

The Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Dear Secretary of State

### **Transport strategy – where should we be heading?**

We write to you as a collective voice of professional concern and advice in relation to UK transport policy and investment plans.

Undoubtedly, the task of planning for the future mobility of the UK is more challenging than when we wrote to your predecessor in 2002. Operating within significant fiscal constraint the Department for Transport is seeking to stimulate economic recovery, tackle climate change and improve the well-being of the population. However, we are concerned that a perception of the economic imperative is leading to a series of important decisions on all of the major transport modes being taken in the absence of a coherent and integrated national policy framework for passengers and freight.

Recent evidence from the UK and internationally shows signs of road traffic growth leveling off, even after accounting for lower than anticipated economic growth. These trends are something which the Department for Transport has never forecast and which we are only beginning to understand. Whilst a growing population may well exert an upward pressure on demand, the basis for major infrastructure spending decisions appears to be changing.

There exists a range of views as to the importance of new transport infrastructure in stimulating economic growth. The evidence base is not as strong as you, or we, might wish it to be. Where real and substantial gains in connectivity and accessibility can be achieved (for example with city based investments such as CrossRail) the potential to unlock employment seems clear. As the 2006 Eddington Review pointed out however, the UK is already comparatively well connected, rendering the employment gains promised for many schemes difficult to realize.

Even were one to accept an economic imperative to invest in significantly expanding the strategic road network there is a well established evidence base that demonstrates that this will generate more traffic. Our cities are simply not equipped to take further growth in road traffic and the benefits of faster journey times on the strategic network risk being lost in greater congestion on local urban roads where the majority of journeys are undertaken. Across all of our networks we would urge a continuation or acceleration of smart demand management measures to ensure we get the best use of the infrastructures we already have – including our telecommunications infrastructures. The UK is a world leader in many aspects of this. Our service and knowledge-led economy should not be assumed to be as tightly coupled to road traffic for its success as it once might have been. There is substantial recent

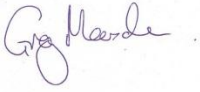
evidence, including the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and the Olympics, on the success of travel behaviour change programmes, underscoring demand management potential.

Integration across government is also important. On land use, changes to policy could well store up traffic problems for the future rather than encouraging economic growth. In reality, good transport and land use planning has prevented congestion and supported the economy, not held it back.

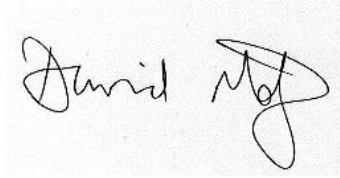
On funding, no progress has been made in the debate on how we should pay for improvements to the transport system. Understandably perhaps, your predecessors and the Treasury have ducked the issue of establishing a new congestion based system of pay as you go motoring. This could continue, but for how long? Tax revenues are forecast to fall as vehicle fuel efficiency improves to fulfill a major plank of your carbon reduction strategy. Increases in fuel duty to fill this hole have been a temporary fix, lack public support and fail to establish a stable platform for transport investment. There is a need to find a new way of charging for motoring as we move away from fossil-fuels.

We conclude, as we did in 2002 that policies on infrastructure, land-use, operations and prices must be consistent with each other if they are to offer a realistic chance of making things better instead of just accumulating long term problems. The past decade has shown how difficult integrated transport planning can be, but it remains the best hope to tackle the challenges you face. We urge you to work with us and the professional institutions in establishing a clear long-term national policy framework.

Yours sincerely



Professor Greg Marsden  
Professor of Transport Governance  
University of Leeds



Professor David Metz  
Visiting Professor, Centre for Transport  
Studies, University College London



Professor Peter Mackie  
Research Professor  
University of Leeds



Professor Angela Hull  
Professor of Spatial Planning  
Heriot Watt University



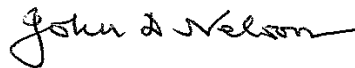
Professor Graham Parkhurst  
Professor of Sustainable Mobility  
University of the West of England



Professor Tom Rye  
Visiting Professor of Transport  
Open University



Professor Stephane Hess  
Professor of Choice Modeling  
University of Leeds



Professor John Nelson  
Professor of Transport Studies  
University of Aberdeen



Professor Iain Docherty  
Professor of Public Policy and  
Governance, University of Glasgow



Professor Glenn Lyons  
Professor of Transport and Society  
University of the West of England



Professor Mike Maher  
Professor in Mathematical Analysis of  
Transport Systems, University of Leeds



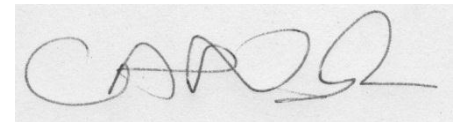
Professor Richard Allsop  
Emeritus Professor of Transport  
Studies, University College London



Stephen Potter  
Professor of Transport Strategy,  
The Open University, Milton Keynes



Professor Jon Shaw  
Professor of Transport Geography  
Plymouth University



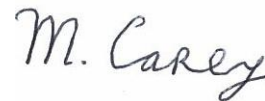
Professor Chris Nash  
Research Professor  
University of Leeds



Professor David Banister  
Professor of Transport Studies and  
Fellow of St Anne's College,  
Oxford University



Professor Miles Tight  
Professor of Transport, Energy and  
Environment  
University of Birmingham



Professor Malachy Carey  
Research Professor  
University of Leeds



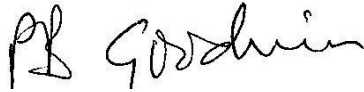
Professor John Parkin  
Professor of Transport Engineering  
London South Bank University



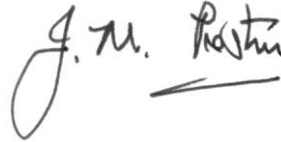
Professor R E Wilson  
Professor of Intelligent Transport  
Systems, University of Bristol



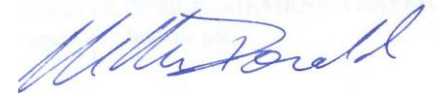
Professor Wafaa Saleh  
Professor of Transport Engineering  
Edinburgh Napier University



Professor Phil Goodwin  
Emeritus Professor of Transport Policy,  
University College London and  
University of the West of England



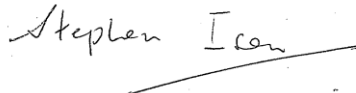
Professor John Preston  
Professor of Rail Transport  
University of Southampton



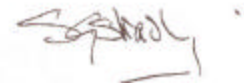
Professor Mike McDonald  
Emeritus Professor of Transportation  
University of Southampton



Professor Julian Hine  
Professor of Transport  
University of Ulster



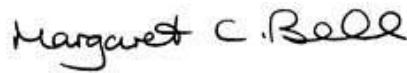
Professor Stephen Ison  
Professor of Transport Policy  
Loughborough University



Professor Stephen Stradling  
Professor Emeritus  
Edinburgh Napier University



Professor Mark Wardman  
Professor of Transport Demand  
Analysis, University of Leeds



Professor Margaret C. Bell CBE  
Science City Professor of Transport and  
Environment, Newcastle University



Professor Peter White  
Professor of Planning & Transport  
University of Westminster



Professor Steve Atkins  
Visiting Professor  
University of the West of England



Professor Austin Smyth  
Professor of Transport  
University of Hertfordshire



Keith Buchan  
Chair of the Transport Planning Society

Trudi Elliott CBE, Chief Executive,  
Royal Town Planning Institute