

Dear Sirs,

As a professional in the transport and planning field, and an occasional user of the London transport infrastructure (mainly as a cyclist - its the fastest mode inside zones 1 and 2, and beyond), I write to offer comment on the call for evidence in respect of the London Transport infrastructure.

I think there are really only two issues in respect of London's transport infrastructure; the level of subsidy it attracts, and the level of provision. Both, in my view, are so disproportionate as to make the provision to all other parts of the UK, and especially the North of England (which for no obvious - or outstanding - reason has been singled out as lacking transport infrastructure), look pitiful. In fact, this is a misnomer. Transport infrastructure provision in the UK is simply being directed in several wrong directions at once. The actual level of infrastructure provision in London is significantly better than the rest of the UK, but its performance - ability to deliver - is almost equally abysmal as in any other major city. The reason is also the same; concentration of resources on the lowest modal utilisation (the car and conventional rail). These two prevent, in the case of the car, efficient use of the highway and goods delivery by the commercial vehicle, and in the case of conventional rail, restrict capacity, and the provision of that capacity, to perhaps 10% of the potential by the use of outmoded and very expensive technology.

In short, London does not have a problem caused by a lack of infrastructure, but a problem caused by lack of effective infrastructure utilisation. That is simply down to poor management, and since government has run UK transport, de facto since 1914, then it is a racing certainty that those - the great and the good of this evidence process - are at least partially culpable in that failure to manage the London land transport infrastructure so that it can deliver what London needs - fast, cheap, low carbon efficient transport for goods and people.

So investment in more of the same is not going to change anything; in fact doing more of the same de facto prevents change. Only doing something different will make a difference.

London needs to lead the world, not follow it. And it can do so easily on the simple level of planning to cope with the cycling revolution now in full flow in the capital; full provision as if the bicycle was the prime user of the highway, with junctions, priority, parking, recharge stations for assisted cycles, all designed to the exclusion - if required - of everything else. Think of it as we did for the motor car 1960 to 1990. Predict and Provide. Stop regarding cyclists as cads on castors (though a few undoubtedly are!) London's shape, as a structural basin, makes the ride to work downhill, on average, with the sweat reserved for the journey home. Makes Paris look hard work, which it is.

The bicycle on its own will do a lot for London, but it will not do everything, though the cost, less than a single rebuild of a mainline terminus, is eminently affordable. It will however, if properly designed, raise zone 1 and 2 transit speeds (door to door) for people from 3-4mph to about 12mph. Outside this central zone cycling will do more than any other modal shift to assist people and goods flows, but it will not address the medium and long distance people and goods flows on which the capital depends, and on which so much is proposed to be spent in addition to what has already been poured down the black holes of Crossrail, HS1, HS2, Crossrail 2 etc.

No current technology will square this circle, but something new will. Second Generation Rail (2GR). You won't have heard of it. It has nothing to do with rail, except the steel of the vehicle tyres and the material of the metal those tyres run on. It offers a solution to the issue of capacity - perhaps 10-fold over conventional rail - at perhaps 10% of the cost, and can be used on the public highway, or on reserved or segregated tracks with full door to door operability. It is equally amenable to freight or passenger, and requires no modal interchanges or special provisions such as large termini;

calculations suggest large termini would be inadvisable due to 2GR's theoretical capacity, even were they desirable. Over medium distances, say up to 120 miles, 2GR would be faster than the TGV and use perhaps 1% of the energy to do the same task. Based upon road vehicle technology, which has driven the western world's mass production for twelve decades, 2GR is only new in the way it looks at the issues of land transport, and the way steel wheels will run on rails; all the rest we already have in the technology drawer.

So London can choose; more of the same at enormous cost, or something new that will deliver what everyone wants at a price that all in the UK, not just London, can afford and acquire.

Yours Sincerely,

[redacted]