

# TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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***Winner of CILT award for best practice in passenger transport (2013)***

***promoting quality public transport.....***

National Infrastructure Assessment Consultation  
 National Infrastructure Commission  
 5th Floor  
 11 Philpot Lane  
 London EC3M 8UD

12<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Dear Commission Secretariat,

## **Congestion, Capacity and Carbon: Priorities for National Infrastructure**

TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) is an independent Community Interest Company representing all public transport users in NW England. We are pleased to give our views as follows.

Our main concern is promoting greater use of public transport and tackling road congestion which is of course acknowledged.

Congestion in our towns and cities (and elsewhere) is getting worse because of:

- a) Public transport of *overall* poorer quality than it should be;
- b) Ill-considered planning decisions that have led housing, employment and education building that is not easily accessed by public transport, leading to too great a reliance on car travel;
- c) Streets and roads that are unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.
- d) The growth in car and commercial vehicle journeys

### ***Public transport provision***

Road congestion cannot be solved easily by new road schemes and there is the need to curb road traffic pollution. The alternative has to be public transport **but** rail in our region currently suffers widely from inadequate infrastructure capacity in terms of track and lack of train capacity to run more and longer passenger trains. Bus services on the other hand can be made much more friendly so that car drivers will use them and bus priority is a necessity.

Integration is a term much in common use and to be commended. However the private car will probably continue to be more attractive than connecting

buses to rail stations for many people and the challenge will be to bring about a step change in the provision of parking space at the many totally inadequate current station locations. With more trains and more passengers this vital issue becomes increasingly exacerbated. Accessibility at many stations is poor or non-existent for those with limited mobility. This should be a priority.

### ***Planning decisions***

With regards to infrastructure to support housing, new building should not be developed based on road access only. A good rail/light rail station with convenient walking/cycling access and with regular services would minimise the substantial countryside space needed for road infrastructure and improve the visual and safety aspects of the development. The tax regime should be changed to provide incentives to rescue, restore and improve derelict buildings and where necessary build on brownfield sites. There needs to be a tax on developers who 'land grab', then hold on to sites for years without building. We also feel there should be a tax on developments in the green built and outside centres of population that impose externalities on society (by way of congestion, pollution etc).

### ***Liveable Cities.***

Although there is a movement towards environmentally friendly electric noise free cars and buses the fact is that a road full of traffic is both a visual impediment and a safety hazard. We should aim towards car free cities and much larger totally pedestrian city centre areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

*John A Moorhouse*

John Moorhouse  
Company Secretary