

Agenda – Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Video Conference via Zoom	Robert Donovan
Meeting date: 30 September 2020	Committee Clerk
Meeting time: 09.15	0300 200 6565
	SeneddEIS@senedd.wales

Private pre-meeting (09.15– 09.45)

In accordance with Standing Order 34.19, the Chair has determined that the public are excluded from the Committee's meeting in order to protect public health. This meeting will be broadcast live on www.senedd.tv.

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09.45)

2.1 Letter from Minister for Housing and Local Government re: National Development Framework

(09.45)

(Pages 1 – 8)

Attached Documents:

EIS(5)–18–20 – Paper to note 1

3 Covid–19: Transport Recovery – Advocacy Groups and Passenger Interests

(09.45–10.55)

(Pages 9 – 25)



Christine Boston, Director for Wales, Transform Cymru

Ryland Jones, Interim Deputy Director, Sustrans Cymru

Norman Baker, Adviser to the Chief Executive Officer, Campaign for Better Transport

David Beer, Senior Manager Wales, Transport Focus

Attached Documents:

EIS(5)-18-20 – Paper 2: Evidence from Transport Focus

EIS(5)-18-20 – Paper 3: Research Brief

Break (10.55–11.05)

4 Covid-19: Transport Recovery – Academic and Industry

Perspectives

(11.05–11.55)

(Pages 26 – 30)

Prof Glenn Lyons, Professor of Future Mobility – University of the West of England

Nick Richardson, Technical Director (Transport) – Mott Macdonald and Chair of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Bus and Coach Policy Group

Attached Documents:

EIS(5)-18-20 – Paper 4: Evidence from Mott Macdonald

EIS(5)-18-20 – Paper 5: Evidence from Professor Glenn Lyons

5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

(11.55)

6 Private

(11.55-12.15)

Covid:19: Recovery – Consideration of evidence following Item 3 & 4

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref:

Russell George MS
Chair of the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

21 September 2020

Dear Russell

Following extensive consultation on the draft National Development Framework (NDF) last year, I have, today, laid the revised draft NDF before the Senedd for a 60-day consideration period.

The NDF is accompanied by a consultation report setting out the issues raised during the consultation, a schedule of changes I intend to make following consideration of the consultation responses, and an updated integrated sustainability appraisal. They can be viewed [here](#).

My response to the issues you raised after your initial consideration of the draft NDF is included in the consultation report, and is also appended to this letter. To support the scrutiny process I have today published two documents. The first sets out how I intend to monitor the NDF after its publication; and the second is a version of the schedules of changes document that has been laid in the format of the draft NDF document that was consulted upon last year. These documents are available to view [here](#).

I will be tabling an amendable motion in government-time to provide an opportunity for the Senedd to express its views on (but not approve) the draft NDF. The debate will take place during the Senedd's 60-day consideration period so the Government can reflect on the issues raised together with any recommendations from Senedd Committees in a timely manner.

During last year's consultation on the draft NDF, Senedd members expressed to me the importance of everyone being able to understand what the NDF was and what it would mean for them. Some thought the name 'national development framework' did not set out what the NDF was or would do. I have reflected on this and asked Children in Wales to help develop a new title. They suggested the name 'Future Wales – The National Plan 2040'. On publication, the NDF will be known by this new name and referred to in short as Future Wales. You will see this new name appearing on some of the documents that will support the scrutiny process.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I look forward to working with the Senedd on the completion of Future Wales, our first National Development Framework.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Julie James AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government

Welsh Government response to Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee letter of 5 February 2020 regarding the draft National Development Framework.

Issue Raised	Response
<p>1. The framework seems to lack ambition. When drafting a key national planning document like this, there is an opportunity to set the agenda and make changes which will address big issues in society such as tackling climate change and economic and social inequality. The Committee felt that this opportunity has been missed somewhat.</p>	<p>We do not accept the Committee’s assessment that the draft National Development Framework (NDF) lacks ambition. The NDF includes a vision and the policies to enable and deliver radical improvements to how places look and function across the country. The vision and policies reflect the wider strategic framework in which the NDF sits, which includes the Economic Action Plan, Low Carbon Wales and the Wales infrastructure Investment Plan.</p> <p>The NDF is seeking to address significant and long term challenges, including the climate and environmental emergencies. It is explicitly seeking to enable a modal shift in travel methods and to reduce distances between people’s homes, their jobs and the services they use. It is committed to placemaking – the method of planning that places value on having excellent access to services, community facilities and open spaces in communities. The net result would be a more decarbonised society that is less reliant on cars and healthier, more sociable communities with vibrant local services. In this regard, the NDF is perfectly aligned with the Welsh Government’s commitment to revitalising town centres, to develop Metro transport systems and to enhance our natural resources.</p> <p>A ‘lack of ambition’ is a term used in some consultation responses that want the NDF to allow widespread exploitation of greenfield land for the development of new poorly-located commuter towns and ‘anywhere’ estates. Focusing on opportunities to regenerate and renew town centres by promoting mixed developments and better sustainable transport infrastructure in existing towns and cities is ambitious because it is not the easiest option to take. It is the approach that is most likely to prioritise using brownfield land and the approach that is most likely to lead to more sustainable lifestyles.</p> <p>As an estimate, new homes developed over the next twenty years will account for 8% of the housing stock. The NDF does not focus solely on planning for</p>

Issue Raised	Response
	<p>this 8% of homes – it also provides a vision for how all places will be healthier and more vibrant in future.</p> <p>The NDF vision will influence other Welsh Government documents. The mechanisms for reviewing the NDF every 5 years (or sooner) will ensure it can influence and be responsive to the emergence of related strategies and plans, including: the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan, the Wales Transport Strategy and recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales. A vision for how the NDF will develop with each review is set out in a paper on the NDF Monitoring Framework.</p> <p>Financial Implication: None.</p>
<p>2. The Committee is concerned that this lack of ambition means the NDF's will not create the correct space to foster growth in the economy. Professor Goodstadt stated "what's missing is some sense of the overall scale of the Welsh economy and what that should be" and referred to the document as only setting out a "trend-based view of life."</p>	<p>The NDF takes into account wider Welsh Government policies and strategies and provides the planning policies and context necessary to achieve them. It is not the role of the NDF to set the Welsh Government's overarching economic policy as these can be found elsewhere in the Programme for Government and Economic Action Plan.</p> <p>The NDF provides the context for the planning ambitions set out in Welsh Government policies to be translated through Strategic and Local Development Plans which will put more detail on anticipated levels of sustainable economic growth, leading to greater fairness and equality between areas.</p> <p>Financial Implication: None.</p>
<p>3. For example, the NDF does not mention the foundational economy despite this being a clear priority of the Welsh Government, indeed the UK2070 Commission has noted that Wales is leading the way this field. The foundational economy approach should be noted in, celebrated by and built on in the NDF.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government's approach to the foundational economy is currently being developed by the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales as one of the key features of the Economic Action Plan. It is difficult to frame national, strategic land use planning policies around this sector given its nature as something which is very locally based and driven by need within a tightly defined area.</p>

Issue Raised	Response
	<p>Amendments to the NDF include reference to the importance of the foundational economy throughout Wales. The Welsh Government will also consider what other planning guidance could be issued to planning authorities and others to help develop this sector.</p> <p>Financial Implication: None.</p>
<p>4. The lack of ambition in the document is also evident in that it does not set out specific pieces of key large transport infrastructure. For example, the Committee would have expected more details the planned Metros included in the NDF.</p>	<p>The NDF must be considered alongside other Welsh Government strategies and programmes. The Welsh Government will publish a new Wales Transport Strategy in 2020 which will set out the vision, priorities and desired outcomes for transport. The Strategy will be aligned with the NDF and support its spatial strategy which directs where new development and infrastructure investment will be focused. A new National Transport Delivery Plan will be produced to support the delivery of the Wales Transport Strategy and the NDF. The long term infrastructure needs of the country will also be identified by the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales (NICW).</p> <p>The NDF is a vehicle for setting direction and co-ordinating investment in infrastructure with a wider strategy for development, to ensure the benefits of infrastructure investment is maximised.</p> <p>The NDF will be published before NICW provides its recommendations. There will be stronger alignment and reciprocity between key documents as the full suite of relevant strategies and plans are put in place.</p> <p>Financial Implication: None</p>
<p>5. The Committee was concerned about the sequencing of the national, strategic and local plans. Most Local Development Plans (LDPs) have been developed and clearly the work to develop the NDF is well underway. However very little work has been undertaken at the regional level on Strategic</p>	<p>The Welsh Government is committed to a three-tiered development planning system. The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduced the ability for local planning authorities to collaborate to produce SDPs. Although the relevant powers were commenced in 2015, proposals for SDPs have been slow to come forward. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill will mandate preparation of SDPs, with governance provided by Corporate Joint Committees. The NDF further mandates the preparation of SDPs by providing a focus on regional</p>

Issue Raised	Response
<p>Development Plans (SDPs). The Committee understands that we will be well into the 2020s before the first SDP is up and running. At this point we will be into the second, if not the third iteration of the NDF. Having some LDPs developed ahead of the NDF, and well ahead of the SDPs seems to present a risk of a disjointed approach to strategic planning. The timeframe before we see the three levels of plans working in order and harmony also is of concern. The Committee would like some reassurances around the speed of the SDPs and remaining LDPs coming forward and how the Government will ensure this lag between the three levels does not harm the NDF's ability to provide the correct spatial plan to address the key national priorities it sets out to do.</p>	<p>planning, with Chapter 5 setting a framework for the preparation of SDPs (Policy 19). The NDF's regional policies will focus Welsh Government and key stakeholder action and investment in the four regions, identify key strategic spatial issues, and provide a framework for the co-ordination of national economic, housing, regeneration, environmental, flooding, energy, rural and transport policy delivery.</p> <p>Recognising that SDPs are not yet in place, the NDF policies also set out key regional issues identified across the NDF process to provide a starting point for the preparation of SDPs and a regional context for the planning system in advance of the adoption of SDPs. As SDPs are required by law to be in conformity with the NDF, the regional content of the NDF provides a clear outline of the matters SDPs must address while enabling regionally-distinctive approaches to be developed</p> <p>An important feature of the three-tiered development planning system will be the ability of higher tier plans to be influenced by the emergence and adoption of other development plans. It is anticipated that Strategic Development Plan evidence bases will form part of the evidence base for future NDFs. In time the NDF, SDPs and LDPs will inform and shape each other and this relationship will ensure a strong, effective planning system at all levels.</p> <p>Financial Implication: None.</p>
<p>6. The Committee felt that the document was light on improving transport links between Welsh regions and cross-border with England. Both north-south and east-west connectivity could be greatly improved. This could be via direct links within an all-Wales integrated transport network, emphasising opportunities to develop public transport links and active travel. As well as helping people navigate easily around Wales this network</p>	<p>The NDF will be strengthened in response to consultation responses relating to transport issues. Chapter 4, which covers the national strategic matters, has been expanded with three additional policies on International, National and Regional Connectivity.</p> <p>Proposed Policy 10 – International Connectivity This policy sets out how the Welsh Government will support international connectivity at Cardiff Airport, Holyhead Port, the Haven Waterway and the Fishguard Port. This policy integrates what were three regional policies in the draft NDF.</p>

Issue Raised	Response
<p>could also transport people into local hubs where they can travel onwards to England, Ireland and further afield.</p>	<p>Proposed Policy 11 – National Connectivity This policy sets out how the Welsh Government will support and invest in improving national connectivity. It identifies that our priorities are to encourage longer-distance trips to be made by public transport, whilst making longer journeys possible by electric vehicles, and also supports strengthening of the National Cycle Network.</p> <p>Proposed Policy 12 – Regional Connectivity This policy sets out how the Welsh Government will support and invest in improving regional connectivity. It sets out our priorities for both urban and rural areas.</p> <p>The National and Regional Connectivity policies are supported by specific transport policies in the regional sections of the NDF which provide the regional context and specific proposals for improving connectivity.</p> <p>Financial Implication: None.</p>
<p>7. Although sea travel is not devolved, ports are. Whilst the Committee understands it's unlikely any new ports will be developed, infrastructure links to ports should feature in the document.</p>	<p>This policy position will be supported by the introduction of a new International Connectivity Policy in Chapter 4 of the NDF which identifies Holyhead Port, Haven Waterway and Fishguard Port as Strategic Gateways.</p> <p>Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the national policy position regarding ports and acknowledges the important role they play in the economy and the sustainable movement of freight. PPW recognises that functional and attractive ports which meet current and future demand, make Wales an attractive location for businesses, visitors and freight transportation.</p> <p>As set out in PPW, the Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP) provides a vision within which ports can plan their current and future operations, including options for expansion and diversification. Planning authorities must consider the land use implications of the WNMP when preparing their development plans.</p>

Issue Raised	Response
	<p>Financial Implication: None.</p>
<p>8. The Committee was not convinced by the argument for Wales to be split into three regions. Whilst it understands SDPs need not cover the whole of a region, it feels the Mid and South West Wales region would be better split with Mid Wales and South West Wales being regions to reflect their distinct characteristics.</p>	<p>It is agreed that the NDF would be enhanced by a four-region approach. The NDF will be presented on a four-region basis comprising North, Mid, South West and South East regions.</p> <p>Financial Implication: None.</p>

Summary of Risks and Opportunities for Transport Policy from Covid-19

The picture from our research

Travel during Covid-19 weekly survey¹

- Use of public transport is increasing slowly; although train travel lags behind bus
- The proportion of those who used buses or trains regularly before lockdown who say that they will be using these modes in the next month is increasing over time, but volumes are still considerably lower than prior to lockdown
- More people are making journeys for leisure reasons
- Those who have used public transport in the last seven days remain more likely than those that have not to think that doing so is more safe, or equally safe as compared to going to shops and restaurants

For those in Wales:

- Two-thirds (67 per cent) **agree** that they will feel safer using public transport if passengers wear face coverings
- Almost half (45 per cent) **disagree** that they have few concerns about using public transport, which has increased from 40 per cent in June
- Around half (51 per cent) say they will walk more for journeys where public transport was used previously and three-in-ten (30 per cent) will cycle more. In June, Wales had the lowest proportion of people saying they will be happy to use public transport again at 15 per cent, compared with 22 per cent across Britain and 33 per cent among 18-24 year olds
- Almost half (47 per cent) expect to work from home more in future.

Analysis of Travel During Covid-19 report² – key points

- Still a significant number of people who are avoiding public transport or don't feel it is safe at the moment
- Several key reasons why people are avoiding public transport or don't feel that it is safe at the moment including concerns around face masks, feeling that public transport is 'unclean' and a general distrust in others to follow the rules
- There is a sense of having less control on public transport than in other places making it feel less safe, such as not being able to get 'off' easily.

Transport User Community³ views

- Respondents have never seen their trains as particularly clean, Passengers will not return to rail if they feel they are paying extra for a standard of cleanliness and capacity they felt entitled to long before Covid-19. Previous research has shown that commuters feel 'hostage' to rail.

¹ A weekly survey of over 2000 people, asking them about the travel behaviours and their attitudes towards travelling.

² Analysis of the feedback comments from the weekly survey, [4 September 2020](#).

³ Community of 60 people who were regular rail users, who we use as a sounding board to discuss issues and concerns.

- There is an opportunity to promote public transport as opposed to car use for a more sustainable transport system. Passengers want rail to succeed, and to some extent recognise things ‘must’ return to normal, but need their concerns addressed.
- A mixed approach of home working and office working is seen as ideal for most; our community argue that home working allows for a greater work life balance and better wellbeing overall. Many wonder why they hadn’t adopted a home or mixed working approach long ago. Those who have been made redundant will actively search for jobs that do not require a rail commute.
- Passengers see crowding as unmanaged and unpredictable and solving the issue is seen as a shared responsibility. Employers must implement flexible working policies to end the ‘peak/off peak’ situation that leads to crowding. Passengers must plan ahead to travel in less congested periods where possible, respect social distancing and respect staff who enforce the rules. Operators must arm passengers and employers with the information necessary to plan around the crowding – passengers expect an on-demand, technical solution to indicate how crowded their train or bus will be.
- Leisure journeys by rail have declined sharply among our community members. While most recognise that the rules allow for discretionary rail travel, concerns remain. Images in the media of overcrowded beaches and parks have led to a renewed fear of making day trips. Our community does not want to contribute to overcrowding or the spread of the virus and are therefore keeping their leisure trips local and small scale.
- Bus travel has more space, so has become more pleasant, but with an underlying anxiety about potential lapses in social distancing.
- Those who are not taking the bus take a very pessimistic view of its safety during the pandemic. Many assume that non-wearing of face masks will be rife. Others assume that the atmosphere would be even more tense than active passengers reported – as with our rail users, stories about young people ignoring the regulations have spread far.

Issues arising

Continuing perceptions gap – people want reassurance

Our surveys have highlighted the gap between the views and experience of those people actually using public transport and the perceptions of those who are not. There are signs that attitudes may be slowly shifting. However, a significant number still say they have been avoiding public transport and they don’t feel safe using it, particularly making comparisons with restaurants and pubs, with specific measures and the attention paid to customers when eating out in recent weeks. Changing perceptions will be very hard for bus and train operators, but it is vital for concerns to be addressed with measures such as active management of face coverings, staff visibility and higher profile of cleaning regimes.

We have called for incentives – including better value rail fares and a ‘Head Out to Help Out’ offer – to remove barriers to giving public transport another try. However, people want

firm assurances about safety measures and a sense of accountability and commitment they will be delivered, giving confidence to travel. Alongside this it is crucial to concentrate on essentials of punctuality, reliability, value for money and inclusive accessibility. Our priorities for improvement work⁴ demonstrates the continuing need to focus on the core product and the importance of not losing sight of this when looking at the future.

Fares: The prospect of a price increase in January sends the wrong message. With the industry struggling with how to get people back on rail, there is the need to tap into new working practices and a key opportunity to do things differently

- Carnets and flexible tickets: work from home has given previously captive commuters more choice of whether to travel or not. Rail has to adapt. Transport for Wales Rail's multiflex is a good example – but is this available across all routes? What is interoperability with other train companies' versions?
- Simplify the structure: many passengers see the fares structure as complicated, confusing, illogical and expensive – and split ticketing erodes trust. Single leg pricing, simpler ticket ranges and addressing anomalies will help to give passengers confidence they have bought the best value ticket for their journey
- Rail fares and ticketing reform: prior to the pandemic fares and retailing reform was high on the agenda as part of the Rail Review recommendations. Transport Focus is urging that reform of the complex rail fares system is urgently accelerated, to deliver a better value for money fares system for passengers.

Performance: During lockdown punctuality has been around 95 per cent – almost unheard of from a few months earlier. As timetables ramp up and as more people return again, there is a need to look at timetables and fix any pinch-points. So the lessons can be learnt to maintain these levels of performance and the timetable rebuilt with reliability.

Building confidence: it is vital for both the perception and experience of public transport to build trust. Focus must be given to core elements of reliability, frequency, value for money and visibility of staff. However our research shows these must be supported by further measures:

- Real time information: Providing digital information gives the ability to personalise, giving better value to passengers. A lot of work has been going into real-time loading and crowding information, which coupled with real time running details, provides a good package for passengers. Adding automatic *Delay-Repay* and digital ticketing into that mix makes it much more of a seamless bundle – ticket, personalised information and compensation in one package.
- Wi-Fi: A potential future shift towards more leisure travel rather than commuting highlights the need to look at making the journey itself a more valuable experience. Wi-Fi is the aspect that brings people in and enables them to engage in activities while travelling. Recent research⁵ by us on behalf of the Department for Transport

⁴ People ranked the things that would most improve their journeys – [Rail passengers' priorities](#) July 2020 and [Bus passengers' priorities](#), September 2020, which also looks at both youth and non-user priorities.

⁵ [Keeping connected: rail passengers' experience of internet connectivity](#), July 2020

suggests there is plenty of room for improvement before passengers receive the usable bandwidth that gives the positive journey experience they want.

Co-ordination with England: Virus restrictions and cross-border differences have added to confusion of who can travel and when. Are there lessons to be learnt that point to a need for better arrangements for when Transport for Wales Rail services cross the border?

Transport Focus Wales, Leckwith Offices, Sloper Road, Cardiff, CF11 8TB

Website: www.transportfocus.org.uk

September 2020

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 4

Welsh Parliament Economy, Skills and Infrastructure Committee
Evidence submitted by Nick Richardson BA(Hons) MA CTP FCILT FCIHT FRGS MTPS
Technical Principal at consultancy Mott MacDonald, Chair of the CILT Bus and
Coach Policy Group, former Chair of the Transport Planning Society and
columnist in 'Passenger Transport' magazine.

Risks and opportunities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic for transport policy and delivery in Wales

Key issues

The pandemic has shifted travel demand more fundamentally than any other event in modern times. It has shown how peoples' travel behaviour can adapt in a number of ways but the question is for how long can these new behaviours continue and will there be a lasting legacy? In addition to this key question is the extent to which people can be influenced in how and when they travel and what can be done to enable them to adopt sustainable travel behaviour. They will have seen during the lockdown period what could be achieved in terms of improved air quality, far less noise and safer streets.

There are some basic tenets – pre-COVID-19, the overwhelming problem was that of car dependency which has a direct effect on congestion (economic impacts) and air quality (health impacts). Every strategy seeking to widen transport options and promote sustainable modes comes back to this problem. There is no instant panacea and most areas have shied away from introducing any measures that could be seen as penalising motorists. The only examples are London's Congestion Charge, Nottingham's Workplace Parking Levy and the introduction of Low Emission Zones for which vehicle use is charged according to emissions. Public acceptance for any fiscal measures or restraints of car use are invariably met with considerable hostility – this is only avoidable if the benefits are clear and extensive. While there is consensus that traffic congestion and poor air quality have adverse effects, promoting measures that feature sustainable transport can be difficult.

The growth in demand for rail travel over recent years has shown that a shift from car can be achieved. Conversely, local bus services have continued to suffer from a range of problems of which traffic congestion is one major influence that has fed the decline in bus use. This is a major problem because bus services provide many of the solutions to traffic congestion and car-dependency.

Necessary changes

Against this background, the pandemic has shown that passenger transport services are financially fragile and will take a long time to recover. However, they provide vital means of transport across society, not just key workers. It is also evident that returning to the pre-pandemic network is not a viable route to take. For buses, re-creating a service that was failing would be illogical. Instead there are some significant opportunities. The greater proportions of walking and cycling are very encouraging but may not be a lasting legacy

unless measures are taken to address car dependency. All these strands are linked and without a comprehensive approach, transport will continue to struggle.

Aligning policy

Transport policy in Wales has highlighted how transport matters as part of the wider agenda of wellbeing. Increased awareness of walking and cycling brought about by the pandemic is to be welcomed and has drawn out issues of safety such as cycling on the road network, the health benefits of walking and the need to re-prioritise how infrastructure is used optimally. This approach could usefully be extended across the transport spectrum i.e. defining the value of measures by their outcomes rather than their economic performance alone. This comes back to the key problem of excessive car use, exacerbated by poor land use planning decisions, a lack of adaptability in the way bus services operate and entrenched behaviours. Any public transport proposal should be considered in this wider concept alongside the recognition that excessive car use adversely affects virtually everything else.

For bus services, major steps need to be taken to attract new users, most of whom are currently car users. Bus networks tend to be based on past travel patterns, hampered by unpredictable traffic and poor perceptions of bus travel. Buses need to offer much more to respond to the pandemic's widespread changes. Historically, the main purpose of bus journeys has been for work and shopping; both of these have changed hugely. Many more people are able to work at home and unemployment is likely to erode bus use further. New services could target concentrations of employment and operate at times when people need them. Online retailing and the ailing high street means that fewer people shop by bus but concentrations of retail activity could be better served with appropriate services at evenings and weekends to reflect changing shopping habits. Better links between trains and buses remain an aspiration but this will be most effective if there is a wider target to include integrated timetables, passenger information and ticketing and possibly considering other modes as well such as taxis and cycle (or scooter) hire. Fundamentally, the reliability and punctuality of bus and coach services will require more emphasis on-street which means dealing with traffic delays. Demand management measures affecting car users must be in place if there is to be any incentive to shift to bus services.

Much has been debated about how bus services are planned and operated but falling demand remains the big issue. Funding for transport can be complex, selective and of limited benefit unless there is a re-think about what infrastructure is needed (possibly not much if existing infrastructure is used differently), what revenue funding is needed, particularly post-pandemic and how new revenue streams can be created. This ties in with restraints on car use if measures such as road user charging or workplace parking are to be addressed successfully. By implication, highway authorities and municipal bus operators need to collaborate more to ensure that key objectives are being addressed.

The problems are well-rehearsed but the solutions now need to be wider and deeper if broader objectives for the environment, economy, health and communities are to be met.

NR 08 Sep 20

Examining the risks and opportunities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular emphasis upon **how transport policy and delivery in Wales should respond, manage the risks and maximise any opportunities**

Glenn Lyons, Mott MacDonald Professor of Future Mobility at UWE Bristol (Glenn.Lyons@uwe.ac.uk)

Thank you for the invitation and opportunity to offer my thoughts on the matter above.

In what capacity am I providing this input?

I was the founding director of the Centre for Transport & Society at UWE Bristol where I now hold the Mott MacDonald Chair in Future Mobility – seconded for half my time into consultancy. I did a degree in civil engineering and then PhD in artificial intelligence and driver behaviour at Cardiff University. I have subsequently devoted my research and practice career to **understanding and influencing travel behaviour in the context of continuing social and technological change**. I take a socio-technical perspective: trying to address the interplay between the social and technical systems within society. I have particularly focused upon how the digital age has collided and is merging with the motor age – triggering, I believe, regime change away from ‘automobility’ (the motor age as we have known it). I am now specialising in helping transport authorities, including the Department for Transport (DfT), take **a new approach to transport planning and policymaking that is vision-led and which can better expose and accommodate uncertainty**. I have also been the technical lead for a piece of work supporting the DfT’s development of its Transport Decarbonisation Plan – this has developed a series of technology roadmaps for the reduction and removal of direct emissions from across domestic transport modes by 2050 (see talking head video [here](#)).

Risks and opportunities in respect of what?

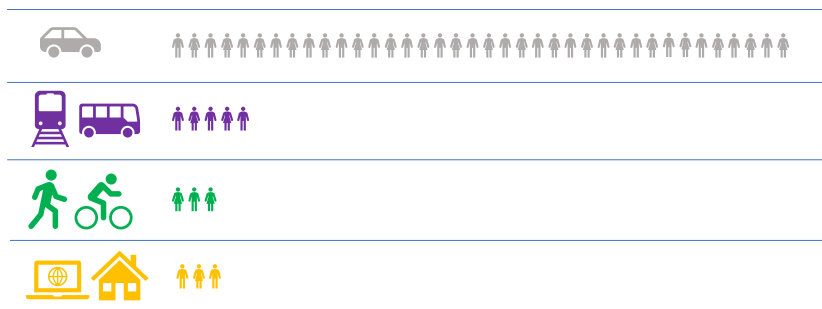
It seems important to understand the perspective taken when viewing risks and opportunities. For me this is clear. We are facing a climate emergency, the true gravity of which cannot be fully understood but which in any case presents us with a legally binding commitment to achieve a net zero carbon emissions economy in the UK by 2050. We know transport, as the single biggest emitting sector and most stubborn to decarbonise to date, is front and centre in the challenge to address this. As acknowledged in DfT’s March 2020 publication [Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge](#), “behaviour change will be an important aspect of the decarbonisation of transport”. Behaviour change is not only a rapid change in vehicle purchasing decisions towards lower and zero direct emissions vehicles. Its about how much we travel and the modes of travel we use: “[a]ccelerating modal shift to public and active transport” and “fewer car trips”. **It is not enough to green business as usual. To decarbonise transport in only 30 years calls for significant, substantial and timely behaviour change**. Such change is likely to be intimidating and met with resistance from public and businesses who feel they have a vested interest in the status quo. This makes it politically very challenging – especially in a context of weakened economic prospects and social inequality.

COVID as a source of disruption to the norms of travel

Travel behaviour of the population is continually changing – more dramatically at the level of individuals than at the aggregate. Change in circumstances (and in attitudes) can bring about changes in people’s needs and priorities for transport – a new job, a new home, a new location, a new relationship, a new family, a retirement, a divorce, a scrapped car, a drop in income. Travel behaviour changes and can be changed. The pandemic for many has been a months-long exposure to a change in circumstances. They have understood what it is like to rethink their travel requirements and choices, and they have experienced the consequences. **Travel requirements and choices emerging from the pandemic will change and can be changed – this is at the heart of the opportunities and risks ahead**. The illustrative diagram below depicts

how the makeup of people's access to employment could change. The question becomes, **what can policymakers do to influence the post-COVID profile, and to continue to influence it over time?**

Daily commute PRE-COVID



Daily commute POST-COVID



What are the risks?

There are of course multiple risks associated with the pandemic that relate directly and indirectly to transport and which are short-term and longer-term in nature. **The risk to public transport is arguably one of the most serious.** As illustrated above, some former public transport users may become, or return to being, car users for some journeys in the face of social distancing concerns. Some former public transport users may now be relying upon digital connectivity in their homes for access rather than travelling by public transport. Its possible that some former car users will see empty buses and trains (if they are still running) and switch to using public transport for some trips. Not everyone will have the same freedom of choice in changing their behaviours. If public transport carrying capacity and level of service is diminished post-COVID in the face of precarious commercial viability, **social inequality may well be exacerbated.**

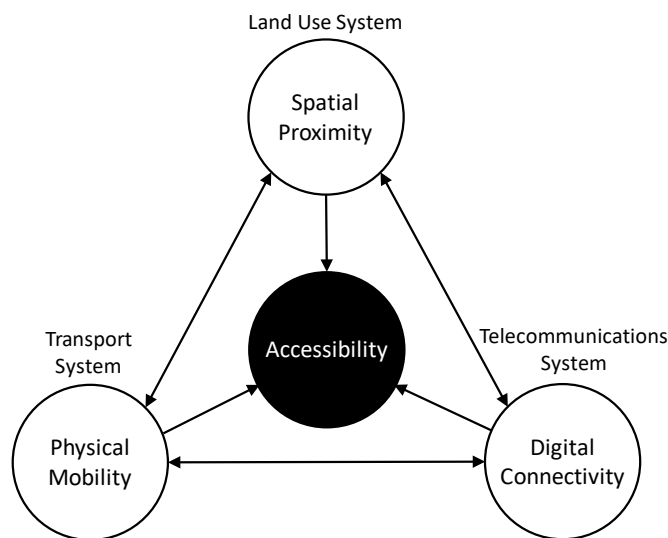
There are non-transport risks for urban centres in terms of 'the commuters not returning' if homeworking is more commonplace. **The risk for transport is that this is seen as a reason to discourage homeworking – a behavioural trend that can help address decarbonisation.**

The greatest risk for transport is that the lesson the pandemic has provided in human capacity to adapt to changed circumstances, will be squandered by vested interest in the old status quo and the inertia that results: efforts to resurrect a strong semblance of the old normal rather than seizing the opportunity to shape a new normal, aligned to the imperative of addressing decarbonisation.

What are the opportunities?

In 2016, based upon work in 2014/15 as Strategy Director for the New Zealand Ministry of Transport, we

put forward a model called the Triple Access System¹ (see below). This recognises that **what underpins economic prosperity and social wellbeing is access – the ability to reach people, goods, services and opportunities**. Access can be fulfilled through the transport system (physical motorised mobility), the land use system (spatial proximity and active travel) and the telecommunications system (digital connectivity).



Thank goodness this is the world we live in and that access is not all about motorised transport – because **the resilience and adaptability afforded to us by the Triple Access System has been critical during the pandemic** – as reliance on motorised transport was reduced, we switched emphasis to digital connectivity and spatial proximity for our fulfilment of access (‘living local and acting global’). **The opportunity is now to embrace ‘triple access planning’** – to support future economic prosperity and social wellbeing through changing the supply-side of this Triple Access System and fostering and supporting behaviour change.

Triple access planning involves moving away from the forecast-led approach in transport planning of predict and provide (forecast a most likely mobility future (within sensitivity-tested bounds of uncertainty) and provide a means to accommodate projected demand). Instead it concerns a vision-led approach of **decide and provide: decide on a preferred accessibility future (and outcomes) and provide a means to move towards it in a way that accommodates the deep uncertainty ahead.**

The Climate Assembly UK report ‘The path to net zero’ published on 10 September signals public appetite for change. The Assembly’s recommendations on transport are: *a ban on the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars by 2030–2035; a reduction in the amount we use cars by an average of 2–5% per decade; and improved public transport.* We need to go even further and faster and triple access planning holds the key. **Decide on the relative prioritisation of support for the shaping of the Triple Access System that creates the environment of choice for how people lead their lives.** Public transport must not only survive the pandemic but thrive beyond it. Spatial planning and reprioritising our built environments must give walking and cycling sustained, not temporary, acknowledgement as key, rather than peripheral and downtrodden, modes. Capitalising on digital connectivity allows us to tread more lightly as a society – and offers flexibility of access, including helping people to better manage their working and personal lives.

¹ Lyons, G. and Davidson, C. (2016). Guidance for transport planning and policymaking in the face of an uncertain future. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 88, 104-116. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2016.03.012>