

Whole Industry Strategic Plan

Call for Evidence Response Form

09/12/2021

Responding to this Call for Evidence

This call for evidence launches on 9 December 2021 and will be open for eight weeks until 4 February 2022.

You may respond as an individual or on behalf of an organisation or organisations (please let us know all the organisations you are responding on behalf of) and can submit a response in the following ways:

- Online via the call for evidence [webpage](#).
- Via email to cfe@gbrtt.co.uk using this response template.

We recommend you read the call for evidence launch document in full before submitting your response.

Please send the completed response form, along with any supporting information or attachments, to cfe@gbrtt.co.uk.

In the email subject please include your name and/or organisation and 'WISP call for evidence submission'.

Confidentiality

The information you send to us may be shared with colleagues within Great British Railways Transition Team, the Department for Transport and published or referred to in the Response Summary Report response document. All information contained in your response may be subject to publication or disclosure if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If you want any information in your response to the call for evidence to be kept confidential, or if it contains sensitive information, you should explain why and identify the information clearly within your response. Extracts from responses used within the Response Summary Report will be agreed with the responder before publication, where information is not already in the public domain.

I am responding on behalf of: *

One or multiple organisations

If you are responding as an individual, please move to Section 2. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please fill in Section 1 and Section 2.

Section 1 – Organisation Details

Organisation name(s)*

Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)

Please identify the category, or categories that best describes your organisation(s)*

If multiple categories apply, please list within the “other” field below.

Other

If other, please state

Professional Institution

Please provide a brief description of the organisation(s) you are responding on behalf of.

This may include information about who the organisation represents, the size of its membership and how the views of members were obtained.

The Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) provides strategic leadership and support to help our members develop, deliver, and maintain sustainable solutions for highways, transport, infrastructure, and services.

CIHT is a chartered professional body for those working in highways and transportation.

We support our members throughout their careers by providing:

- industry-recognised training and qualifications
- professional standards
- research and business information
- leadership on key transportation related issues

We have members across the world, working in the public, private, academic, research and not-for-profit sectors.

CIHT is the only body to offer the full range of professional transportation qualifications including Chartered Engineer, Incorporated Engineer, Engineering Technician, Certificate of Competency in Road Safety and, uniquely, Chartered Transport Planning Professional. These qualifications ensure that our members work to high professional standards on behalf of the societies we serve.

We have a network of valued partner organisations – representing the private, public, research and education sectors – that support and collaborate with us in our work and align to our values.

Our work is governed by our Royal Charter. Our object states that we exist:

“To advance for the public benefit the science and art associated with highways and transportation in all their aspects: and to promote education, training and research and development of the said science and art.”

Section 2 – Your details

Name

Justin Ward

Email address

Justin.ward@ciht.org.uk

Please choose the region you or your organisation(s) are based within*

If multiple regions apply, please list within the “other” field below.

UK-wide

If other, please state

Please provide information about the reason for your interest in the Whole Industry Strategic Plan

CIHT members play key roles in policy and technical developments across highways and transportation. Through working closely with members and influential stakeholders, CIHT shapes the decisions that affect our society, environment and economy. CIHT welcomes the opportunity to provide input to an important review such as this one.

Strategic Objectives for the Whole Rail Industry

The UK Government has developed five strategic objectives for the Strategic Plan over the next 30 years: **meeting customers' needs, delivering financial sustainability, contributing to long-term economic growth, levelling up & connectivity, and delivering environmental sustainability.** We intend to put these objectives at the heart of the Strategic Plan, and we are using them to guide all of the questions in this call for evidence.

[Click here to see more information](#)

We recognise that many of you are working to similar long-term objectives. We are very interested in how you define and quantify your objectives, and how they match or differ from our own. When considering your response to question 1, please use your experiences to inform your answers and share any examples, taking into account that in all future scenarios we expect affordability to be a significant constraint.

Question 1

- a) How would you apply these objectives to rail in your region or to your area of expertise within the transport sector? Do you have evidence you can share with us of how you have applied similar objectives in relation to rail, and do you consider the objectives to have missed any key areas?
- b) How is it possible to make progress against a number of the objectives simultaneously? Do any of the objectives have larger barriers associated with them than others, or do any objectives pose possible barriers to others? Where would you make the trade-offs?
- c) What long-term trends in wider society, the economy, and the environment will affect these five objectives over the next 5, 10, and 30 years? Please give evidence to support your response.

[Click here to see more information](#)

- d) What are the key uncertainties you consider that the Strategic Plan must be resilient to in order to be effective over the next 5, 10 and 30 years?
- e) Over the next 5, 10 and 30 years, which steps should the sector take to improve integration of rail with the wider transport system (including walking and cycling) in pursuit of these objectives?

CIHT welcomes the long-term focus and the opportunity to contribute our feedback.

CIHT would like the UK Government to establish a National Transport Strategy (NTS), as this is lacking in England and that the Great British Railways strategy would be a component of this.

A NTS would help the government to provide a clear vision and strategy that sets out how transport will contribute to key policy areas. CIHT will work with government, other national bodies and sub-national transport groups to develop the vision and strategy.

The strategy should set a clear framework of requirements over a minimum 10-year period for all elements of our transportation networks. This strategy should include the strategic and local highway networks, rail, aviation and ports and set out how those networks integrate with one another.

It should include a pipeline of infrastructure investment that would encourage business to invest in the resources needed to deliver in a wide range of government policy areas – equality, health, sustainability and developing a prosperous economy.

Currently there is a lack of coordination of transport strategy at a spatial level across the UK. From local and central governments and regional transport partnerships implementing policies, to businesses and individuals taking account of their actions; the national strategy should set a long-term direction and urgent and immediate priorities. The benefits of a more coordinated strategy (and delivery plan) that covers all modes of transport are already being realised in Scotland and Wales, giving businesses the increased certainty, they need.

As part of an integrated transport strategy CIHT highlights the need to improve the links between planning and transport – too often we build first and then think about transport infrastructure afterwards. Our 'Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places'¹ advice highlights how this could be done.

The creation of a vision and strategy would give a clear focus for everyone involved in (and dependent upon) transport as to how to align planning and investment for the future. Without one there is a real risk of business not investing or investment being wasted in the development of approaches that are not required.

CIHT welcome the publication of the DfT Transport Decarbonisation Plan² and recommends that the NTS investment appraisal approach must demonstrate how it supports Net Zero.

¹ CIHT, 2019, Better planning, better transport, better places, [Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places | CIHT](#)

² Department for Transport, 2021, Transport decarbonisation plan, [Transport decarbonisation plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

CIHT FUTURES³ was published in 2016 and highlighted the need to embrace uncertainty in future transport decision-making. The techniques and tools in this report should be taken account of by Great British Railways in the development of their strategy, particularly around scenario planning; a shift from 'predict and provide' to 'decide and provide'; using a regime-testing approach to decision-making on transport investment.

The development of this strategy should be undertaken in consultation with other transport bodies – particularly with National Highways – as the freight implications from the strategy need to be considered across all transport modes. And other strategies e.g. the Government has a Bus Strategy – how the Rail Strategy connects to this must be considered alongside CIHT's 'Buses in Urban Developments'⁴.

CIHT would see the Office for Road and Rail (ORR) to ensure that it has a role in sharing best practice between the road and rail sectors.

CIHT considers that a whole industry approach focuses on the whole of the transport industry.

³ CIHT Futures, 2016 https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/4809/ciht_futures_-_final_report_doc_a4_final_linked.pdf

⁴ CIHT Buses in Urban Developments, 2018 [CIHT - BUSES BROCHURE 2018_cs4.indd](#)

Meeting customers' needs

Rail industry customers broadly fall into two types: passengers and freight. The rail network provides important benefits to the customers who rely on it. The Plan for Rail says that passengers must receive high-quality, consistent services day in, day out. This means accessible, reliable journeys that are well connected with other transport services and include new customer offers at stations and on trains.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the rail freight industry has shown its resilience and agility, working to transport food and medical supplies around the . This example, and others given in the Plan for Rail, highlight how important rail freight is to our economy now and in the future, and how we will develop growth targets for freight that will be included in the Strategic Plan. The Plan for Rail says of freight: 'national co-ordination, greater opportunities for growth and strong safeguards will put rail freight on the front foot.'

When considering your responses, please take account of the likelihood of changes in levels or patterns of passenger and freight demand over the next 5, 10 and 30 years, what that would mean for the rail system, and what will the interventions be over that period that will provide the maximum value for money.

Question 2

- a) Passenger: how will rail passenger expectations, including accessibility requirements, evolve over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years, what will be the driving causes of these changing expectations, and how can they be most effectively met by the rail sector?
- b) Passenger: in your experience, how can we most effectively monitor and assess customer satisfaction? What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What evidence can you share to support your view?
- c) Freight: what evidence can you provide regarding the advantage(s) of transporting goods by rail and what evidence can you share for how that could develop in the next 5, 10 and 30 years? What do you consider to be the most effective role for rail freight in the existing supply chains served and those that it doesn't? How could this change over that period? In answering, please explain and take account of likely developments in technology and in the wider economy.
- d) What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money, and what evidence can you share to support your claim?

Any successful vision will have travellers at its heart. A user-centric vision needs to stress door to door journeys and be linked to how people will live and work. To generate lasting behavioural change (or to simply get people back on the trains post Covid), the sector needs to get the basics right: punctuality, convenience, digital connectivity, affordability, and cleanliness. CIHT suggests including an objective to make the network fully accessible to all. The roll-out of digital train control and other technologies can reduce the noise on a very congested system and deliver a positive impact on performance.

For users of transport systems, a door-to-door approach is valuable, and this means that from a customer perspective the interchanges between transport networks and rail must be accessible through a person-centred design approach. Passenger and freight rail is essentially a trunk carrier and interchanges with other modes is a necessary part of most journeys.

The rise of 15-minute cities and the development of hybrid working – with lower levels of rail use – means the role of transport networks changes. The London Overground has been an example of a successful orbital rail system⁵; perhaps demonstrating the value of not just commuter rail journeys, but journeys made for social and leisure purposes also. As such, the option appraisal is vital in ensuring outcomes for use are broad given a potential longer-term shift for a downward trend in commuter rail trips.

In rural areas where there are old rail lines means that smaller scales investment might enable modal shift to reduce carbon emissions e.g. the Borders line in Scotland⁶.

In terms of carbon emissions air travel currently poses a challenge in decarbonisation; as such, the role of rail networks in supporting decarbonisation via modal shift from aviation to rail poses an opportunity.

We need to understand customers in a wider sense i.e. how the rail network perceives customers as local authority bridge owners, or the bus industry for rail replacement services, or integration of access with National Highways in England.

There is a need to take into consideration freight across all modes and consider how rail freight interfaces with road freight and last-mile deliveries. The impact on the local road network of small goods vehicles and last mile deliveries needs to be considered.

In the report Decarbonising the Scottish Transport Sector⁷ it is noted: 23% of freight goods moved by road must be shifted to rail and ships by 2030 (this is expected to

⁵ [London Underground - a Success Story: Transforming Neglected Urban Railway Infrastructure to Meet Capacity and Connectivity Demands | Request PDF \(researchgate.net\)](#)

⁶ [The Scottish Borders Railway Line evaluation reports and projections: EIR release - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

⁷ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/50354/decarbonising-the-scottish-transport-sector-summary-report-september-2021.pdf>

be predominantly on longer routes and is equivalent to all road freight moved over 400km, although exact routes shifted to rail will depend on infrastructure). This means improving the freight train links between Scotland and England to allow them to take more of the cross-border freight movements and upgrading Scottish ports to allow greater freight movement capacity.

Value for money is necessary to consider, but value for carbon also needs to be considered in the evaluation of the 'cost' of freight – and the impact across all modes: this metric needs to be developed.

Delivering financial sustainability

Rail is both a public service, supported by the taxpayer, and a business, run by private operators, with paying passenger and freight customers. The railways have received unprecedented levels of public support throughout the pandemic, protecting the essential services that people, including commuting key workers, rely on. As the recovery and rail reform gains pace, as with all areas of public expenditure, there is an onus on the rail sector to ensure value for money for users and taxpayers in how funds are used, and it must harness the incentives of the private sector to deliver the service in the most cost-effective way.

The railway, accordingly, must seek to deliver infrastructure and services more efficiently, in order to maximise beneficial outcomes while balancing costs against revenue and taxpayer funding. This is more than just a short-term issue: we are clear that reducing the cost of the railway, increasing efficiency including through innovating with private partners, and achieving a better deal for users and taxpayers is a critical priority over the next 30 years.

When considering your answer to the question below, please consider how we can support greater efficiency (such as joined up operations), innovation, alternative sources of funding and/or cost base reduction. Similarly, what steps you would propose to improve the efficiency and reduce the cost of infrastructure projects, operation and maintenance, and what evidence you have to support your response.

Question 3

Where are the most significant opportunities and barriers to delivering financial sustainability in the rail sector over 5, 10, and 30 years and how do we achieve/overcome them? How can we most effectively monitor and assess this? What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money?

Opportunities abound for decarbonising the rail network and for re-opening of closed lines and for serving new communities; but care needs to be taken that the integration of new stations can reduce the journey times for existing users and the introduction of new branch lines can affect network operational performance.

Two barriers to rail development are: high costs of construction and limited skills pools, the latter feeding the former. Expectations of new lines and enhancements may need to be curtailed as the effects of climate change will inevitably require prioritised attention and funding.

The pricing of mobility services – e.g. the price to drive, to get a train, or a bus – will have an impact on the financial model of rail services. This makes the case for a National Transport Strategy that considers pricing across all modes. The financial question for rail cannot be focused on in isolation.

There will need to be a focus on future mobility as it will almost certainly be realised via a mix of technological trends such as shared mobility, automated and linked systems, and electrification (or other low-carbon energy alternatives), with an emphasis on energy systems, public transportation, and infrastructure integration: this will be a factor for Great British Railways to consider.

Contributing to long-term economic growth

Rail helps to boost productivity and growth through improved connectivity and job creation, enables supply chains, delivers goods to businesses and consumers and directly employs over 240,000 people (source: the rail sector in numbers). Among other factors, such as population growth, long term economic growth is influenced by emerging technology, and innovative, more effective ways of thinking and doing things. Over the next 30 years, wider economic, social, environmental and technological trends will change the role rail plays in our economy. It will be for the whole sector to demonstrate that it cannot only continue to deliver wide economic benefits in the face of a changed economy but that it can find new ways to catalyse growth and prosperity.

When considering your answer to the questions below, please share examples of any relevant local, regional and national growth and productivity, and examples of innovations and technology from the UK and abroad, research into trends that may influence rail's contribution to economic growth, and/or new ways of thinking that should be used in or for the rail sector over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years.

Question 4

- a) As Britain recovers from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, what evidence do you have for how rail can contribute to wider economic growth over the next 5, 10, and 30 years? What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What type of interventions over that period will provide maximum value for money from rail's economic contribution, and what evidence can you share to support your views?
- b) In the context of enabling development and regeneration opportunities both in the immediate vicinity of stations and within the surrounding area, how can rail best facilitate improvements to places and local growth, through improved connectivity and unlocking commercial activity, housing, and employment over the next 5, 10 and 30 years?
- c) What innovative and modernising ideas do you have which would benefit the railway while supporting the strategic objectives? Please give evidence and make reference to how they would maintain or enhance the railway's safety record.

A revisiting of economic impacts on the rail sector from the pandemic is required due to the arrival of hybrid working practices: this reduces the necessity for intense commuting that existed pre-Covid.

Rail does offer certainty to a new community by virtue of the commitment to expensive infrastructure; therefore, implementing rail into new developments can help support the integration of planning with sustainable transport.

Rail can offer a great deal to local communities, and in the context of regeneration and development opportunities, rail should be seen as part of a wider sustainable transport network for these communities - as was laid out in Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places⁸. Rail can connect smaller communities to larger towns and cities; therefore rail should focus on how it can best integrate with other sustainable transport modes to reach these communities.

Previous investment in the rail network has catered for a growth in predominately business/commuter focused transport. However, with the development of hybrid working and home working the equation of rail investment returns is considerably less clear. There is a need for a National Transport Strategy that involves the local network in the consideration.

⁸ https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/10218/ciht-better-planning-a4_updated_linked_.pdf

Levelling up and connectivity

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up has outlined four key outcomes on which the government will focus:

- Empowering local leaders and communities;
- Boosting living standards by growing the private sector and improving productivity and connectivity;
- Spreading opportunity and improving public services; and
- Restoring local pride.

Rail has an important part to play in working toward these outcomes, and particularly so in connecting the nations, regions and communities of the UK. Improved rail links can connect people to jobs, education and skills, high-quality housing, social opportunities, services, and green spaces, as well as encouraging the growth of businesses, and attracting leisure visitors into an area. Improving stations and surrounding areas can also act as a catalyst for regeneration and development and a cause for local pride.

At present, usage of rail differs widely across the UK; before the pandemic, almost two thirds of all rail journeys made were in London and the south east ([Rail Sector in Numbers report from 2019](#)).

When answering your questions, consider the ways in which rail can be used to improve connectivity and local economic growth over the next 5, 10, and 30 years.

Question 5

- a) What evidence can you provide for how the rail sector contributes to the four levelling up outcomes and to improving connectivity across Great Britain, including through cross-border services? How does this change depending on the type of place where the sector operates (including in cities, towns and rural areas), and what are the most cost-effective ways at the sector's disposal to improve that further during the next 5, 10, and 30 years?
- b) How could the rail industry, over the next 5, 10, and 30 years, become more responsive to, and more accountable to, local communities and passengers? Please give evidence and examples in your response.
- c) What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money, and what evidence can you share to support your views?

CIHT welcomes the recent Government's White Paper on Levelling Up with transport core to the delivery of the Levelling Up agenda. Investing in more integrated transport will enable people to access economic and social opportunities, in a carbon friendly way, and will be key to the future prosperity of all regions across the UK. Investing in transport will also help develop future skills and open up opportunities for people to work in this rewarding sector⁹. In the context of the rail sector and Levelling Up the price of access onto the rail network (i.e. fare costs) can be a barrier to access; this could pose a challenge to delivering the Levelling Up agenda in a fully inclusive way.

A well-connected transport network is needed; and, to that end, rail should focus more on bus connections to present a coherent public transport network to the public.

When it comes to climate action and levelling up CIHT sees investment in the local highway network (LHN) as the biggest priority for transport investment as, without adequate funding, it means that other government plans will not be met. Investment in the rail sector is important, but levelling-up from a transport perspective must take a multi-modal approach in thinking.

⁹ [Public Transport and Skills Get Big Boost in New 'Levelling-Up' Plan \(ciht.org.uk\)](https://www.ciht.org.uk)

Delivering environmental sustainability

The Plan for Rail commits to the creation of a comprehensive environment plan that will establish rail as the backbone of a cleaner future transport system, one that aims to protect and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment. That plan, the Sustainable Rail Strategy (SRS), will be one of the inputs to the Strategic Plan, and will build on and develop a strategy for achieving the policy commitments set out in both the UK's [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#) and the [Rail Environment Policy Statement](#) that were published in July 2021, as well as the Net Zero Strategy from October 2021.

In addition to tackling the causes of climate change, the rail network must also be able to adapt to the changes already being seen. This means preparing for the impact of extreme weather events and increasing the resilience of the rail network to the impacts of these events – for example, flooding.

When answering your questions, consider the ways in which rail and the rail estate can contribute to wider national and regional environmental policy agendas, support decarbonisation, conserve and enhance biodiversity, improve air quality and increase renewable power generation.

Question 6

- a) What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money, and what evidence can you share to support your views?
- b) What use can the rail sector make of emerging or existing technologies to reduce its impact on the environment and enhance biodiversity over the next 5, 10, and 30 years, and, in a proportionate and cost-effective way, help national and regional authorities to meet their environmental objectives?
- c) How can rail best invest in climate resilience, supported by smarter forecasting, planning and technology, over the next 5, 10, and 30 years and what evidence do you have to support your view?

The focus should be on decarbonising the existing rail network and putting in remedial/protection schemes rather than widespread rail expansion is key. Rail should be part of the solution set of proposals and help optimise the best outcome. This goes back to the wider whole transport industry point made in question one: the strategy must fully consider options and alternatives such as express bus, tram, or even tram-train to achieve outcomes sought.

CIHT calls for transport resilience assessments to be made a statutory requirement for all transport asset owners to identify vulnerable areas. CIHT calls for a central fund to be established to support the mitigation of such vulnerable areas¹⁰. This, alongside the recommendations from the RAIB report on Stonehaven should be considered in the development of this strategy.

Technology will be central to delivering a Net Zero railway. The sector needs a shared vision that allows tactical decisions to be made that have a strategic fit. The vision can explain how technology will help deliver on strategic goals like Net Zero, supporting the rollout of key initiatives including electrification, digital train control and real time monitoring of infrastructure by the trains themselves.

Care and flexibility are also needed. Rushing to deploy a tech-fix can be counter-productive, particularly if organisations don't have the capability to adopt it effectively – maturity around the ability to work with data is the classic example. Similarly, some of the technology that could deliver against carbon targets in 20 years' time is either immature or will change several times in that period. The sector needs a mechanism for building in enablers or steppingstones and realising value along the way or it will always be chasing a moving target.

Net Zero requirements must find its way into contracts that ensure carbon impacts are measured and managed. This will create a level playing field on which the supply chain can compete and increasingly collaborate to bring solutions¹¹.

¹⁰ CIHT has previously recommended a formal review and commitment for asset and infrastructure resilience assessment to be made a statutory requirement in its response to the Transport Resilience Review in 2014 as noted here: [NIA Process and Methodology consultation - Redacted responses all .pdf \(nic.org.uk\)](https://www.nic.org.uk/NIA_Process_and_Methodology_consultation_-_Redacted_responses_all_.pdf)

¹¹ [How can Digital Transformation help the rail sector accelerate its journey to Net Zero? \(ciht.org.uk\)](https://www.ciht.org.uk/How-can-Digital-Transformation-help-the-rail-sector-accelerate-its-journey-to-Net-Zero/)