

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

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) is a charity, learned society and membership body, with over 10,000 members across 12 UK regions and several international groups. CIHT represents and qualifies professionals who plan, design, build, manage, maintain and operate transport and infrastructure.

Executive Summary

CIHT has highlighted the need for a national transport strategy for many years and welcomes the call for ideas. CIHT was part of the shaping of the first National Transport Strategy in Scotland and has supported the Welsh Government on the delivery of their National Transport Strategy. The opportunity for England to have an Integrated National Transport Strategy (INTS) is a welcome opportunity to help the government deliver its agenda.

Transport provides more economic benefit than just the obvious one associated with the movement of goods and people. Increases in active travel can have positive benefits for NHS and social care costs by reducing mortality and morbidity for the UK population. For people without access to a private vehicle, improving the provision of public transport and facilitating active travel can reduce transport inequality, improve individual opportunities and potential economic output. A shift from private car use to sustainable transport modes, such as public transport, walking and cycling, also has air pollution reduction and decarbonisation benefits.

Almost all journeys involve some form of the local road network. To that end, the success of an INTS is dependent on good local delivery and maintenance of the local highways network. Investments in active travel lose their attractiveness if they fall into disrepair, highlighting the critical need for a focus on asset management and resilience/adaptation.

Without an INTS there is a:

- lack of an overarching vision about what the transport sector can plan/deliver/provide/maintain to make places and peoples' lives better.
- risk that decisions on developing and operating different parts of the transport network and/or services are taken in near total isolation by different owners/operators.

CIHT believes that the INTS should establish four major strategic goals, and its success should be judged against the delivery of these:

1. To deliver a sustained modal shift in line with the sustainable transport hierarchy – thus contributing to the net zero mission.
2. To significantly improve resilience and access to reliable and affordable connectivity to economic opportunity for people and business – thus contributing to the growth mission.
3. To deliver a safer, cleaner, and more inclusive transport network – thus contributing to the health mission.

4. To improve customer choice and experience – thus contributing to the breaking down barriers to opportunity mission.

1. In your opinion, how could the transport network be better ‘joined-up’?

An Integrated National Transport Strategy (INTS) should underpin efforts to deliver a sustained modal shift in line with the sustainable transport hierarchy while not damaging people's access to opportunities.

The INTS offers a mechanism to better join up different modes by providing an overarching strategic framework. The framework will be necessary to reduce the risk of delayed and disconnected decision-making that currently occurs. The framework should provide a very high-level set of common goals. This will need to be supported by the right level of process and co-ordination to ensure a coherence in delivering the goals. CIHT recognises that this will be challenging and there will need to be an iterative developmental approach. CIHT offers to work with the Department for Transport (DfT) to be part of the solution.

The fundamental principles of the framework need to:

- **Be vision-led:** The INTS is an opportunity to make a decisive shift from the *predict and provide* paradigm that has dominated transport planning for many decades towards a *decide and provide* approach. England cannot meet its goals by attempting to accommodate projections of continuous traffic growth through the years. The Government needs to clearly define the economic, social, health and environmental outcomes to which transport will contribute and to plan the provision of infrastructure and services accordingly. It is also important to maintain the existing transport network as ignoring the existing network and focussing on additions to it, may result in people not being able to access new additions to the network, if the current network is unavailable or unreliable.
- **Treat our networks as a system of systems:** England's transport networks form an inter-connected system of systems (SoS) made up of the strategic and local highway networks, rail, aviation, and ports. In addition, digital technology is playing an increasing role in meeting the needs for connectivity and access: for example, online meetings have reduced the need to travel and real-time information provided by apps, can greatly assist with mode choice.

Given the recent impacts of climate change related events (such as heavy storms and floodings), on transport networks, telecoms and energy, it is important to think of the interdependencies between services. The strategic networks of road, rail, water and energy supply tend to be designed as linear systems. These services are often co-located in the same physical corridors and when an extreme weather event happens, they can be mutually impacted. Such concurrent interruptions can have a major societal impact and render normal activity difficult to sustain. There is a vital need to invest in our existing infrastructure to meet both broader policy goals and to ensure the network is safe, reliable, and resilient.

The vision-led approach that needs to be set-out by the government in the INTS must support the delivery of its Mission-led approach¹.

¹ The five Missions are: growing the economy, an NHS fit for the future, safer streets, secure power through clean energy and opportunity for all – see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/next-phase-of-mission-led-government-will-put-working-peoples-priorities-first-with-pm-set-to-unveil-plan-for-change>

CIHT encourages the government to consider the calls that CIHT made in its manifesto - “A Transport Network fit for all our futures”² as the key elements for this vision. These demonstrate clearly how an effective transport network supports economic activity, social wellbeing and can work towards net-zero.^[2] In this we called for the government to champion six strategic objectives; these are to ensure:

- Our transport networks are resilient
- The transport sector decarbonises in line with legally binding obligations
- Everyone has the opportunity to travel sustainably
- Everyone has the opportunity to travel safely and feel safe
- There is a skilled workforce with the capacity and capability to deliver
- Funding is reprioritised to support timely and effective delivery

These overarching strategic objectives would be useful in framing outcomes that could provide thematic elements to the strategy. For example, if housing was a thematic area within the INTS, then CIHT would see a need to demonstrate how the INTS supports the delivery of 1.5 million more homes over the parliamentary cycle³ in a way that provides everyone having the opportunity to travel sustainably. Our streets, towns, and neighbourhoods should be accessible to all by ensuring that transport solutions improve social inclusion by putting equity issues at the centre of policy and infrastructure development.

Practical ways to deliver – some examples:

- **The need to clarify responsibilities:** The INTS is an opportunity to establish a framework that defines roles and co-ordination mechanisms for national and local government, sub-national transport bodies, regulatory and monitoring bodies, arms lengths agencies, private transport providers, and other stakeholders. A strategy for England should also clarify how the four nations of the UK will collaborate on shared challenges.
- **Connect land use planning and transport:** Spatial Development Strategies and Local Transport Plans should be produced together, ideally as one document. CIHT submitted evidence to the recent amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework⁴ that built on the evidence in the CIHT report ‘Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places’ report⁵.
- **Integrate health and transport policies:** to get more people to travel actively and by public transport - reducing reliance on private vehicles in rural areas.
- **Create a safer transport network:** by applying the safe system approach to road safety. Please see CIHT’s report “[Progressing the UK towards Safe System implementation- Reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured on UK](#)”

² CIHT (2024) ‘[A transport network fit for all our futures](#)’, Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

³ MHCLG (2024) [Housing targets increased to get Britain building again](#) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, published 30 July 2024

⁴ CIHT (2024) ‘[CIHT calls for stronger focus on sustainable transport in latest National Planning Policy Framework consultation response](#)’ Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

⁵ CIHT (2019) ‘[Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places](#)’, Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

[roads](#)”⁶ for more information. Annually over 30,000 people are killed or seriously injured on the UK’s roads resulting in societal and economic costs of £42.2 billion.⁷

- **Integrate economic policy** with transport so use price signals to shift mode/reduce traffic – parking, fuel duty, road user charging⁸.
- **Recognise that transport is an essential public service**, that should be accessible and affordable. Please see CIHT’s report “[Creating a public realm for all](#)”⁹, ‘Creating Better Streets’¹⁰ and “[Ensuring a Just Transition to Net Zero Transport Policy Brief](#)”¹¹ for more information.
- **Improve sustainable travel** - joining up Active Travel and Public Transport planning and delivery as only by combining these will we be able to achieve door-to-door long distance travel that provides an alternative to the private car.
- **Place responsibility** for planning and operating trains, trams, buses and strategic cycle routes, and the Key Route Network (KRN) on which they operate, with Strategic Authorities. This has already been proposed in the devolution White Paper¹² but needs to be implemented.
- **Improve customer choice and experience**, especially for sustainable transport modes. This will be a key component in delivering the INTS. The improved resilience and reliability of the transport network will be critical to customer experience.
- **Use behavioural science** to encourage desired outcomes – for example, behavioural science has been effective in informing effective road safety interventions and can be used to support modal shift.
- **Use consistent assumptions** when forecasting the demand for travel across different modes.

Better integration of transport modes can help reduce the transport inequality that disproportionately affects people with disabilities, those without access to a car and those on the lowest incomes.

⁶ CIHT (2024) [Progressing the UK towards Safe System implementation- Reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured on UK roads](#), Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

⁷ Department for Transport, last updated 19 December 2024, RAS4001: Average and total value of prevention of collisions. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/reported-road-accidents-vehicles-and-casualties-tables-for-great-britain>

⁸ CIHT (2024) ‘[Charging for Road Use: What is the Future of Mobility Pricing](#)’, Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

⁹ CIHT (2024) [Creating a public realm for all](#), Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

¹⁰ CIHT (2018) ‘[Creating better streets](#)’, Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

¹¹ CIHT (2024) [Ensuring a Just Transition to Net Zero Transport Policy Brief](#), Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation highlights the challenges that UK’s transport professionals face in considering fairness and justice when planning projects aimed at reducing carbon emissions in travel.

¹² [English Devolution White Paper: Power and partnership: Foundations for growth - GOV.UK](#)

2. How could data be used to improve the transport network?

The INTS must ensure that data is utilised in a way that ensures journeys are connected so that everyone using the transport system is able to have access to a properly integrated transport network.

The INTS aims to support delivering improved journey reliability to unlock economic opportunities for everyone. There is a need to ensure that reliable and accurate data means that everyone can travel, particularly where the data relates to information for people with disabilities, especially in relation to the availability of lifts, so that we achieve the goal of an inclusive transport network. To support modal shift, data needs to be available to aid choice and deliver journey time reliability – whether that is for planning to cycle, get a bus, or walk.

Journey planning information for car users is very comprehensive – you can find out how long your journey will take and satnavs can re-route people based on actual traffic conditions. However, for transport by other modes the information is often not as well connected as it might be and it is difficult to tell from data feeds if a bus, tram or train is full.

Real-time information is also important. The real time information for trains and trams is good as these run on fixed, signalised, networks. However, coverage is poor in many places in terms of information for bus services and is often limited both in accuracy and in availability, particularly at bus stops.

When it comes to measures to support modal shifts, the barrier to information is a barrier to behavioural change. Multiple apps for multiple service providers only complicate the journey planning experience for people.

Consolidation of data feeds and allowing the private sector to provide personalised journey planning services is one solution to this, for instance Google Maps or CityMapper. However, there is likely still a role for the public sector to bring innovation forward. With Gov.uk being an example of bringing digital services together – having a single app for rail or bus services (as opposed to apps for separate operators) and ideally for end-to-end journeys, to plan and book tickets, would be an example of how data could be used to improve the transport network.

Data must be inclusive and accessible: there is a need to ensure that people with disabilities have the right data available to journey plan. This means that solutions to journey planning should not only rely on a technology solution - access to journey planning by phone, for example, will be useful for people without internet access or unable to use smartphones.

Integration is often thought about as integration between public transport modes, but integration of walking, cycling, public transport is what is really needed. The integration should not just be physical but also digital so that there is end-to-end journey planning including the provision of cycling parking.

Integration of timetabling to enable transport users to connect one journey to another is also important. Timetabling must ensure that modes are linked up e.g. buses should arrive at the railway station to coincide with the arrival of trains, particularly for commuter journeys.

Switzerland offers a good example of effective integrated transport¹³. The Swiss model¹⁴ coordinates rail timetables with bus and other public transport timetables, with a focus on 'clock

¹³ [Swiss show the way in integrated transport – Christian Wolmar](#)

¹⁴ Tyler, J (2024), [Creating a national unified rail timetable that works for passengers](#), Jonathan Tyler and Transport for Quality of Life, November 2024

face' services where public transport services always arrive at the same minutes past the hour.

Technology in the context of the next question 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.

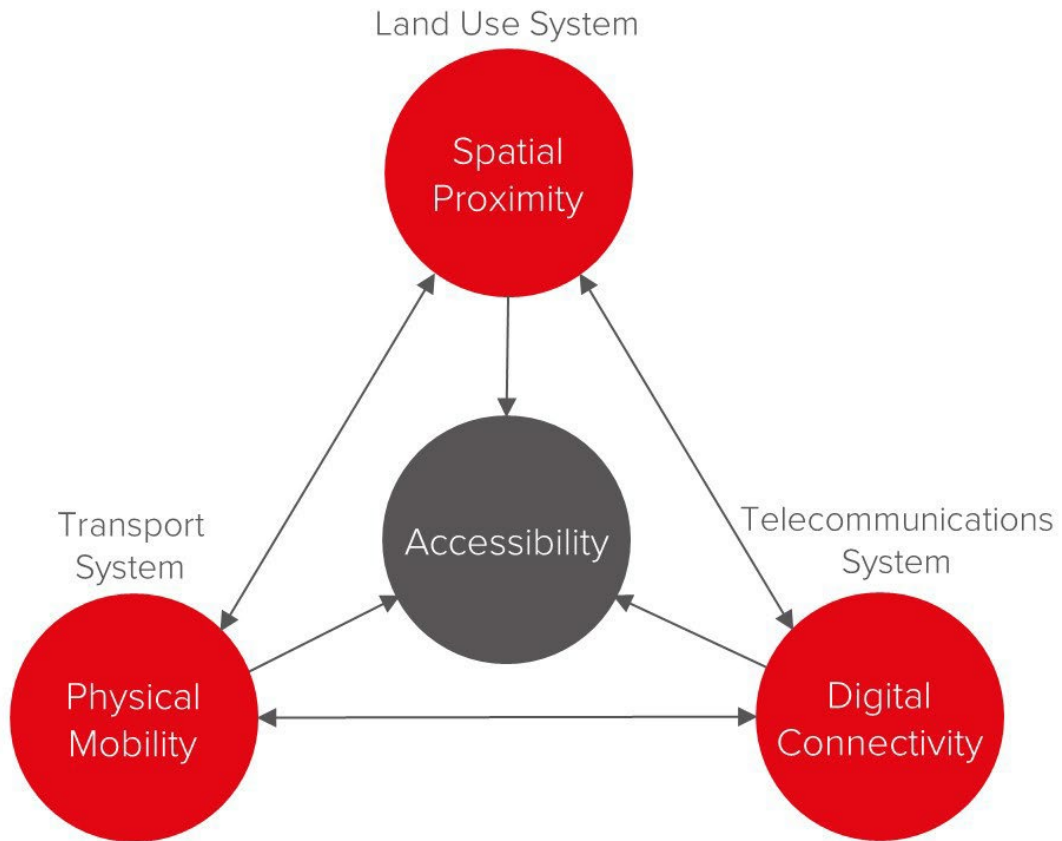
3. How could technology be used to improve the transport network?

Technology can deliver a range of benefits to support the delivery of the strategic goals set out at the start of this response. Technology can help deliver a sustained modal shift in line with a sustainable transport hierarchy and therefore contribute to the net zero mission, for instance through enabling digital connectivity.

There is a need to embrace cutting edge technology in the best possible way and deliver user centric integrated solutions. However, there can be a risk in jumping to a technological solution without first properly identifying a problem – e.g. treating the symptom not the cause. Technology can be an enabler of fairer and more accessible transport, but it can also be a barrier for some people.

Technology can be used to reduce the number of journeys made, for example home working rather than commuting to a place of work. There is a need to set the transport system in the wider context of the Triple Access System¹⁵ when drawing up policy and investment plans. This has a bearing not only on taking an inclusive approach to access but also in terms of tackling the climate emergency and transport decarbonisation.

¹⁵ CIHT (2024) [The importance of triple access planning in transport](#), Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation, news story 15 October 2024



What technology can do well is to offer choice and options and these can be appealing, particularly to people who may not or may not want to own a car but do want to have options and choices to travel to a location.

Technology needs to be able to offer a choice of what to do, whether that is going on an app and hiring an e-scooter, getting in a car club car, getting on a bus or getting on a train etc.

A key issue around technology is that it often requires a level of technological and cognitive competence. Often people need to juggle from one transport app to another to manage a journey and often at stressful points in a journey, for instance in the event of delays and cancellations. This deters some older, disabled and nervous users - especially if they have difficulty using certain apps. That deterrence may mean some people choose to use a less sustainable mode, such as a car or taxi, if they have the option to do so, or do not travel at all, which contributes to social isolation¹⁶.

What the transport sector can help do within that context of choice and options is to frame them in an ecosystem that preferences sustainability. For example, by offering wider choice for parking for people using car clubs or disabled badges in city areas and providing accurate, reliable information for active travel/ public transport option so it can be compared with a car journey.

A key component of choice is pricing. CIHT believe that if people have an alternative, they should pay more than if they don't have an alternative, and there should be exemptions for

¹⁶ The Joseph Rowntree showed that social isolation kills faster than smoking or obesity, but it's rarely considered in economic impact of transport.

disabled badge holders so as not to further disadvantage people with disabilities. For example, if you are travelling from north London to south London and you are driving you should pay more than travelling the same distance in a place where there's no public transport.

CIHT's report '[Charging for Road Use – What is the Future of Mobility pricing?](#)'¹⁷ looks at the options for using direct charges to pay for the maintenance of the road network and help tackle challenges such as congestion and poor air quality whilst pushing for Net Zero. The paper warns that a failure amongst professionals to collaborate to overcome the practical and political barriers to introducing new schemes means there is a risk that this powerful tool will be off the table for a generation.

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

Devolution of power and budgets is key to improving the way decisions are made about the transport network.

CIHT sees devolution of decisions made about transport to be an opportunity to connect the INTS from a national policy to delivery across larger local/regional geographies. However, the Transport Strategies of the seven Sub-National Transport Bodies in England need to be aligned to ensure seamless journeys across area boundaries.

There is a need to make sure that powers enabled through devolution are supported by the right budget mechanism for effective delivery.

The English Devolution White Paper¹⁸ signals the introduction of an Integrated Settlement – providing consolidated budgets to Strategic Authorities to enable movement of funding between housing, regeneration, local growth, local transport, skills, retrofit, and employment support.

CIHT welcome the White Paper as this provides – via the establishment of the strategic authorities – the ability to connect highways and planning.

With combined authorities and strategic authorities there is the question of how we make sure that the decision-making powers are at the right level, so that what is delivered is an integrated system of walking, cycling and public transport to offer an attractive alternative to the private car. Even with strategic authorities, decisions on transport are made at different levels of government. For example, public transport pricing may be at the strategic authority level whereas car parking charges are set at the local authority level. As noted above, pricing is a key component of choice so for a truly integrated system, all decisions relating to transport pricing need to be made at the same level, although this may well cause problems for some local authorities who rely on car parking revenue to provide essential services, such as paying for concessionary travel.

¹⁷ [Charging for Road Use – What is the Future of Mobility Pricing | CIHT](#)

¹⁸ [English Devolution White Paper: Power and partnership: Foundations for growth - GOV.UK](#)

There will also be seasonal increases in demand and provision due to factors such as weather and tourism, a significant generator of local income, which increases demands on the transport network.

Often decisions relating to active travel, i.e. walking and cycling, are made at the local authority level so ensuring these are joined up within a strategic authority region can be difficult. This can be partially overcome if the strategic authority funds schemes across several local authorities, for example, to ensure a continuous cycle route. However, decision making to accept the funding and implement the scheme still rests at the local authority level and political decisions may mean that the funding is not accepted/ scheme not progressed.

How the INTS balances the national and the local decision making effectively will be critical. CIHT welcomes devolution and sees this working across wider spatial areas in connecting transport journeys, but this needs to feed into more local transport for shorter journeys made by active travel.

The development of the Metro Mayors¹⁹ is a positive development. Across these wider regions, efforts can be made to develop a better-connected public transport offer – whether that be through bus franchising, micromobility or metro systems.

Metro Mayors have also got environmental targets, which will need to be supported by the decarbonisation of the transport network.

There will need to be effective communication with people. It will be necessary to articulate effectively how the transport network, and individual schemes, are there to connect together to make people's lives better. For example, franchising buses is one element in the jigsaw which is an integrated transport system. If decision-makers can show transport users how that piece of the jigsaw fits into the others, a clear picture of an integrated travel system is created and this message can then be communicated in how this will benefit peoples' lives and create opportunities for them – in improving health, supporting access to jobs and so on.

The Office of Road and Rail (ORR), with its new, combined modal remit is probably the closest we get to an integrated overview of the transport network and would seem to require a role in the strategy being contemplated.

There is also a role for Transport Focus to evaluate how the high-level strategic goals of the INTS are being delivered from the customer perspective.

¹⁹ Metro mayors and are directly elected by citizens in their area, and are chairs of their area's combined authority. The mayor, in partnership with the combined authority, exercises the powers and functions devolved from Government, set out in the local area's devolution deal. <https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-labour/about-us/metro-mayors> ²⁰ CIHT (2024) 'New CIHT Report: Delivering a resilient transport network', published 8 October 2024, Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

5. Any other comments?

Transport and land use

There is a need to ensure that the relationship between transport and land use is a key focus for the INTS, particularly given the emphasis on increasing housing provision by the government. In CIHT's response to the recent consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) we highlighted the need for:

- **Sustainability in development:** Emphasise the need for quality, sustainable development over mere quantity. The NPPF should clearly define sustainable development and prioritise sustainable transport options to reduce car dependency.
- **Integration of transport and planning:** Advocate for closer integration of transport and planning to ensure housing developments are accessible by sustainable transport modes like walking, cycling, and public transport, thus meeting the needs of people rather than cars.
- **Clarity on grey belt development:** Call for stronger clarification and safeguards to ensure that grey belt developments are appropriately serviced by sustainable transport and not arbitrarily designated.
- **Vision-led planning:** Support a shift from the outdated 'predict and provide' approach to a 'vision-led' approach in planning, ensuring developments are strategically planned with a focus on sustainable transport and economic growth.
- **Collaboration and cross-boundary planning:** Stress the importance of effective cooperation among local authorities and stakeholders in cross-boundary and strategic planning matters to ensure consistent and sustainable development outcomes.

Resilience

Any INTS relies on the transport network being available for use. The UK has a significant ageing asset in need of maintenance repair and renewal. There is a major challenge of maintaining the existing transport network. When you add on the impacts of climate change, this challenge is exacerbated.

CIHT's report "[Delivering a resilient transport network- maintaining and future proofing highway infrastructure from extreme weather events](#)"²⁰ shows how preparing road infrastructure now is key to long-term resilience, saving costs, and protecting communities and the economy.

²⁰ CIHT (2024) '[New CIHT Report: Delivering a resilient transport network](#)', published 8 October 2024, Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

1. CIHT calls for adaptation and resilience to be made an immediate investment and policy priority across all governmental transport strategies. There is a risk of significant and expensive infrastructure failures if resilience measures are not recognised as key strategic objectives now. Extreme weather events are happening with increased frequency and intensity – it is imperative that we act now to mitigate the risk of possible losses.
2. CIHT calls for investment in maintenance of our existing highways and infrastructure to ensure the continued and efficient use of our transport network. Incrementally adapting infrastructure and proactively maintaining it are crucial for extreme weather resilience and meeting decarbonisation goals.
3. CIHT encourages the legislative road authorities of the UK to make it a statutory requirement for all transport asset owners to carry out transport resilience assessments. This will help to identify vulnerabilities in the network, prioritise remedial action and identify who should be responsible. This should also apply to neighbouring asset owners and utilities where risks and impacts are clearly intertwined.
4. CIHT encourages the legislative road authorities of the UK to provide coherent and consistent guidance to the sector on how to undertake risk assessments on resilience. There is a need to avoid different operators and asset owners developing their own internal assessments based on different assumptions, leading to non-transferable or non-sharable data.

Conclusion

CIHT would be pleased to work with government on the development of the INTS and is happy to convene meetings with our members and the project team to obtain further feedback.

Ends