

Appendix 1 –Comments at Scrutiny Committee 4th November 21

TfN's Scrutiny Committee provided feedback on the Major Roads Report at the meeting on 4th November. The Scrutiny Chair also read out a set of questions submitted to the committee on 3rd November.

Questions submitted by Mr Anthony Rae, representing environmental NGO's, received 3rd November

- 1. Should the MRR not contain an explicit commitment to compatibility with the Decarbonisation Strategy, as is required by the TfN strategic transport plan?**

TfN is committed to ensuring that our recommended investment programme for road & rail is aligned with and matches commitments in our transport Decarbonisation Strategy. As described in the MRR we are appraising our investment programme against social, economic and environmental outcomes; this will inform our recommendations for future investment. This includes recommendations on future investment on our Major Roads. Ultimately, we will be asking the question: 'what needs to be true, if the North is to effectively decarbonise its surface transport as well as enjoy the significant connectivity, economic and environmental benefits that our investment programme will deliver?'

The Major Roads Report conditional outputs (page 32 of the summary report) include a conditional output on Carbon emissions: "*Reduction in carbon emissions from road transport in the North in line with TfN's trajectory for achieving near-zero net carbon emissions from surface transport by 2045.*"

- 2. Has an analysis been undertaken that establishes whether TfN's proposed investment in increased road capacity, facilitating more traffic generation, either assists the proposed carbon reduction pathway to Net Zero or alternatively undermines it?**

We are undertaking an 'Investment Programme Benefits Analysis (IPBA) to inform recommendations on the TfN investment programme and will adjust recommendations based on evidence encompassing the social, economic and environmental outcomes (including GHG emissions) of that analysis. In practice this means that the recommended delivery of certain projects within the programme may need to be re-sequenced in consultation with our partners to a date when the future travel context enables the programme to operate within the decarbonisation trajectory. For example, a particular road project may be re-scheduled to a point when the majority of additional traffic generated is by zero emission vehicles.

It is also important to be clear that the IPBA work will inform TfN recommendations at a programme level and does not represent a final decision on whether and when a scheme will be delivered.

As specific schemes or packages of schemes are taken forward, they will subsequently need to be developed in accordance with the treasury 'Green Book', and statutory processes including an environmental impact assessment.

3. **How would the MRR manage increased demand for road travel consistent with its preferred future travel scenario and in order to achieve its 2030 & 2050 carbon reduction targets?**

The four travel scenarios developed through collaboration with industry experts and TfN partners represent 4 plausible future states – these are ‘driven’ by exogenous factors, distinct from the Investment Programme and outside of the direct influence of TfN.

For example, factors including future planning policy leading to land use changes, public transport fare structures, cost of road travel, levels of digital substitution and propensity of citizens to change travel behaviours. The scenarios are being used in our appraisal of the IP to help future proof our recommendations.

Through this work we are taking a far more sophisticated approach than a simple core scenario for traffic growth / passenger demand – based on evidence on what are credible future states - influenced by Government, local decisions, and societal changes. Our Urban Zero Carbon scenario shows a lower increase in vehicle KM than the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) projection.

4. **TfN’s Strategic Goal for the environment requires TfN to make best use of existing transport infrastructure before investing in new capacity. Has TfN undertaken such an assessment to see if best use is being made of the road network?**

TfN has developed a robust set of analytical tools representing performance of the existing road and rail networks and which is used to model the impact of future changes in transport behaviour for both the road and rail networks. This is a strategic analytical tool used to inform recommendations on a where transport connections need to improve, not used for final decision making on transport investment in a specific programme or scheme.

To be absolutely clear TfN’s work on developing Investment Programme recommendations is the starting point for more detailed options appraisal looking at options for transport improvements on specific routes or corridors. Wherever possible we will promote the best use of existing infrastructure, important on value for money grounds, as well as for reducing future carbon emissions.

5. **Will TfN review (or ask DfT/National Highways to do likewise) the strategic case for all the MRR road schemes in the context of the Green Book?**

The final decision on whether to invest in highway schemes on the SRN or on schemes funded via the MRN/LLM programmes lies with the Department for Transport and Secretary. of State for Transport. Schemes in development are following guidance set out in the Green Book.

6. **The negative impacts of the MRR on the wider environment are nowhere to be found in the documents. Carbon emissions**

reduction is not the only emergency – there is a nature crisis and a public health crisis as well. What are the impacts of the MRR investments on these other two emergencies, and why have they not been included within its analysis?

The MRR full reportⁱ includes a specific section 3 (page 58 – 61) on transport's role in contributing to sustainable & inclusive growth, specifically refers to air quality issues (section 3.3) and highlights air quality and noise pollution as key areas for improvement.

Table 4.3 (page 67) summarises how the Major Road Network can contribute to meeting the STP's four objectives – including "Improving inclusivity, health, and access to opportunities for all" & "Promoting and enhancing the built, historic, and natural environment."

And Chapter 5 "Current and future requirements of the MRN" section 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 refer to societal issues and trends and how transport including the function of the MRN impacts on peoples' lives. For example, section 5.1.3 (page 81) includes the statement that: "Consideration of sustainable and active travel should be an early part of the design stages for all schemes on the MRN, with decisions on a route-by-route and location-by-location basis as to the most appropriate type of provision in each locality. Investment in active travel should be designed and maintained in accordance with the principles contained within 'Stepping up a Gear' and as described in more detailed within Local Transport Note (1/20) Cycle – Infrastructure."

Environmental Impacts Assessments will be required for every MRN road scheme in terms of assessing impacts on biodiversity and public health.

MRN investments can have significant beneficial impacts on communities and citizens health – for example if removing traffic from residential areas.

Questions and comments raised by Members at Scrutiny Committee on 4th November and officer's consideration and responses.

7. How much will road use need to reduce in order to meet the TfN decarbonisation trajectory.

This is detailed in the Board report, point 3.9; and is based on the TfN's analysis for the Decarbonisation Strategy.

8. How do we tackle air quality issues?

Section 3.3 of the Major Roads Report (full report) focus on Air Quality issues, and states that "TfN recognises the steps taken by National Highways to improve air quality on the SRN, and we are keen to explore how this strategy could be expanded to also cover the MRN through future investment on the network."

TfN's has also taken steps to monitor the proportion of the

population in the North exposed to high levels of PM2.5 and NO2 emissions, to which vehicles are a significant contributor.

9. **Electric cars are not the only solution to decarbonising.**

Absolutely true, and TfN's analysis for the Decarbonisation Strategy and in the work, we are undertaking for the Investment Programme Benefits Appraisal (IPBA) includes an evidenced based assessment of a range of factors impacting on emissions. This includes projections on the uptake of Zero Emission Vehicles, but also data on population changes, levels of car ownership, assumptions on levels of home working etc..

Further detail on factors we are considering can be accessed at:

<https://transportforthenorth.com/future-travel-scenarios/>

10. **We need more low traffic neighbourhoods and reallocation of road space is important.**

As stated in the Board report, the MRN's primary role is to facilitate inter-urban journeys, with a general presumption that MRN routes should not extend directly into the main urban centres (city and town centres).

Local transport and highway authorities have responsibility for decisions on where to reallocate road space to active travel, public transport or develop new traffic free open spaces. TfN supports increased and sustained investment in place making and sustainable travel.

The Major Road Network was developed by TfN in partnership with our local transport and highway authority partners and will work with partners in taking forward proposals for future changes to the MRN.

11. **How do we maintain good road connectivity without encouraging more car use / discouraging public transport?**

Points 3.11 and 3.12 in the Board report outline the need for a holistic and hierarchical account of all options for improving access for people and goods. Also, that TfN is ready to work with Government on considering new approaches to taxation and how revenues can be used to fund improvements across all modes of an integrated transport system. And that we believe this is an opportunity to ensure customers are better informed of the true cost of a journey via different modes, enabling people to make better choices on which forms of transport to take, resulting in more efficient and environmentally friendly journeys.

12. **Need to promote the right solutions for different areas, for example public transport should be the first choice in urban areas, whereas for many rural areas' car is the primary or only option.**

The Major Roads Report section 2.8.5 focuses on the role of the MRN in urban areas. As highlighted in the previous response we are taking a whole network approach to developing proposals for transport investment, assessing the potential for increases in active travel and public transport in place of car travel. And doing this for different geographical areas of the North, for example urban and rural locations.

ⁱ Note that the full version of the Major Roads Report was circulated with Scrutiny Committee papers for the meeting on 4th November. Link to papers [here](#).