line with Government priorities.

The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

Quantifiable economic, spatial and social impacts and benefits of mass transit schemes.
Focused, verifiable evidence around impact on economic growth, creating and enabling new jobs and unlocking delivery housing and other commercial and public development and regeneration.

Evidence of where mass transit has led to inward investment.

How benefits differ between different types of mass transit.

Ambitions for future mass transit schemes and extensions.

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

What is your understanding of the economic, spatial and social benefits of mass transit systems? Please supply verifiable evidence to support your answer.

Please share any examples of mass transit schemes (from the UK or elsewhere) where benefits have most effectively been realised, backed by verifiable evidence.

Please share any examples of mass transit schemes where expected benefits have not been fully delivered and the reasons behind this. Please supply verifiable evidence to support your answer.

Local authorities only: What plans do you have for new mass transit schemes or extensions and enhancements to existing schemes? What benefits are these schemes expected to deliver?

Maximum 1,000 words

For people without access to a private vehicle improving the provision of public transport can reduce transport inequality, improve individual opportunities and potential economic output. A shift from private car use to sustainable transport modes, such as light rail, very light rail, tram, tram-train, metro-style systems, and bus rapid transit, also has air pollution reduction and decarbonisation benefits.

The successful development of mass transit systems can help to deliver modal shift targets, increasing the number of journeys taken by sustainable modes, provide reliable and affordable access to economic opportunities and create a safer and cleaner transport system. The choice of mode should be driven by the transport problems and required capacity rather than by a presumption in favour of a particular technology. In many cases, the most effective solution will be a blend of public transport modes, optimising interchange and matching modes to the required line-haul capacity, including bus, bus rapid transit, light rail, heavy rail and very light rail. This should also take account of feeder modes, including walking and cycling.

Some modes included in mass transit systems, such as tram and bus rapid transit, involve use of the local road network. Realising the benefits of these mass transit systems therefore rely on good local delivery and maintenance of the local highways network. Investment in these modes lose their attractiveness if they fall into disrepair, highlighting the critical need for a focus on asset management and resilience/adaptation. For tram schemes in particular, urban design should be treated as a crucial part of the project rather than as an additional consideration. The integration of tracks, stops, public realm, walking and cycling infrastructure and surrounding development can have a significant influence on the quality and long-term success of the scheme.

Effective delivery of transport interventions is also most effective when it is integrated with land use planning. Integration of these functions helps to promote transport service viability by ensuring that homes, businesses, local services and transport infrastructure are planned together.

This can be achieved at a local-level through a 'vision-led' approach in planning, ensuring developments are strategically planned with a focus on sustainable transport and economic growth.

There are also lessons to be learned from the way mass transit schemes are identified, justified and appraised. Scotland provides an example of a more integrated approach through the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2), which identified Clyde Metro, Edinburgh and South East Scotland Mass Transit and Aberdeen Rapid Transit as strategic priorities. These are characterised by a blend of public transport modes developed through a standardised approach to consultation and appraisal, within the

framework of Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2). This approach considers different, multi-modal options against identified transport problems, with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) process providing a consistent basis for appraisal.

An integrated, vision-led approach of this kind can provide the industry with clearer sight of government and regional intentions, allowing schemes to be tracked through detailed business cases and delivery plans. It can also help to ensure that decisions about mode are based on the capacity and function required, rather than the availability of a particular technology.

There needs to be effective cooperation among local authorities and stakeholders in cross-boundary and strategic planning matters to ensure consistent and sustainable development outcomes.

Governance and accountability

Q8. The Taskforce wants to understand barriers, delays and inefficiencies around governance and accountability and what would be helpful to set mass transit projects up for success, ensuring faster and more efficient delivery from end-to-end.

The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

Extent of structured stakeholder engagement from the outset spanning government, industry, regulators, and communities to support alignment and reduce delivery risk.

Are existing governance and accountability structures and mechanisms fit for purpose?

Are financing and funding arrangements appropriate and appropriately governed?

Extent and impact of fragmented responsibilities and accountability between central and local government and delivery partners.

How should responsibilities and accountability be allocated? Would models with a clearer single point of accountability help?

Where could decision making helpfully be devolved? How could existing or future devolution levers be shaped to maximise opportunities for streamlining and speeding up decision-making?

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are existing governance and accountability structures and mechanisms contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to governance and accountability have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to improve governance and accountability structures and mechanisms in to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

No comment

Skills, capability and capacity

Q9. The Taskforce wants to understand what skills, capability and capacity need to be in place from the outset to set mass transit projects up for success.
The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

Gaps in skills, capabilities and capacities within central and local government, the impact of these and how they could be addressed.

Challenges for local government in the transition from strategic policy bodies to delivery bodies and what would help.

Learnings from established delivery bodies and how these can be captured.

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are gaps in skills, capacities and capabilities across stakeholders contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to gaps in skills, capacities and capabilities have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to address gaps in skills, capacities and capabilities to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

Mass transit systems require a skilled transport planning profession.

CIHT is concerned that the transport planning skills pipeline is weakening at exactly the point when government needs stronger transport planning capability to deliver growth, devolution, vision-led planning, local transport investment and better places. The issue has been highlighted by the decline of some MSc courses but is broader than course viability. It is about whether employers, clients and government are creating enough demand for properly qualified transport planners, and whether recognised professional registration through CTPP is being used clearly enough as a signal of competence, professional judgement and accountability.

Professional registration matters because it turns skills and experience into a recognised standard. CTPPs provide a visible way for employers, clients and government to identify practitioners who have demonstrated competence, professional judgement and commitment to ethical practice. If professional registration is not valued in procurement, guidance and client expectations, the sector risks weakening the incentive for individuals and employers to invest in the capability government needs.

CIHT is helping to create a more skilled workforce through the sharing of best practice reports, such as:

- Building carbon reduction into procurement processes <https://www.ciht.org.uk/knowledge-resource-centre/resources/building-carbon-reduction-into-procurement-processes/>
- Delivering a resilient transport network <https://www.ciht.org.uk/resilience>
- Building carbon reduction into procurement processes | CIHT

CIHT's training platform CIHT Learn allows training to be undertaken at a pace and time which suits the user. The CIHT Learn platform has over 100 courses including:

- Driver nutrition and fatigue <https://www.cihtlearn.org.uk/#/dlp/course/140c8999-2d04-43d3-9ea6-e7eb8111f6a8>
- Transport decarbonisation <https://www.cihtlearn.org.uk/#/dlp/course/89332fb6-a9e9-413d-82cb-70ec77549262>

Policy development, strategic fit and options assessment

Q10. The Taskforce wants to understand how effective processes are for aligning mass transit with wider strategic priorities and the wider transport network as well as how options are assessed.

The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

Is there effective alignment of timescales, governance and outcomes with other plans and frameworks for the area (e.g. business cases for other major projects that may come forward at different times; spatial plans; and regeneration, housing and development priorities across multiple LTAs). How might alignment be strengthened?

Is there good understanding of in what circumstances mass transit is an appropriate solution to meet desired outcomes, and specifically what type of mass transit? Do we give due consideration to options that could deliver the same or similar outcomes but quicker and cheaper?

Are we good at estimating costs and benefits of preferred options?

Is there scope to identify and adopt more effective prioritisation methodologies based on impact, deliverability and timing, ensuring focus on the most critical interventions?

Network fit – are there barriers to ensuring effective integration with other modes?

What changes might be needed in terms of operations and governance to better realise strategic and network fit of mass transit schemes?

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are challenges around ensuring strategic fit and assessing options contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to ensuring strategic fit and assessing options have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to address challenges in ensuring strategic fit and assessing options to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

No comment

Business case development, appraisal and approval

Q11. Mass transit projects typically follow three main business case development stages: producing a Strategic Outline Case, Outline Business Case and Full Business Case, each following a five case model setting out strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management dimensions of the case. At each stage, the business case is considered at an investment decision point, and some are additionally referred to HM Treasury for approval.

The Taskforce wants to understand what impact current processes for business case development, appraisal and approval are having on the speed and efficiency of mass transit scheme delivery.

The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

Is Business Case development guidance fit for purpose, does it support the capture of wider benefits and strategic fit?

Is the sequential business case process, underpinned by the five-case model, working? Could it be streamlined?

Could approval mechanisms be streamlined?

What level of appraisal would be fit for purpose?

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are challenges around business case development, appraisal and approval contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to business case development, appraisal and approval have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to address challenges around business case development, appraisal and approval to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

No comment

Public and stakeholder consultation and engagement

Q12. The Taskforce wants to understand the process for consulting and engaging the public and other stakeholders in shaping and gaining support for mass transit schemes and whether unnecessary delays and inefficiencies are impacting on mass transit scheme delivery. The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

Are scheme promoters good at communicating the case to the public and wider stakeholders, securing their engagement and support?

Is poor communication, consultation and engagement contributing to delays and inefficiencies?

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are challenges around public and stakeholder consultation and engagement contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to public and stakeholder consultation and engagement have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to address challenges around public and stakeholder consultation and engagement to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

As stated in CIHT's report *Creating a public realm for all* <http://www.ciht.org.uk/publicrealm>, to ensure full accessibility, mass transit strategies should adopt the principle of "co-cultivation" (i.e. continuous, meaningful engagement and representation from inception and design through construction, operation, and monitoring to re-evaluation) rather than light-touch consultation. This should result in a shared understanding of the issues faced (from both the user and the designer perspective) and increased commitment to finding appropriate solutions.

In practice, this should include:

- engaging with diverse user groups in planning, designing and delivery of services and of vehicles and infrastructure used in the provision of that service
- ensuring physical and digital accessibility for all, including disabled and older people
- providing affordable and equitable options across income levels
- designing for safety and comfort, especially for women and vulnerable groups.

Inclusion must be fundamental, not incidental. That means designing with, not merely for, those most often excluded: disabled people, carers, those without digital access, and people on low incomes.

Meaningful engagement is particularly important where mass transit schemes use or repurpose existing routes and public spaces. The development of future tram and mass transit routes needs to recognise existing patterns of walking, cycling and recreation, and engage early with communities and established users to identify and address potential conflicts.

Funding, finance and sustainability

Q13. The Taskforce wants to understand the effectiveness of processes for securing funding for mass transit schemes from a range of sources as well as challenges around ensuring financial viability and sustainability.

The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

The extent and impacts of stop-start funding, late-stage funding decisions, inflation (e.g. res coping/descoping meaning full potential benefits are not delivered).

How can greater funding certainty be achieved?

How we can build market confidence to invest? E.g. maintaining a visible pipeline.

Challenges around the risk appetite of funders, whether that be central/local government or private investors.

Whether there are sufficient means to raise funding locally for schemes – what needs to be in place for this to happen?

Is there a good understanding of whether a scheme will be operationally viable without requiring ongoing subsidy?

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are challenges around funding, finance and sustainability contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to funding, finance and sustainability have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to address challenges around funding, finance and sustainability to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

How challenges around funding, finance and sustainability are contributing to delays and inefficiencies:

A historic reliance on short-term, fragmented, and "stop-start" funding is a primary driver of inefficiency and delays in transport infrastructure delivery.

In the example of local roads, as evidenced by the CIHT report Unlocking the benefits of longer-term funding for local roads <https://www.ciht.org.uk/knowledge-resource-centre/resources/policy-technical/unlocking-the-benefits-of-long-term-funding-for-local-roads/>, one-year funding settlements have hindered strategic planning and lead to rushed project execution. This often results in 'year-end funding surges,' where authorities rush to spend budgets before they expire, which is environmentally suboptimal and drives up contractor costs.

The importance of long-term funding has been acknowledged at the national level through both the road investment strategy for the strategic road network (SRN) and the introduction of a four-year capital funding settlement for local authorities by the government.

Due to the fact that transport funding is often not ringfenced, financially pressured local authorities are frequently forced to divert resources to other urgent areas, such as social care, further undermining long-term asset management.

Examples of tackling funding inefficiencies and lessons learned

Evidence from the UK and internationally, highlighted in the CIHT Report Unlocking the benefits of longer-term funding for local roads, demonstrates that moving to multi-year investment models unlocks significant measurable benefits.

- Surrey County Council (Project Horizon): By securing long-term funding certainty (by combining DfT's six-year block grant with a matching five-year capital commitment from the Council), Surrey achieved 12% efficiency gains. Strategic planning was paired with supply chain collaboration and funding certainty to ensure delivery.

- National Highways (Strategic Road Network): The shift from reactive investment to five-year funding settlements through the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) has enabled National Highways to deliver approximately 8% in efficiency gains. This has helped to deliver improved planning and coordinating work, new contracting and procurement arrangements, greater flexibility in programming, better whole-life cost approach, and more customer focus investment in the key outcomes.

- Oxfordshire County Council: Utilising a framework alliance contract supported by long-term funding, Oxfordshire outperformed cost-saving targets, delivering 8.5% efficiency gains. This allowed them to achieve environmental, commercial, and social value gains.

What could be done to address challenges around funding, finance and sustainability
The key to addressing challenges around funding is to take a long term, strategic approach, including-

- Longer funding horizons enable bulk purchasing of materials and services, leading to significant cost reductions through economies of scale
- Prioritise Maintenance and Renewals: Funding for the maintenance and renewal of existing transport infrastructure should be prioritised before committing to new builds to ensure network resilience and reliability.
- Long-term funding should be anchored within combined or strategic authorities to ensure integrated transport planning and strong regional leadership.

Consenting procedures and securing legal powers

Q14. The Taskforce wants to understand the extent of delays and inefficiencies associated with securing the legal powers and consents to construct and operate mass transit systems.

The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

Are Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) processes fit for purpose to enable desired outcomes or are there alternative methods (noting government's commitment) to consult on reform of TWAO?

TWAO applications need a funding statement to be submitted and component parts of funding deals 'locked in' – could more flexibility be introduced given confirming funding packages takes time?

Multiple consents and approvals are required in addition to a TWAO – is this taking longer than necessary? What alternative approaches could be taken, is there scope for devolution?

How efficient is the process for drafting, consulting on and finalising Environmental Impact Statements?

Is the response to objections/objectors proportionate or disproportionate?

What happens if Public Inquiries are needed? What impact do these have on project timescales and efficient delivery?

Do challenges with securing consents and legal powers vary depending on the type of mass transit scheme (e.g. extensions vs new schemes, bus rapid transit vs light rail)?

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are challenges around consenting procedures and securing legal powers contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to consenting procedures and securing legal powers have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to address challenges around consenting procedures and securing legal powers to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

No comment

Procurement

Q15. The Taskforce wants to understand processes and challenges around procuring design, construction and delivery partners to build infrastructure and supply vehicles. The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

How procurement costs can be reduced.

How can we better understand and build supply chain capacity and workforce capability (including in the UK) to ensure readiness to support an expanded and sustained delivery pipeline?

Opportunities for new technology and innovation (e.g. greater standardisation of design, materials, technologies and components, building a pipeline etc) to accelerate delivery and improve efficiency.

Do procurement challenges vary depending on the type of mass transit scheme (e.g. light rail compared to bus rapid transit)?

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are challenges around procurement contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to procurement have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to address challenges around procurement to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

How challenges around procurement are contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes:

Procurement requirements have a huge influence on how infrastructure is delivered on the ground and the outcomes achieved from the associated spend. Procurement policy and legislation offer significant opportunities to shape industry practice. Legislation and policy are powerful, enforceable levers to influence the industry towards collaborative innovation and improvement against consistent standards.

Through our research, highlighted in the report Building carbon reduction into procurement processes <https://www.ciht.org.uk/knowledge-resource-centre/resources/building-carbon-reduction-into-procurement-processes/>, significant delays and inefficiencies in infrastructure delivery often stem from a lack of standardised processes, fragmented knowledge, and short-termism.

Procurement is frequently treated as an administrative end-stage rather than a strategic function. When procurement is not involved at the inception of a project, the industry loses the opportunity to build innovation into contract clauses, leading to designs that may be compromised or require later, costly revisions. A great deal of transport spend is already locked-in to long-term contracts that may not have prioritised modern efficiency. This creates a barrier to adopting new technologies until the next tender cycle. The prevalence of short-term capital funding and regular changes to political strategy increase overall costs and limit the ability to enact long-term, systemic change. This "stop-start" nature hinders the development of a sustained delivery pipeline.

Mass transit schemes can be particularly vulnerable to these issues because major tram and other urban transit projects are relatively uncommon in the UK. This can mean that clients and delivery organisations do not always have sufficient embedded experience in the design, procurement and construction skills required. Building and retaining client-side capability, alongside mechanisms for transferring lessons between schemes, is therefore essential.

Examples of tackling procurement delays and inefficiencies and lessons learned

The 2023 CIHT report Building carbon reduction into procurement processes highlights success stories from the UK and internationally. While these examples are focussed on embedding carbon reduction in procurement, they demonstrate how procurement interventions can help to deliver targeted outcomes.

- The Netherlands (Rijkswaterstaat): The Dutch government mandated 100% sustainable procurement by 2015. Compulsory tools were introduced like DuboCalc (life-cycle analysis) and the CO2 Performance Ladder to allow tenderers to demonstrate carbon-limiting measures.
- Somerset Council (Collaborative Procurement): Somerset has used the NEC4 X29 climate change clause for construction contracts and adapted this as a Z clause for its professional services contracts. The council is also setting up a collaborative board that will enable coordination of activity between the employer and the suppliers jointly and will focus on how coordinated works and use of materials.
- Cross Tay Link Road (Perth, Scotland): Early contractor involvement on this scheme provided an

opportunity to optimise the design for carbon reduction, as well as to align procurement and construction methodologies. Involving delivery partners early can significantly improve efficiency and reduce material costs.

- Newcastle Light Rail Project, Sydney Metro Project - Transport for New South Wales has defined a set of sustainable design guidelines. The client has an authority to set a level of reduction (usually 15–25%) in relation to the baseline. The key lessons were:
- Provide support and training were vital parts of promoting sustainability goals across different public transport projects.
- Need for an ambitious government policy to justify carbon reduction requirements
- The Edinburgh Tram experience provides an important UK case study of the consequences when these capabilities and project arrangements are not sufficiently embedded. Lord Hardie's inquiry into the Edinburgh Tram project identified a wide range of shortcomings in the delivery of the original tram line. The findings are relevant to many of the issues considered in this consultation, including governance, procurement, project management, risk, design, construction and client capability. CIHT believes DfT and scheme promoters should make specific use of the Hardie Report as a source of lessons when developing and delivering future mass transit schemes. However, the Edinburgh experience should not be viewed solely as a story of failure. The subsequent Edinburgh Tram extension to Newhaven demonstrated that lessons could be learned and applied: the second project was delivered to time and budget. This provides an important example of how experience from one project can strengthen the delivery arrangements for subsequent schemes. The Borders Railway to Tweedbank also provides a further UK example of successful rail infrastructure delivery. The lessons from Edinburgh also extend beyond procurement. Urban design is a crucial aspect of tram installation, and the success of a tram system should be considered in terms of the wider place it creates as well as its transport performance. A well-designed scheme should integrate the tram with walking, cycling, public realm, surrounding development and existing transport services.

What could be done to address procurement challenges to deliver schemes more quickly and efficiently? CIHT has identified a number of potential solutions to addressing procurement challenges. The sector should move toward the universal adoption of agreed standards such as PAS 2080 for carbon management and ISO 20400 for sustainable procurement. This reduces the learning curve for smaller suppliers and ensures all parties are on a "level playing field".

The use of contractual mechanisms to reward performance against efficiency and targets. This can be supplemented by non-financial rewards, such as supplier recognition or longer-term contract extensions for high performers.

Skills funding is essential to ensure procurement teams can ask the right questions and evaluate complex, innovative solutions.

Strategic procurement should involve designers, constructors, and suppliers at the earliest possible stage to identify the most efficient materials and work methods.

For mass transit, this early involvement should be supported by a strong and capable client organisation with sufficient embedded expertise in design, procurement and construction. DfT and scheme promoters should also establish mechanisms to capture and share lessons between projects, recognising that the relative rarity of major tram and mass transit schemes in the UK means that each project provides an important opportunity to build sector capability.

Construction and commissioning

Q16. The Taskforce wants to understand challenges once physical construction gets under way, including around traffic and disruption management, utilities works and diversions and physical integration with the wider network.

The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

Why are our costs per mile so high?

Are there technologies being used in the UK or elsewhere that could be exploited more effectively?

What happens when mass transit interfaces with other parts of the network e.g. Network Rail infrastructure? Do existing processes add to delays and costs?

Utilities diversion costs and cost sharing agreements – what is their true impact? Can the utilities process be improved?

Do challenges vary depending on the type of mass transit scheme (e.g. extensions vs new schemes, bus rapid transit vs light rail)?

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are challenges around construction and commissioning contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to construction and commissioning have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to address challenges around construction and commissioning to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

CIHT's report 'Reducing the impact of highway works on road users' (2025)

<https://www.ciht.org.uk/knowledge-resource-centre/resources/policy-technical/reducing-the-impact-of-highway-works-on-road-users/> provides useful advice on how the utilities process can be improved. The report provides the following recommendations:

1. A collaboration-first approach to works is essential: There is a need to embed a “collaboration-first” approach among all stakeholders involved in street works and road works. Effective collaboration between highway authorities, utility companies, contractors, and developers is seen as the most effective way to reduce disruption for road users and improve efficiency.

2. Barriers to collaboration must be addressed: There are significant barriers to wider use of collaboration in the sector, including legislative limitations, regulatory and compliance challenges and knowledge and resource gaps. These barriers must be addressed if collaborative works are going to become more prevalent across the sector.

3. Strong potential for innovation: There are some successful examples of collaborative practices taking place already, including joint working, data sharing, and the use of advanced technologies and materials to minimise disruption. Innovations such as joint trenching, real-time data dashboards, AI-powered road condition monitoring, and new materials for faster repairs are already delivering benefits in some areas. Wider adoption of these practices, supported by improved data and knowledge sharing, can significantly reduce the impact of works on road users while fostering innovation in the sector.

4. Government intervention is vital: The report highlights the need for government-led change to help create a collaboration-oriented environment for highway works. Many of the barriers to collaboration will require government intervention to resolve, which is why government-led change is so vital. While the UK Government has recently rejected similar recommendations made by the UK Transport Committee, CIHT asks the Government to reflect on the feedback that the industry has provided, through both the Transport Committee's report and CIHT's report, and to reconsider its response in light of this as we believe that many of the recommendations are viable.

Testing, trials and training prior to public opening

Q17. The Taskforce wants to understand processes around safety testing and trialling of tracks, electrical systems and vehicles prior to opening to the public, as well as training of drivers and other staff.

The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

Whether systems and processes for testing and trialling systems, as well as training staff, prior to official public opening are fit for purpose.

Is there scope for greater efficiency to speed up delivery?

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are challenges around testing, trials and training contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to testing, trials and training have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to address challenges around testing, trials and training to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

No comment

Project handover and entering operation

Q18. The Taskforce wants to understand processes for completing, signing off and handing over mass transit systems for public opening.

The Taskforce would particularly welcome evidence around:

How can the process from completion to public opening and operational delivery be improved?

How do we track outcomes and capture lessons learned from completed projects, ensuring continuous improvement in future scheme delivery?

We strongly suggest structuring your response around answering the following questions:

How are challenges around project sign-off, handover and public opening contributing to delays and inefficiencies in the delivery of mass transit schemes? Please supply verifiable evidence of impact.

Are there examples (from the UK or elsewhere) where specific delays and inefficiencies relating to project sign-off, handover and public opening have been tackled? What lessons can be learned from these?

What could be done to address challenges around project sign-off, handover and public opening to deliver mass transit schemes more quickly and efficiently?

Maximum 1,000 words

No comment

Q19. Please use this space to supply any additional evidence of relevance to the Taskforce's objectives and goals which have not been covered elsewhere in your submission.
Maximum 1,000 words

The CIHT run the Department for Transport funded national Bus Centre of Excellence (BCoE). Whilst local buses are not included in this call for evidence, they play a pivotal role in the mass movement of people. Therefore, the seamless integration of local bus services and mass transit is crucial in ensuring the success of any mass transit scheme.

Q20. Would you like to be contacted further about your submission following the call for evidence?

Yes

Q21. I consent to my survey responses and the provided information being published in the final report. I understand that my responses may be quoted directly.

Yes