

WEST MIDLANDS

TRANSPORT



High Speed 2 will bring great opportunity for the West Midlands – but investment in transport connectivity must continue to ensure the benefits to the economy are realised.

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

ICE has compiled State of the Nation reports each year since 2000, drawing on expertise across its membership and beyond to stimulate debate and to highlight the actions needed to improve the UK's infrastructure.

ICE's State of the Nation: Transport 2013 UK report presents a series of detailed recommendations – for the short, medium and long-term. While all are important, we believe that three are particularly critical to our success:

- 1. IMMEDIATE ACTION TO IMPROVE ROAD CONDITIONS, PLANNING AND FUNDING**
- 2. ENSURING CLEAR NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGIES FOR ALL PARTS OF THE UK**
- 3. CONTINUING AND EXTENDING DEVOLUTION TO FULLY-INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BODIES**

Our emphasis is on making best use of existing assets and achieving the most with public money. The headline recommendations are backed by a series of further points requiring rapid action and a suite of detailed changes by mode and topic. The report concludes with a proposal to create the capacity to address the major social, economic, environmental and technological change which ICE anticipates through the 2020s.

The UK report, with the full detail behind our recommendations, can be downloaded at ice.org.uk/SoNTransport. This briefing sheet highlights how ICE's UK-level recommendations impact on business and communities across our region.

At the centre of the road and rail network, the West Midlands is the natural crossroads for the UK. Efficient and economic travel through and within the region has a major impact on economic growth, North, South, East and West of the dual hubs of Spaghetti Junction and New Street Station.

In 2012 this strategic national importance was highlighted by the announcement that the High Speed 2 rail line will connect London to Birmingham, providing additional capacity and a link of under 50 minutes to the capital. Future extension of the high speed network to the north will also improve connectivity and benefit the wider UK.

The importance of our road network is demonstrated nationally by the West Midlands receiving more government funding than any other region to address its 'pinchpoints' of congestion. These projects will increase capacity locally, but there is little planning for longer term congestion management and road maintenance. The current structure of the funding process restricts the true potential of this investment to assure effective sustainable capacity across the network.

The way that we manage our greenhouse gas emissions is becoming ever more important. Local pollution is now second only to that in London in concentrations of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter, most of which is transport generated. These now exceed EU limit values and, if unchecked, will result in penalties for some Transport Authorities. The switch to lower emission transport is becoming a very clear driver for future innovation.

Despite the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategies, many bodies, including the newly established Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), continue to identify themselves as part of a West Midlands conurbation. There is a real need to review the structure of transport governance and policy across the region to ensure the economic and environmental benefits of infrastructure are realised.

ICE West Midlands believes that the introduction of an Integrated Transport Authority, responsible for road, rail and public transport, with similar powers to Transport for London (TfL) would ensure intelligent long-term planning and delivery and maximise the efficiency of funding available across the West Midlands. We need to offer effective delivery and long-term strategic planning across all of our networks if we are to attract further funding from the public and private sector and meet our carbon reduction targets.

The introduction of a long-term, (30 year) strategic infrastructure plan, together with Integrated Transport Organisations with the powers to deliver, is crucial to ensuring that our network continues to offer capacity and choice. Such a plan could maximise the potential of future high speed rail links to ease the pressure on our congested road and rail networks and bring economic growth to the areas most in need.



REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Long-term integrated transport strategies for the UK that fully recognises strategic assets across the country and has sustainable economic growth/carbon reduction at its core
2. Development of Integrated Transport Authorities with the powers required to enable and deliver across the region.
3. Suitably funded long-term maintenance contracts for our infrastructure assets
4. Recognition of the enhanced benefits and opportunities for regional regeneration and development that High Speed Rail will bring
5. A comprehensive review of the utilisation of our aviation network, fully considering the barriers caused by Air Passenger Duty requirements
6. Vision, integration and committed funding needed to plan and implement long-term strategic transport needs. Priorities should include new infrastructure investment as well as making best use of the current network with improved intermodal connections and public transport options

WEST MIDLANDS – TRANSPORT FOR THE FUTURE

OUR GREATEST ASSET IS OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

It is pleasing to see that many of the schemes that have been called for in our previous reports are now on the ground, under construction, or funded. The recent announcement of the Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) factory in Staffordshire and the Birmingham Enterprise Zone underlines the importance that location and connective infrastructure play in the economic health of the country.

In these times of restricted funding, we need to ensure that we have the right governance structure and overarching economic, innovation and environmental strategies to maximise the capacity of existing assets and ensure efficiency of new investments.

Our transport infrastructure is our biggest asset and its safeguarding is essential to the future economic and environmental wellbeing of the country.

AVIATION

Birmingham Airport is an infrastructure success story for the West Midlands. Strong support from business and the public sector has enabled Birmingham to invest in its transport infrastructure links resulting in this year's Airport of the Year Award (Global AirRail Awards 2013) for integrated travel. Support and investment from the regional business community has ensured that the Airport continues to grow, despite much of its current connectivity being to the depressed European manufacturing sectors, and enabled the extension to the existing runway which will be completed in 2014. This additional capacity will provide the airport with the ability to connect globally to the expanding markets of Brazil, India and China, building on its already successful links to the Middle East.

The Phase 1 development of High Speed 2 is pivotal to the future plans for development of the site. Birmingham has recently announced plans for a second runway, which if achieved, could increase capacity from 27 to 70 million passengers per year, a real alternative to a south east hub. However, existing capacity is under-utilised, and major changes to route pricing will be required if this ambition is to be realised. A review of Air Passenger Duty requirements may have a significant impact in attracting airline operators, providing new routes for trade and economic growth for the Midlands and north of the UK.

With the smaller airports at Coventry and Wolverhampton also able to increase the numbers of passenger and business flights they handle, there is a need for the current Davies Commission Review to fully consider the economic and geographical restrictions within the UK aviation industry at present.

The current investment at Birmingham Interchange has already achieved a modal shift in encouraging people out of their cars and onto rail and bus links. The Airport's ambition in achieving its vision for future capacity is linked to the speed, convenience and connectivity that High Speed 2 can provide. Consideration of appropriate pricing will play a major part in passenger choice when this route is opened and needs to be included in the ongoing route development process.

Our region's success in integrating transport links is already being recognised globally, however, it is the pricing of these routes that will play a major part in the future success of this key national asset.

What we want to see:

- A National Strategy recognising the real potential of our regional airports to address aviation congestion and stimulate economic growth across the country
- A review of the impact of Air Passenger Duty on the potential for UK airports to stimulate economic growth

CASE STUDY

i54 JAGUAR LAND ROVER



Image courtesy of Stoke and Staffordshire LEP

The West Midlands recently celebrated a £355m investment into a new factory for Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) at the i54 development in South Staffordshire. The car manufacturing giant will be bringing many of its suppliers to the area, providing employment for thousands. JLR's decision was based upon a bespoke investment package provided by a partnership of two LEPs: Stoke & Staffordshire LEP and Black Country LEP. The LEPs competed with many other sites internationally and won the investment because of the availability of skilled staff, supply chains and links to transport hubs.



CASE STUDY

MANAGED MOTORWAYS

The Managed Motorways schemes operated by the Highways Agency have now spread across the West Midlands network following its first successful trial on the M42 in 2006. Today, Managed Motorways operates on two sections of the M6 and further work is currently underway on a third section of the M6 in the West Midlands. It also operates on the M62 in West Yorkshire, on the M4/M5 near Bristol and on two sections of the M25.



Image courtesy of the Highways Agency

In 2011, the Highways Agency published a three year safety report which showed that the introduction of the system had resulted in:

- Personal injury accidents reducing by more than half (55.7%)
- Zero fatalities
- Casualties per billion vehicle miles travelled reducing by just under two thirds (61%)

Alongside the impressive safety improvements, a customer satisfaction level of 68% was recorded with road users saying they felt more informed during their journeys and 60% stating they would welcome this type of traffic management elsewhere on our network.

The scheme, which involves the introduction of variable speed limits with hard shoulder running has also delivered improved journey times and significant reduction in traffic emissions within the areas where it has been installed. Major investment is now ongoing to install more of these systems across the country in order to continue to maximise the capacity of our stretched network. The use of information technology to manage and control our mobility and energy use will be an increasing feature of the 21st Century.

OUR ROAD NETWORK

Our road network is another great asset to the West Midlands. Accessibility to the airport, rail, motorway and trunk road network reaching across the country continues to attract new business to the region, ensuring its place as the manufacturing centre of the country. This capacity and connectivity must be maintained if we are to ensure that the West Midlands continues as the effective hub for national goods and imports. The LEPs have been successful in working together to raise the importance of these links through 'pinchpoint' funding. Despite this success, the overall structure and planning for strategic investment remains uncoordinated and disjointed, struggling to make best use of restricted funding.

Maintenance of our road network is increasingly becoming an issue as the network ages and traffic volumes continue to increase. This major asset is of national as well as regional importance and must be cherished. Future asset management must ensure allowance for long-term and sustainable maintenance is provided within planning and funding processes.

The Managed Motorways system on the M6, M40 and M42 motorways is an engineering success story and an example of what can be achieved by use of innovative information systems. This project has provided economic benefits, easing congestion and reducing accidents. However, the lack of success of the M6 Toll in easing congestion around Birmingham, should be reviewed prior to any further capacity management being considered on our crowded network.

Often overlooked is the importance of the strategic network for the movement of abnormal loads. The resilience of this route network is vital for the future economic health of the country and must be considered in any integrated transport planning.

What we want to see:

- Long-term national and regional transport strategies recognising the importance of maintenance and reducing carbon emissions
- The establishment of Integrated Transport Authorities with the powers and funding to deliver long-term capacity for economic growth infrastructure, maintenance and modal shift

RAIL

The West Midlands is at the heart of the nation's rail network playing a significant role in delivering our economic, environmental and social aspirations. It connects communities, reduces congestion and carbon emissions and provides a safer means of transport to our road alternative. Rail performance in the region continues to improve with customer satisfaction now reaching 85%. The percentage of journeys into Birmingham has increased from 17% to 30% over the last 10 years, supporting a reduction not only from the road network, but also from our buses.

Delay in the award of the West Coast Main Line franchise has effectively put any further improvements on hold. The only immediate prospect of infrastructure upgrades is the Staffordshire Alliance works which include a package of resignalling, linespeed improvements and a grade separated junction at Norton Bridge due to be completed by December 2017. Other works have been shelved, pending the improvements that will be brought about by High Speed 2.



High Speed 2 will create a step change in rail capacity in the UK, allowing more local and freight services when all phases are complete, but will not be delivered before 2025. The key challenges for the region will be to ensure that investment supports the increase in passenger numbers and that this modal shift is sustained through additional capacity and sensitive pricing. There is much that can and must be done to continue to ensure the modal shift from road and provide the increased capacity and connectivity that will be required.

What we want to see:

- Continued investment in increasing capacity and network integration up to and beyond the delivery of High Speed 2
- The development of strong, clear, long-term strategic plans for an integrated rail system which will provide full benefit from the High Speed Rail network



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Centro is the major public transport promoter for the West Midlands, covering the area that was previously West Midlands County. They continually invest in the development of bus routes, rail links and light rail across the region and have promoted integrated ticketing and improved contractual arrangements to encourage modal shift to public transport. There has been a significant increase in commuters using public transport due to their long-term planning and implementation of key strategies. They work collaboratively with other authorities to enable public transport connections and deliver efficiencies for the passengers.

However, asset ownership is limited and they have to work by establishing project partnerships and coordinating fragmented funding pots to deliver the improvement programme.

A case in point is buses and bus lane provision. Bus lanes are the responsibility of the road network authorities who have introduced bus lanes across the region. However, recent surveys have shown that bus lanes can actually increase congestion as the lanes themselves carry fewer passenger journeys than would have been provided by car use. Clearly integration of assets, responsibilities and strategies would enable improved delivery and focus on the key enablers across all modes of transport. This would also be of benefit to the more rural areas, enabling faster links and more sustainable choices linking to the urban network.

With increased congestion and emissions legislation looming a more efficient and powerful overarching Authority would provide long-term integrated strategic planning and ensure that our region continues to grow and achieve the economic potential offered by connectivity and legislative change.

What we want to see:

- Integrated Transport Authorities across connected areas empowered to maximise mobility and economic and environmental potential

CYCLING AND WALKING

The potential for cycling and walking to reduce our traffic congestion and carbon emissions is recognised but still largely untapped. Significant progress has been made in ensuring that all Authorities integrate these as transport options within their Local Transport Plans; however, schemes are slow to be promoted and there has been little success in changing the culture of travel to date. ICE West Midlands fully supports the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's April 2013 vision for cycling and its potential to contribute to the health and wealth of the nation.

In January 2013, the Government announced that Birmingham, the Black Country and Stoke-on-Trent are eligible to apply for an extra £62 million in funding for cycling infrastructure projects. This funding has the potential to enable an integrated network across the West Midlands.

The decision of Birmingham City Council to close 4 major underpasses in the city centre this summer to catalyse a modal shift of travel options is a brave choice and will provide real profile for sustainable travel around the region.

What we want to see:

- Cycling and walking embedded into an integrated and nationally coordinated transport strategy, funded at European levels

CANALS

The West Midlands has the largest network of Canals in the country, providing a water-based crossroads for transport to many other industrial and tourist areas. The importance of this network for transporting goods, where longer delivery times are acceptable, remains largely untapped.

Previous successes at Brindley Place, and more recently at the Mailbox/Cube areas adjacent to the canals, have resulted in economic growth with developments and job creation from the business and commercial sectors that are attracted to the area.

These routes should be considered in any future integrated transport and economic review.

INTEGRATION AND INNOVATION

ICE believes the answer to managing congestion and reducing CO₂ created by transport is to offer people real transport choice, redressing the balance so that other forms of transport bear some of the weight currently carried by the private car.

If metropolitan, urban and other areas in the West Midlands were given Transport for London (TfL) - style powers by government, they would be more able to address the mobility issues which affect people in the region and take greater responsibility for meeting the EU Emissions targets.

Our next industrial revolution will be very different to our first and will have energy efficiency at its core. Much of this improvement will need to come from the transport sector; requiring multimodal solutions, efficient vehicles, efficient driving, sustainable travel choices and behaviour and highly intelligent traffic management. We must ensure that our future governance and funding process is structured to deliver this.

The ICE will continue to lead in highlighting the important projects and strategic tools that are required to ensure that our regional and national potential is fully realised.

View the full report online at ice.org.uk/stateofthenation

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