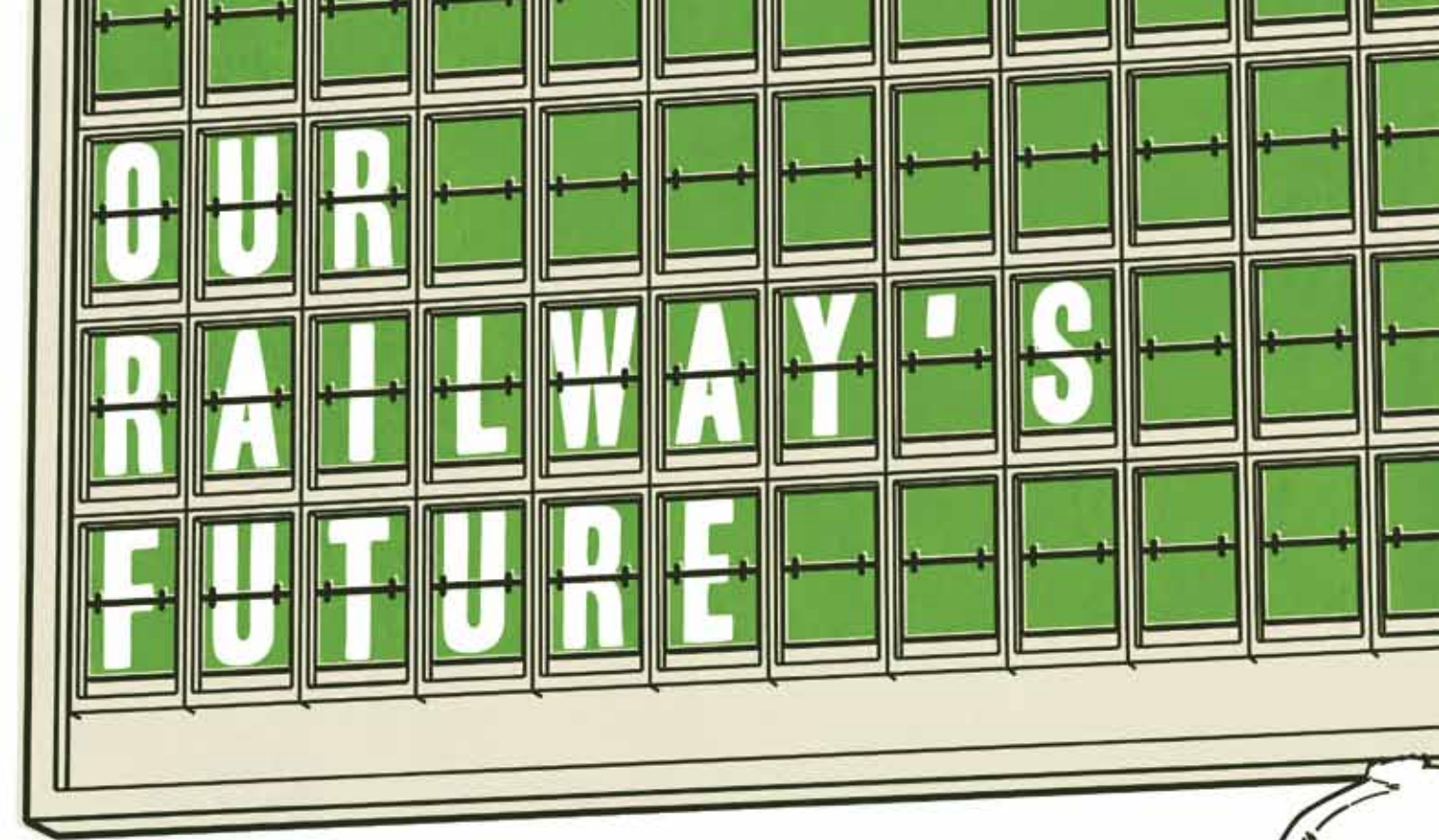


“At some stage we
have to get ahead
of the game.”

Small business, Birmingham

Our Railway's Future



Our Railway's Future

Contents

A moment to grasp – Network Rail & RDG	8
A guide to the report	12
 1. Today’s railway	
A story of growth	16
The shape of the industry	18
International comparisons	20
Trains, planes and automobiles	22
 2. Tomorrow’s railway – Forum for the Future	
Scenarios 2025 – Imagining the future	27
Scenario 1: City hubs	32
Scenario 2: Local communities	34
Scenario 3: London – global hub	36
 3. The railway in the public imagination	
Saul Parker and Rosa Bransky	
 4. A national dialogue – Acacia Avenue	
Objectives	52
Observations	54
The role of the railway	58
Hard choices and trade-offs	72
Top of mind questions for the public	76
Future priorities	79
Railway participants in the workshops	84
Conclusion	87

 5. Perspectives on the railway	
The railway and the economy	92
<i>Dr. Neil Bentley, Deputy Director General, Confederation for British Industry</i>	
The railway and social value	95
<i>Ed Cox, Director, Institute of Public Policy Research</i>	
The railway and private sector investment	98
<i>Julia Prescott, Partner and Chief strategy Officer, Meridiam Infrastructure</i>	
The railway and the taxpayer	101
<i>Matthew Sinclair, Director, The TaxPayers’ Alliance</i>	
The railway and the future of cities	104
<i>Andrew Carter, Director of Policy and Research, Centre for Cities</i>	
The railway and the environment	107
<i>Jonathon Porritt, Founder Director, Forum for the Future</i>	
Rail freight: trucks, trolleys and trains.....	111
<i>William Stobart, COO, Eddie Stobart Group</i>	
Lessons from London	113
<i>Daniel Moylan, Deputy Chairman, Transport for London</i>	
The railway and profit	116
<i>Andrew Haldenby, Director, Reform</i>	
Innovation on the railway	119
<i>Professor Rod Smith, Professor of Railway Engineering, Imperial College London</i>	
Integrated transport	122
<i>David Skelton, Deputy Director, Policy Exchange</i>	
Voices of the industry	126

“The role of the railway is as a support for all business; small, large, and products as well as people. It’s a connecting thing: it’s the artery of the whole country.”

Commuter, London

“We want a more efficient and better service to be proud of, that people would use. It would take people off the roads. It would be a great economic gain.”

Non-rail user, Birmingham

Foreword from the Rail Development Group



Tim O'Toole

CEO of First Group
and Chairman of the
Rail Delivery Group

As he steps down as Chairman of Network Rail, Rick Haythornthwaite will not leave the industry to its status quo. In his final year, Rick has chosen to force this colloquy among the rail industry, its stakeholders and its customers about our shared future. At the same time, he has forced the rail industry to organise itself so it is in a position to hold up its end of the conversation.

In the inaugural George Bradshaw Lecture, Rick proposed a national dialogue about the future of the rail industry. He argued that the gap between the public's perception and the reality of the rail industry's performance and progress was inexplicable, particularly given the industry's unrelenting passenger growth. Growth for most industries is a sign of health and celebration; in rail it is too often discussed as if it were a burden. The rail industry was invented in this country; it is thriving and much improved in this country, so why isn't the public debate punctuated by pride and ambition, instead of timidity and crankiness? When Rick announced his intention to find out, his audience was supportive but sceptical, and yet here it is, the start of the conversation.

When the McNulty Report accused the rail industry of a lack of leadership, it was Rick Haythornthwaite who rose to the challenge and organised the group that would evolve into the Rail Delivery Group. That effort not only puts the industry in a position to participate in a broader conversation about its future, but that collective effort makes it so much more likely that the future we envision can be realised. As I expect it will be understood in the future, Rick's intervention will prove to have been a necessary condition in that regard.

Harvard Professor Steven Pinker has argued that the study of game theory demonstrates that all significant advances in systems, whether organic or inorganic, are a result of positive sum games. That is true whether one looks at the emergence of cells with nuclei or modern communication systems. A distinguishing feature of such positive sum games, such win-win arrangements, is the emergent system's ever greater complexity. The RDG represents the rail industry's attempt to recast itself into a positive sum arrangement among Network Rail, the TOC's and FOC's and all of their stakeholders. The inevitable complexity that effort involves (e.g., funding, ticketing, partnerships, technology, etc.), makes Rick's "conversation" with the public all the more critical. The rail industry is difficult to comprehend. It is in many parts. But the fact remains, it is enjoying unprecedented growth and handling that growth with ever safer operations and ever improving performance. If we are to craft the future those facts call for, we must elevate the debate as the effort reported on in this document attempts to start.

"...here it is,
the start of the
conversation"

Tim O'Toole

Our Railway's Future - A moment to grasp



Rick Haythornthwaite
Chairman,
Network Rail

The caricatured view of the railways in this country is stuck somewhere in the 1960s or '70s - a declining industry which is grossly inefficient and delivers no real value to the nation.

The reality couldn't be more different: this is a growth industry. Increases in passengers of six per cent a year, carrying a billion more passengers per year - on half a million more trains per year than a decade ago.

But it is an industry, also, which is severely constrained, operating, as it does, on an essentially Victorian network. It is constantly required to squeeze more people onto the same trains on the same network. The Prime Minister, in his speech on infrastructure earlier this year, spoke of this country's tendency to sweat its infrastructure assets beyond breaking point. If ever there was an example of that it is the railways. We have been living off the Victorians' foresight for far too long.

Therefore, perhaps inevitably, the debate within the industry tends to be narrowly focused on how we should sweat the asset to deliver even more within the current capacity constraints. What is missing is the big picture debate: how important the railway is, not only in people's lives, but also in the effort to kick-start and re-balance our economy. What is missing is a shared view of what we need the railway to do, not just today, but in the future.

Hence this report which is a deliberate attempt to stimulate that big picture debate, by introducing some different voices and by directly engaging the public to test how important they think the railway is. With the overwhelmingly negative tenor of the general debate about the railway, you might well believe the public are not interested in its fate - apart from to complain about what irks them about the service today, of course. But we have to resist the presumption that there are votes in rail bashing.

In the George Bradshaw Lecture, I argued that the rail industry needs to understand what people really want from their railway; we need to engage in dialogue with the public. And my aspiration was for the dialogue to lift above the immediate and tactical and onto the strategic level.

Over the first few months of 2012, we embarked on a series of public engagement workshops across England, Wales and Scotland. By gathering different perspectives in the same room, we were able to represent the start of a national debate. We had commuters, rural communities and small businesses - as well as, importantly, non-rail using taxpayers - all in one conversation. It is only bringing together this variety of views, including those who don't use the railway, which allows the conversation to move from the personal to focus on the national and strategic significance of the railway.

And what we've learnt in this project, first and foremost, is that the public is willing to engage. When we set out on the project, it could not be taken for granted that that would be the case, and I take considerable encouragement from that.

As I hope you will find out when you read the report in full it contains some findings which are comfortable for the rail industry, and some which are not. It reflects the public's current distrust of the railways, whether that is expressed through a scepticism over claims of improving punctuality performance, or that extra investment will actually result in long-term improvement, rather than simply fattening operators' profits.

On the other hand, we found that people are prepared to get into real debate about the trade-offs and tough decisions we face. But to do so effectively, they need more information than they typically have today. At present there is very little knowledge amongst the public about how the railway works. There is no clarity about the density of traffic on the system, about how the fares work, how we can fund the industry in the future, or how we plan our investment. But they were interested and explaining more helps people engage more and provides the basis of greater trust.

We asked the public what was important to them about the railway and found they have a view. Right across the country the same big themes emerged about the role of the railway. People were quick to highlight how the railway underpins our economic growth. They want to see the railway connecting the country, including as a way to bridge the North-South divide. The public would like the railway to be a viable alternative to an increasingly congested road network. People believe that ensuring universal access matters; they feel that everyone should be able to travel by train, rich and poor, young and old. Strikingly, people also spoke passionately about wanting a modern railway which can be a symbol of national pride.

These things that the public say are the same things that the industry says: we argue that the railway is important because of its economic value, its social value, its national connectivity and as an alternative to the roads. We also want the country to be proud of our railway.

That is not to say that we can and should ignore the current and continuing shortcomings of our stretched railways. We need to be far more open, empathetic and relevant in how we share information and engage with the public. This holds the key to bringing the public into our strategic conversation and creating a far more fertile context for investment in the future.

When we got onto asking people to think about investment strategies for the future, it emerged that there was a significant group of people who would be very much in favour of significant investment and they made their case for that view in a

considered way. Actually, the smallest group was the group that was arguing for status-quo; generally people want to see the railway grow. They want us to be ambitious for the railway; they want us to have a vision for the future.

This industry is a vital piece of the wiring of this country. So to debate its future solely within the closed circle of the industry can never win us the public support we need. We have to expand the universe of voices in the dialogue and bring in fresh perspectives. We can assert now with greater certainty that the public is willing to engage with us. As an industry, we should take confidence from that. The government should take confidence.

There is a lot of activity underway in the industry, including devolution, alliancing, re-franchising and preparation for the next control period, CP5. These are valuable initiatives and necessary pre-cursors to any vision for the future. But they remain within the historic paradigm of de-bottle necking, extension and incremental gains within an infrastructure which is struggling to keep up with a rising tide of demand – and they will not, in themselves, improve the passenger experience. Our goal has to be to break beyond the world of trade-offs and take a longer-term view – to create a vision that imagines a new future for the railways rather than simply fixes the past. The good news is that the public also want us to get ahead of demand.

And let's pause for a moment to consider what may be possible if we could turn this habit of negative debate into a virtuous circle of public support, political support and rebuilding trust. What would that result in? If we were able to do that, a lot of conversations in this new world would be different. Innovation would have a more compelling context. Conversations about HS2 would be fundamentally different and the journey to HS3 would be more definite. The conversations with new engineering talent would be fundamentally different. The planning debates would be fundamentally different. The conversations with local communities about preventing trespass and graffiti would be fundamentally different. That is when the narrative around the industry would change sustainably.

This is a moment to grasp. The industry is about to enter into a period of planning for the next five years which will set the tone for the next fifteen and more. This has been a railway on the mend over the past decade. We've been working hard to get ever more out of the network and deliver ever greater value for money. The industry is embarking on its most collaborative and transformational programme for decades. We have now reached a point in the evolution of the industry where there is an opportunity for all the stakeholders involved to develop a shared strategic view of how to transform our railway for the future.

So the lesson for the industry, I believe, is clear: if we fail to create a vision, we will be selling the railway, the country and, most important, the public short.

“At some stage
we have to
get ahead
of the game.”

Small business, Birmingham

A guide to the report

Objectives

The national conversation about our railways is stuck at a transactional and tactical level. Public perceptions of our railway lag behind the reality: the mainstream view is of an industry in decline, but in reality the railway in Britain has been turned around and is now a growth industry. We need to elevate the debate and have a more strategic conversation. This report sets out to initiate a national dialogue about the future of the railway. The aspiration is to establish a shared purpose between the public, the government and the industry.

At the George Bradshaw Lecture in September 2011 Rick Haythornthwaite, as outgoing Chairman of Network Rail, initiated a programme of public engagement, in association with other industry bodies. This report describes that programme.

1. Today's railway Page 14

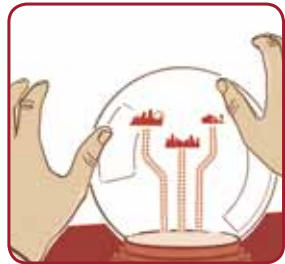


To enable people to enter into the debate in an informed way, it proved important to set out the realities of the railway network today. Not long ago, people were saying that the railway in Britain was broken. Services were unreliable and safety was a major concern. Over the last decade, great effort has gone into addressing this: reliability has improved massively – 91% of trains run on time, up from 75% ten years ago. The network is now one of the safest in the world. The nation's railways have been turned around.

But this presents a new challenge. Demand is soaring: we've seen a 43% increase in passengers over the last ten years. The railway is at full capacity. And it's getting busier.

So there are some hard choices ahead. It is essentially the same network as was built in the Victorian era, now serving 21st century demands. Based on a view of the role of the railway in national life, decisions need to be made about its future.

2. Tomorrow's railway Page 24



In order to prompt strategic debate amongst the public, we worked with Forum for the Future to develop a set of imagined scenarios for how the UK railway might look in 2025. Following a programme of interviews with industry players, desk research and trend analysis, Forum for the Future encapsulated three alternative views of the future:

Scenario 1: City hubs

Scenario 2: Local communities

Scenario 3: London – global hub

These were designed to be used as stimulus for a series of public engagement workshops across the country.

3. The railway in the public imagination Page 38



In order to properly understand the dynamics of the public debate around the railway, we need to understand the context for that debate. The railway has long been a part of national life in Britain, and is deeply embedded in our country's culture and sense of identity. To engage the public in a debate about the future of the railway, we need to understand the cultural context of the railway in people's lives.

Public conversation about today's rail services often focus on transactional elements such as punctuality and price – but there are strong underlying currents of dormant interest and affection for the railway. Understanding the railway in the public imagination can allow us to tap into the residual public goodwill, and offer the basis for a positive narrative about the future role of the railway.

4. A national dialogue Page 50



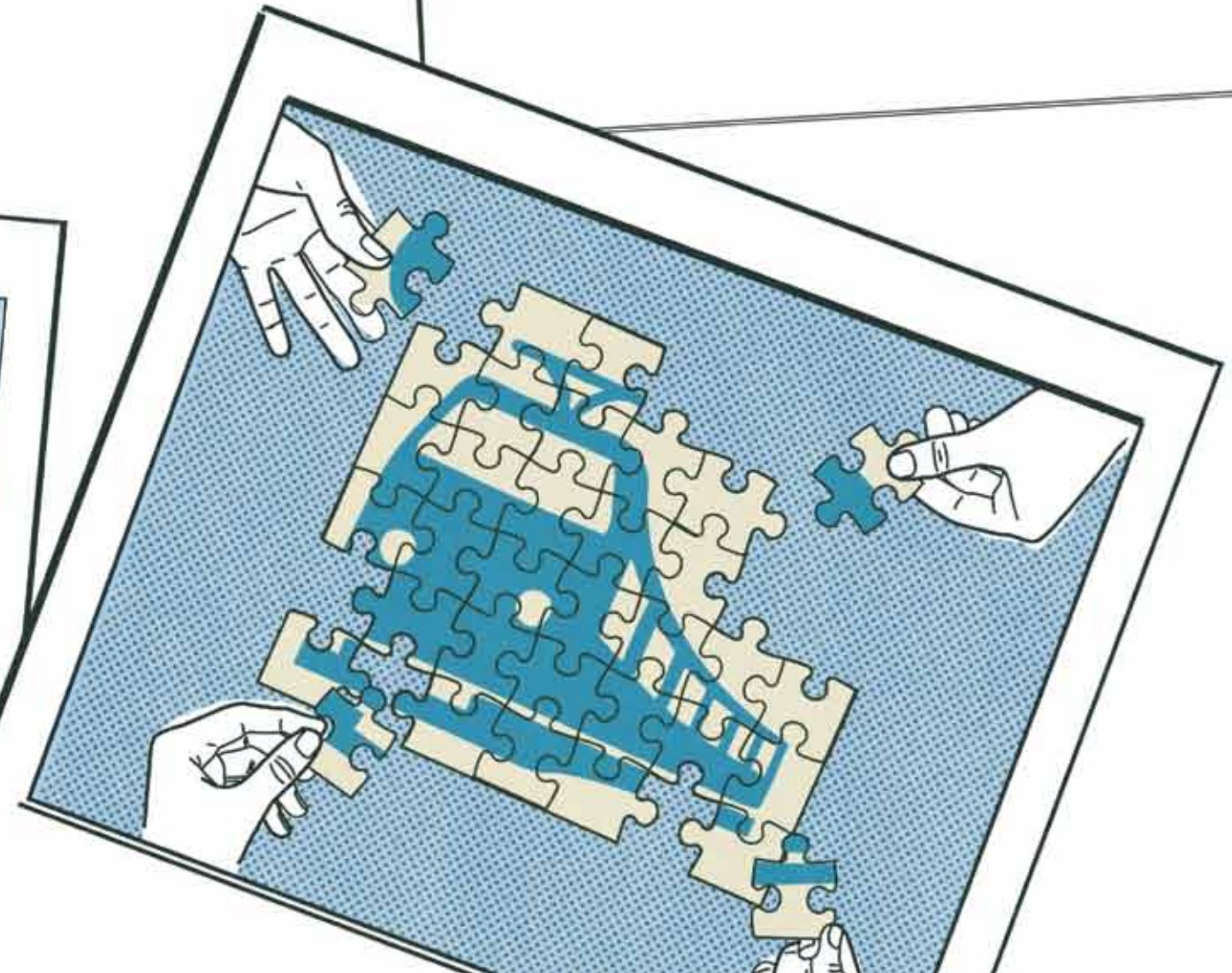
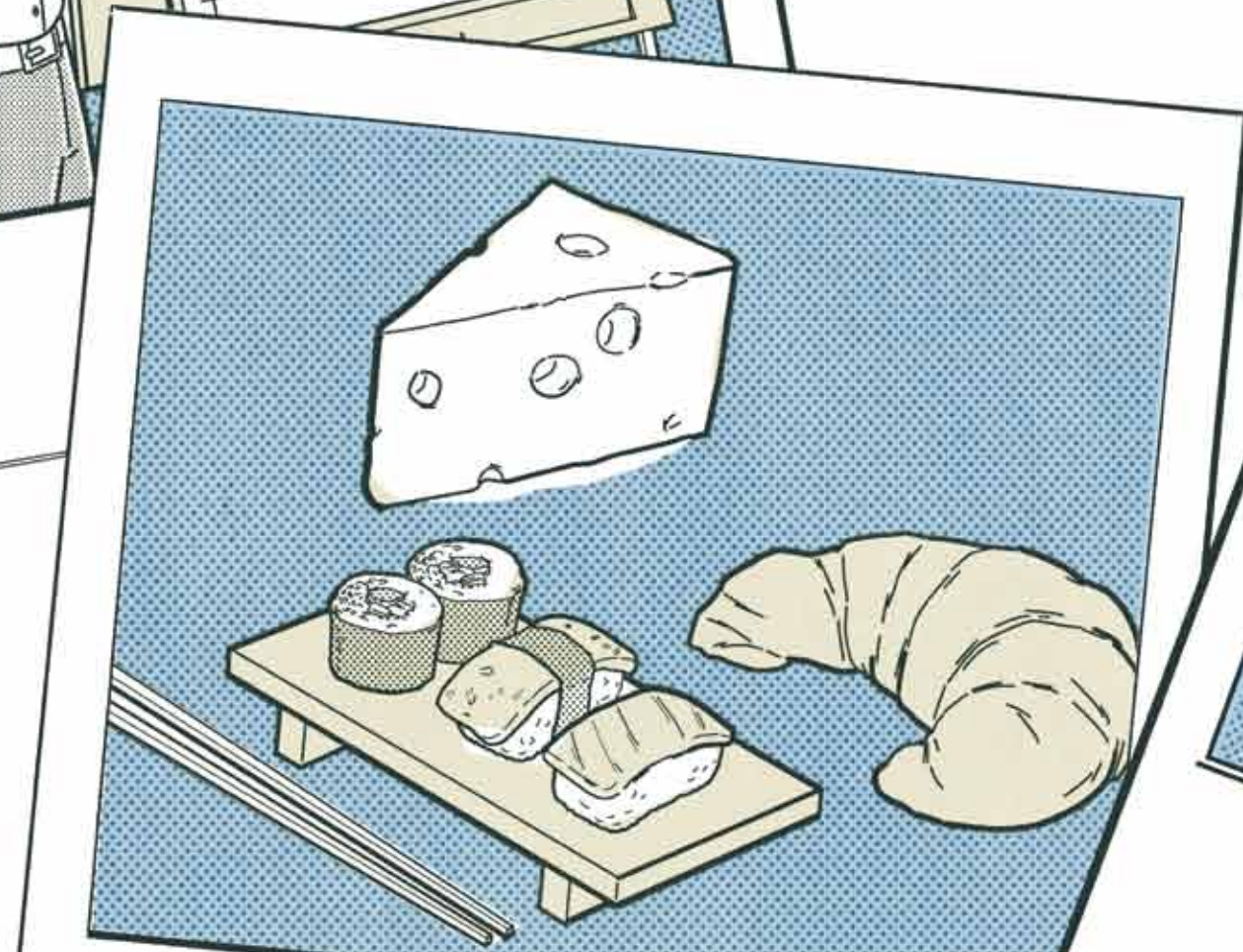
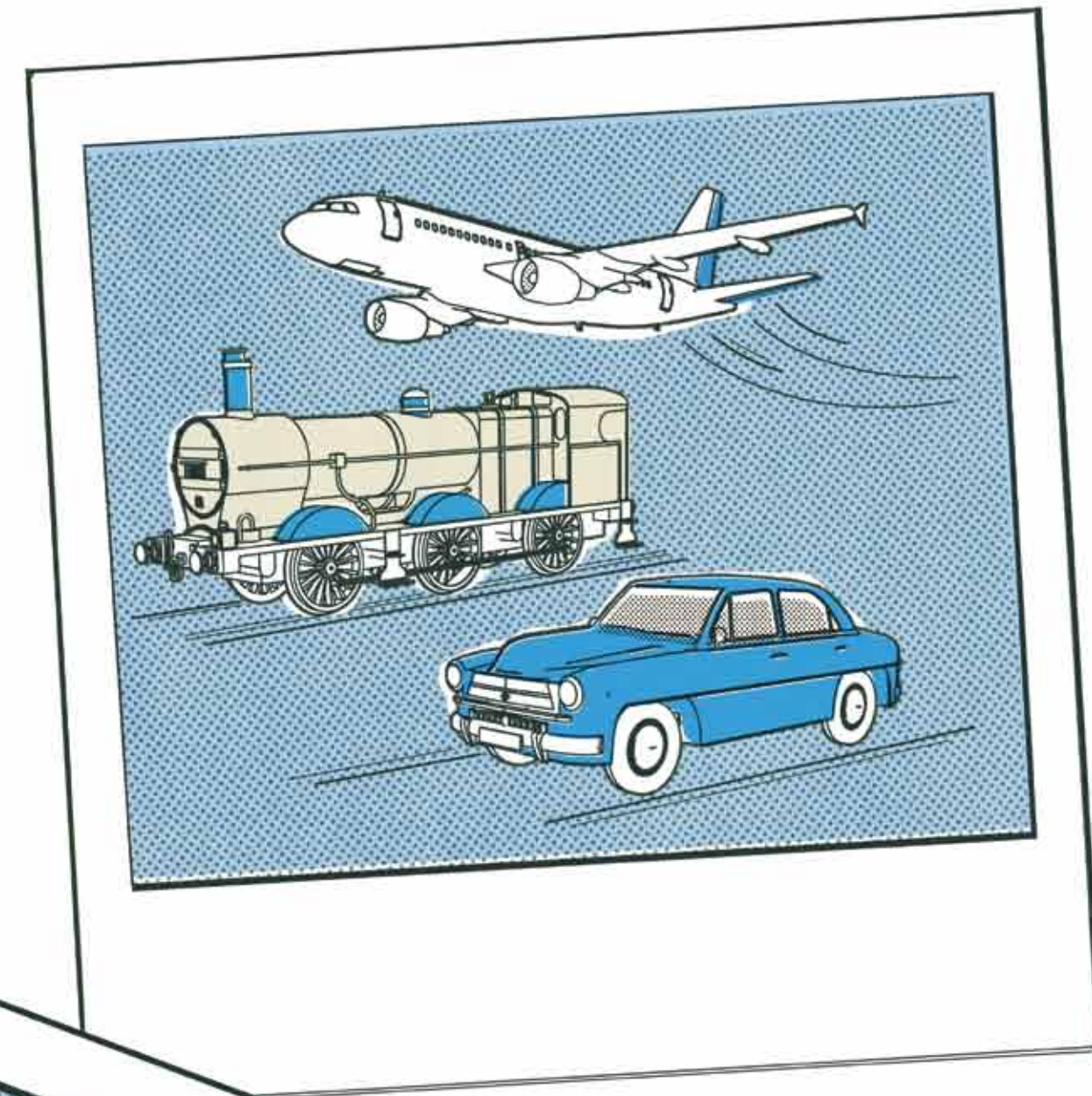
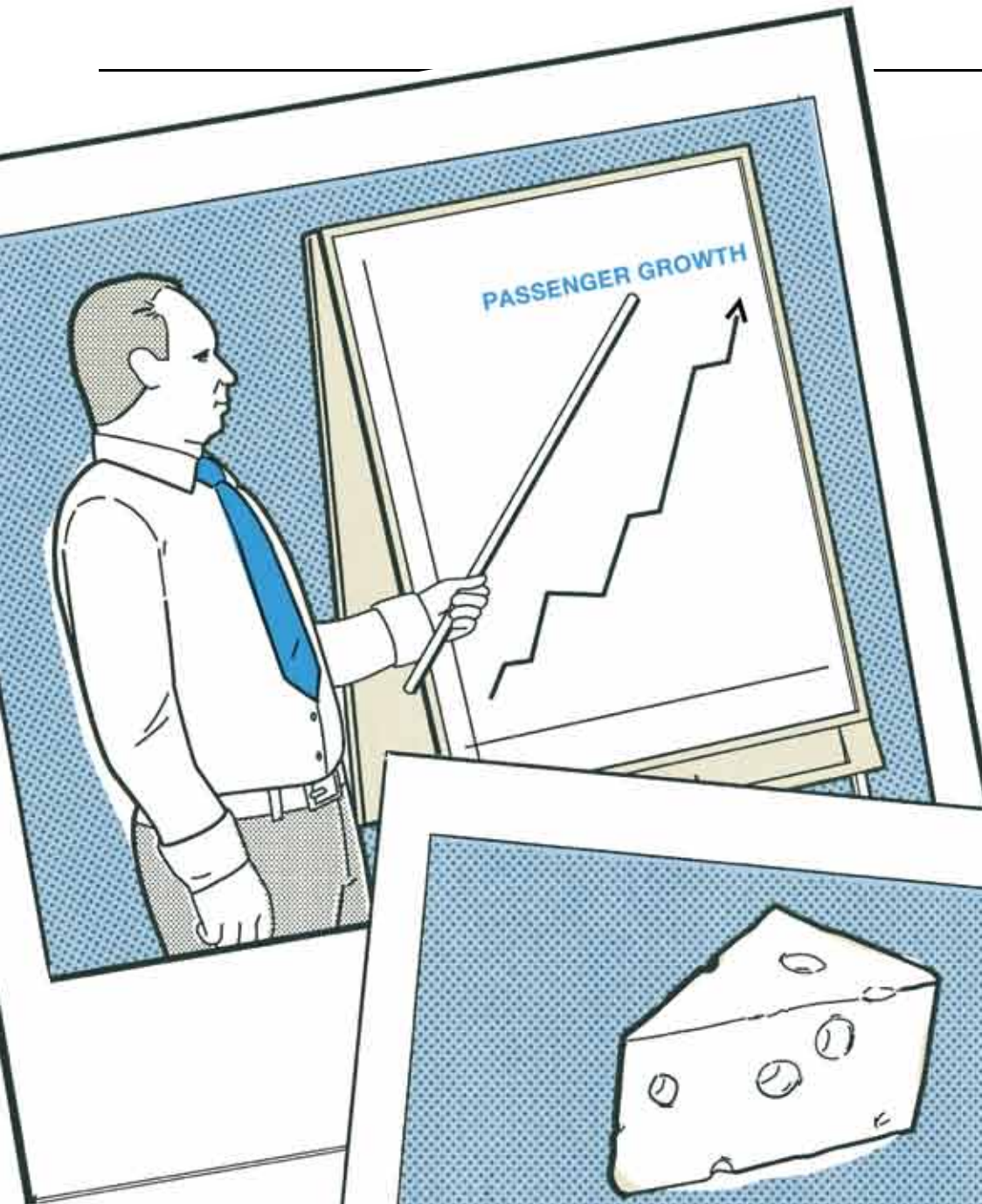
Having set out the realities for today's railway and explored possible scenarios for tomorrow's railway, we conducted a series of public engagement workshops. It was a truly national dialogue: there were 10 workshops in all across the country, in each region of England, in Scotland and Wales. Each workshop had around 24 participants, bringing together into one conversation different passenger groups – commuters, small businesses and rural communities, plus tax payers who are not rail users. The series concluded with a mixed group of public stakeholders and representatives of major industry bodies, around 70 people in total.

5. Perspectives on the railway Page 88



The final section of this report offers a series of personal perspectives on the railway from leading figures in and commentators on the industry. Each of them discusses a different aspect of the future of the railway, from economic growth to social value, from freight to new technologies, from private sector funding to integrated transport solutions. In addition, leading industry bodies set out what they see as the top priorities for the industry going forward. Together they represent an agenda for debate on the railway system in the UK.

1. Today's railway



A story of growth

Not long ago, people were saying that the railway in Britain was broken. Services were unreliable and safety was a real worry. Over the last decade, great effort has gone into addressing this. The following shows how much the nation's railway has been turned around. But this presents a new challenge. More and more people are using the railway - it's at full capacity. And it's getting busier.

2,500
on order to
meet demand

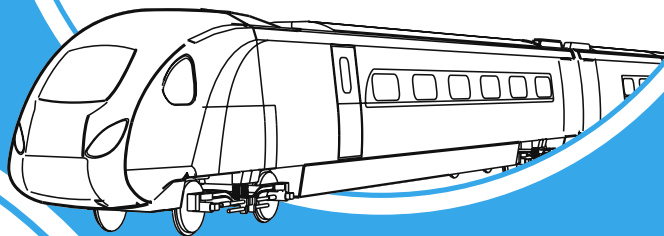
1.3 BILLION
train journeys per year

**MORE
PASSENGERS**

UP 43%
in 10 years

**MORE
TRAINS**

24,000 trains run everyday
13,000 more a week than
5 years ago



92% of the population
live within 5 miles
of a station

1.1 million travel to
work by rail each day
**INCREASE OF
OVER 50%**
in 12 years



**MORE
PUNCTUAL**

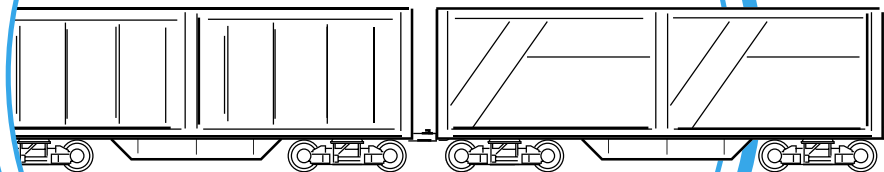
91.5%* of trains
run on time
Up from 75% ten years ago

*'On time' is measured as arrival
within 5 minutes of scheduled time
for commuter trains and to within
10 minutes for long distance trains.

**MORE
SAFETY**

One of the safest
railways in the world

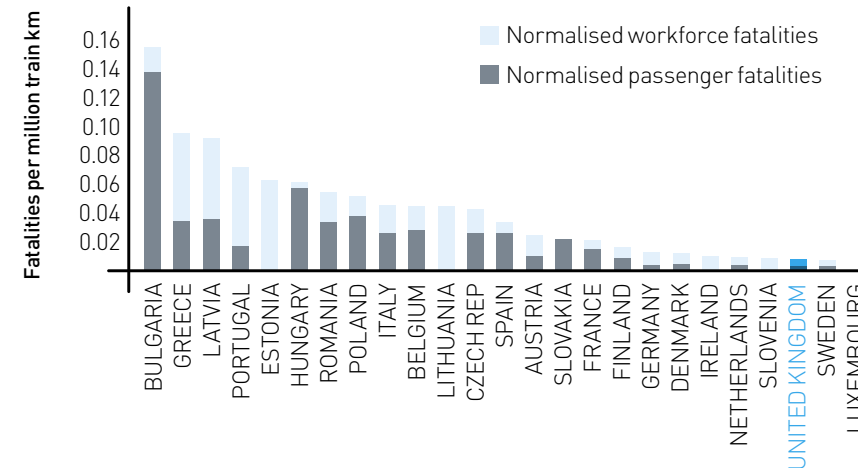
**MORE
FREIGHT**



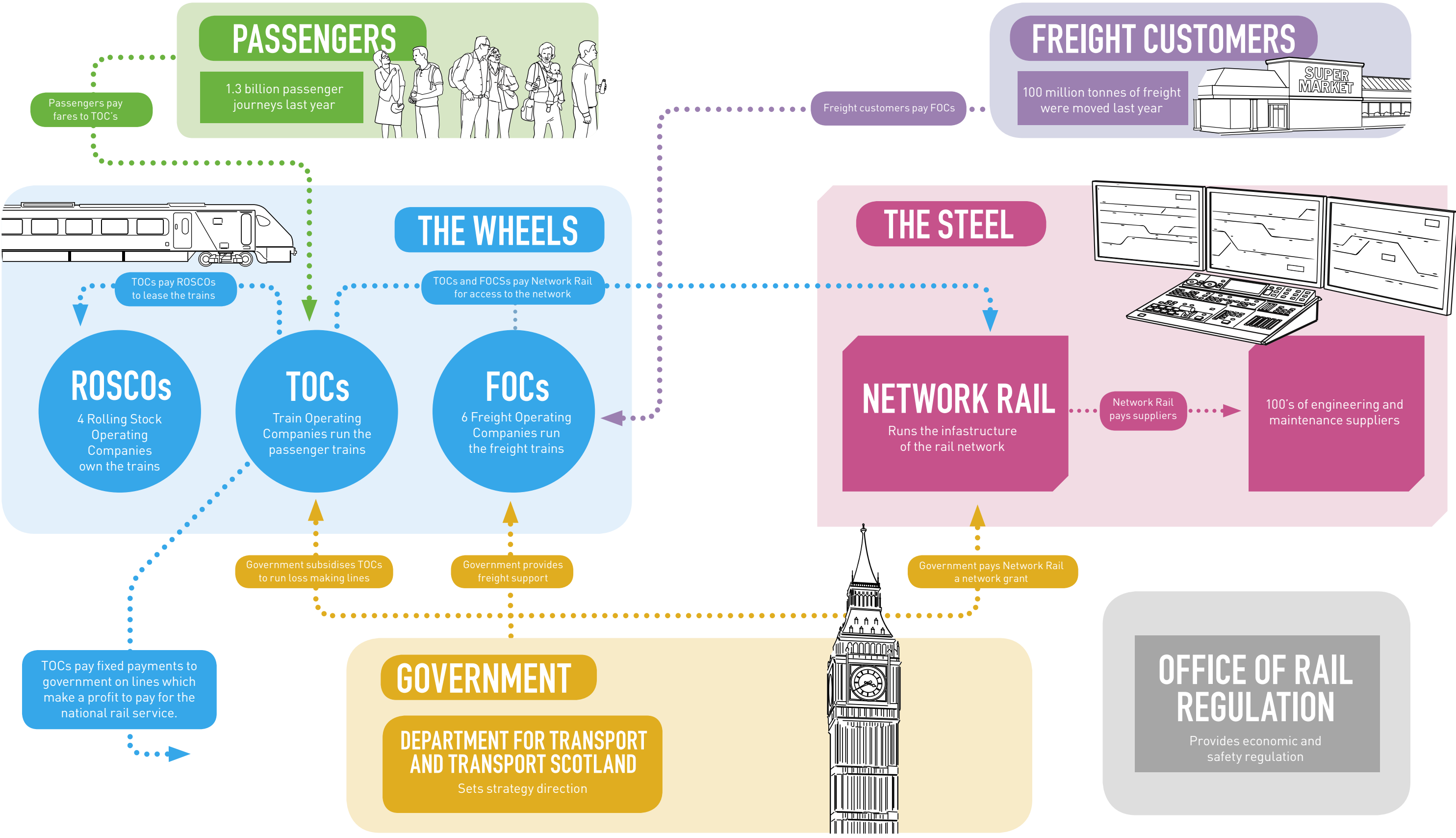
Rail freight is
UP 60%
in 10 years

Every freight train takes
moer than 30 lorries off
our roads

Passenger and workforce fatality rates
on European union railways 2004-2009



The shape of the industry



International comparisons

People frequently compare our railway with overseas railways – and often, with a sense of inferiority. But sometimes it’s a simplistic comparison: other countries may be efficient, affordable and fast – but there are a range of explanations for this. Here we look at some international comparisons, and the specific considerations which make their success possible.

SWITZERLAND

PUBLIC PERCEPTION
A punctual, smooth running system.
KEY FACT
The Swiss run just over 7,000 passenger trains per week compared to 22,000 passenger trains per weekday in the UK
More than 96% of local/regional trains arrive within 5 minutes of advertised time (that’s around 91.5% in the UK)
KEY DIFFERENCE
Rail subsidy per head of population is 3 times that in the UK.
Journeys between major cities are often slower than in the UK.



FRANCE

PUBLIC PERCEPTION
Comfortable and affordable.
KEY FACT
France has high levels of Greenfield development and uses compulsory purchase orders
Number of employees nearly 160,000 (In the UK it takes around 90,000 to run the railway).
Only 81.9% of long distance SNCF trains arriving within 15 mins of advertised time (that’s around 91.5% in the UK)
KEY DIFFERENCE
Many routes have less frequent off-peak services than in the UK.

JAPAN

PUBLIC PERCEPTION
Speed
KEY FACT
The Shinkansen “bullet train” has dedicated high-speed lines – so it isn’t slowed down by other services.
KEY DIFFERENCE
Each line is run by a private for-profit company that can attract private investment.



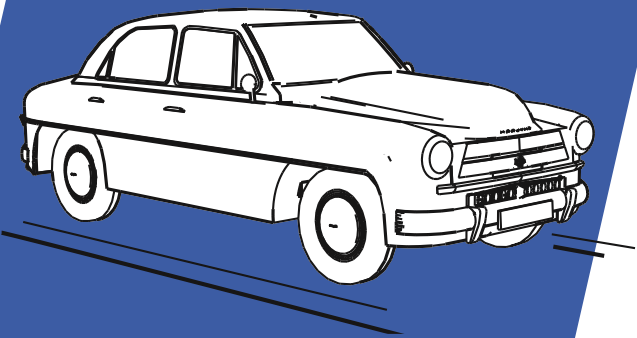
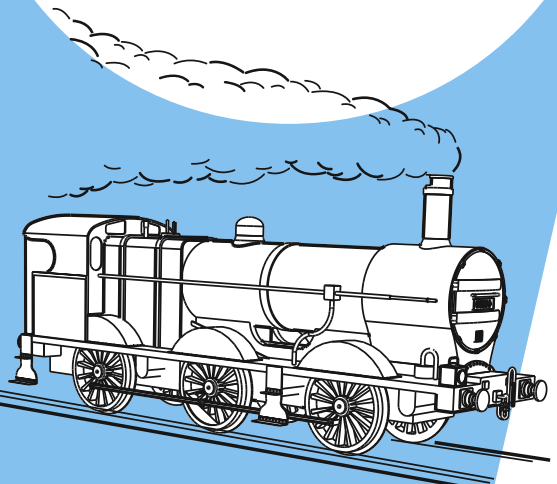
“If France can do it, why can’t we?”

Non-user, Newcastle

Trains, planes and automobiles

This was a period of innovation and engineering breakthroughs - from Stephenson's famous Rocket train to Brunel's great bridges. It changed life in Britain forever. The rail network grew in size to a peak in 1913, with nearly 25,000 route miles. The railway played an important role moving troops and supplies during the World Wars, and afterwards they were nationalised to form British Rail.

THE AGE OF RAIL 1800-1945

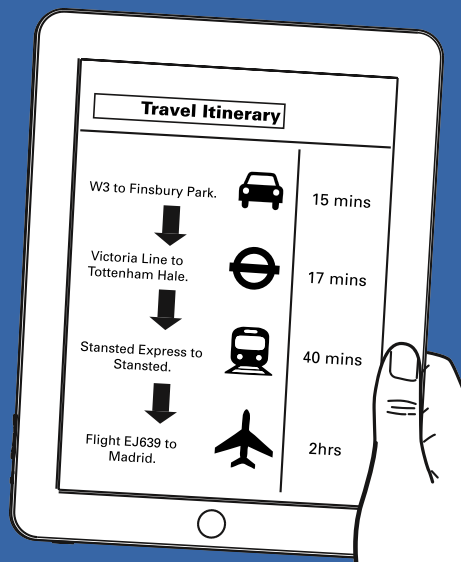


In the 1950s, an ambitious programme of motorway building began, which continued until the early 1990s. Car ownership soared – there are over 28 million cars in the UK today. However, this has led to congestion in and around many towns and cities. Car travel per head peaked in the late 1990s, as people became deterred from using the roads by heavy traffic and by increasing petrol costs. By this time, cheap air travel provided an appealing alternative for long journeys.

THE AGE OF ROAD 1945-1990

THE AGE OF CHEAP AIR TRAVEL 1990-2010

The 1990s saw a boom in low-cost domestic air travel, and the emergence of a new no-frills airline model. As a result, passenger numbers on UK domestic routes more than doubled between 1996 and 2007. However, increases in Air Passenger Duty and rocketing fuel prices have reversed this trend. Recent years have seen a number of airlines go bust, and others have scaled back their domestic routes.

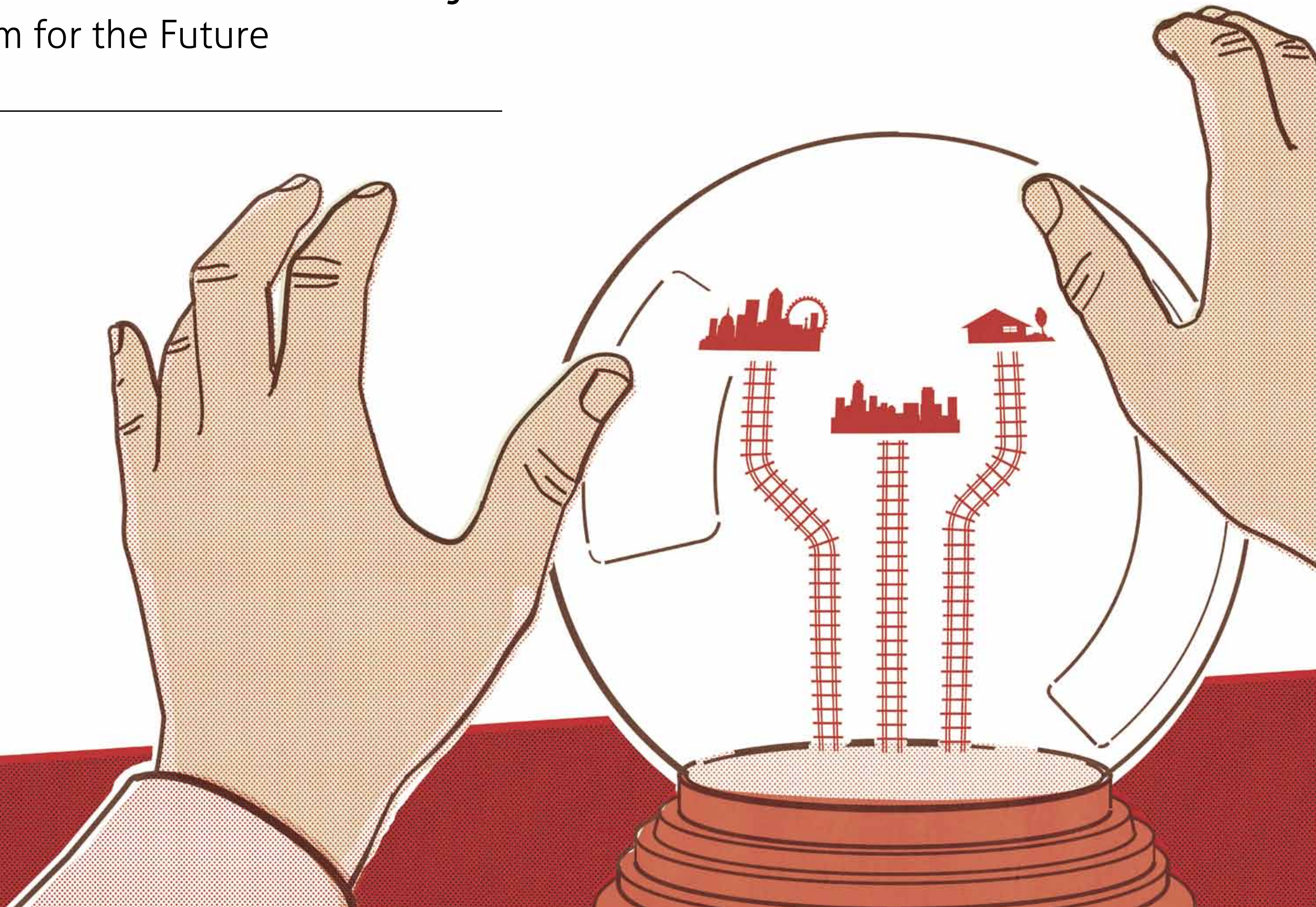


THE AGE OF INTEGRATED TRANSPORT TODAY AND INTO THE FUTURE

The future of transport in the UK must be a smart mix of rail, road and air. We need an approach that makes intelligent use of information technology to give customers low-carbon options and a seamless experience – from planning the journey to arriving at the destination. And we need a vision for how the role of the railway in creating this.

2. Tomorrow's railway

Forum for the Future



Scenarios 2025

Imagining the future

The Future Scenarios were designed to stimulate debate about the purpose and vision of the railway. They present plausible yet challenging narratives about the future. They are not predictions, but representations of possible future pathways.

Many organisations use scenarios as an invaluable tool for understanding the drivers of change, and making decisions about the future.

Forum for the Future worked with Network Rail to develop scenarios which imagined the future of the UK railway. These were developed as creative stimulus for a series of public engagement workshops in early 2012. This material brings to life potential ‘future scenarios’ for the railway, to help members of the public engage in a debate about the role of the railway of the future.

Methodology

The scenarios in this report are informed by an initial desk research phase and a consultation process with a range of industry experts and Network Rail staff.

We began by identifying external drivers of change - including trends in consumer behaviour, urbanisation, energy policy and so on – over which there is likely to be more uncertainty than over operational factors within the rail industry. We then analysed how these drivers might impact transport and, in particular, rail travel in the UK. Alongside this, we conducted ten stakeholder

interviews. These supplemented our analysis and ensured an holistic perspective to our work.

- JAMES ANGUS** - Head of Analysis and Forecasting, Network Rail
- MARK BOSTOCK** - Consultant, Arup
- JOE CARTHY** - Distribution Group, Enviromental Manager, Tesco
- DAN MILMO** - Transport Correspondent, Guardian
- PAUL PLUMMER** - Head of Strategy, Network Rail
- RALPH SMYTH** - Senior Transport Campaigner, CPRE
- RICHARD DAVIES** - Head of Policy, ATOC
- RISHI SAHA** - Regional Director for AMEASCA, Hill and Knowlton
- ROBIN GISBY** - Managing Director of Rail Operations, Network Rail
- PROF. ROD SMITH** - Professor of Railway Engineering, Imperial College London

We used this research as stimulus for a series of workshops with the Network Rail project team, at which we prioritised the key drivers of change for the railway of the future, identified the potential implications of these drivers and created three distinct scenarios for the future of rail in the UK.

FORUM FOR THE FUTURE is a non-profit organisation which works globally with business and government to create a sustainable future. We aim to transform the critical systems that we all depend on, such as food, energy and finance, to make them fit for the challenges of the 21st century.

Horizon scanning:

What we do and don't know about UK rail in 2025

The insight gained from Forum for the Future's research and stakeholder interviews can be expressed in terms of what we do know and what we don't know about what UK rail will be like in 2025.

There are some things that we can be reasonably certain about – our population size, for example, which is predictable over this time period. But it is the things we don't know yet that are crucial to understanding and planning ahead for the railway of the future. There are some uncertain factors which could have a major impact on the railway, and how we live and use it.

What we know...

The UK population will grow, and age: Forecast to hit 70m by 2029, half due to natural growth (births: very predictable), and half due to migration (which is less certain). We also know that the population will age, with 5.5m more elderly people in 20 years' time.

Climate change will continue to be an environmental challenge. For example, 2011 the 2nd hottest year on record in the UK¹, and arctic ice melting to new lows².

Energy prices are unlikely to fall much: The booming demand for and limited supply of oil means that prices are likely to stay at least where they are. What we don't know is whether some further factor or event might result in a more severe price hike (see below).

Land use will be similar: Only a small proportion of the building stock will be changed or added to. But the use of buildings, and commuting and shopping patterns, could change significantly (see below).

Transport technology cannot change much in that time: Many of the trains we'll be using are already in service - and some of the cars too. But our cars are likely to be quite a lot more efficient, due to EU laws, and a handful of rail lines might have been electrified. There are unlikely to be significant changes in signalling technology in this time frame; the issue will be whether and how it is deployed.

The extent of the rail and road networks will be similar: It is unlikely that we will build many more rail lines before 2025.

“Shifts in commuting patterns, costs and convenience, and property prices, will be the major drivers of change.” Forum for the Future

1. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/dec/30/2011-second-warmest-year-december>

2. 2007 ice extent 28% lower than 1979-2000 average <http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/2011/090611.html>

What we don't know...

The shape of the economy: High levels of uncertainty remain about the prospects for the UK economy. Economic growth is a fundamental driver of (and is driven by) travel demand, and the recent recession has actually reduced total travel (ie mainly car travel) for 3 years in a row³. Growing UK inequality is also an increasing concern, with the top 10% now 12x richer than the bottom 10%, up from 8x in 1985⁴. This affects equality of access to rail services (and other travel), and also the day-to-day operation of rail, with the potential for increasing crime or social unrest.

Government transport policy: What might be the changes in fares, and new trains, and signalling investment – and how will roads/motoring policy compare?

High speed rail: The construction of the High Speed 2 rail line will not be finished by 2025, but could be well under way. How will it make us feel about investing in railways?

Energy availability: The price of fuel has soared during recent years, despite the recession. This is mainly due to the rising demand for oil and increasing difficulty of its production, which affects electricity and gas prices. Will this further reduce our car usage, or might new, efficient, low carbon vehicles compensate?

Climate change policy: A renewed focus on climate change could result in rail being favoured as the greenest travel option. Alternatively, rail could lose its attractiveness as a green alternative compared to a new generation of hybrid and electric cars which are lower carbon than older diesel trains⁵.

New technologies and innovation:

Information and communications technology: Will advanced video calls make home working a mainstream choice and reduce commuting, or might new social and business networking opportunities increase the amount we travel?

Personal transport innovation: Might we start using cars differently, with the further growth of businesses like “pay as you go” car clubs? A clear trend away from car use has already been identified: the number of teenagers with driving licenses has dropped by nearly a third since 1999⁶.

Public transport innovation: How might new public transport products change the way we use rail? Smartcards like London's Oyster make sophisticated charging possible, and save time. Could new “bundling”

3. <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/transport-statistics-great-britain-2011/tsgb-2011-stats-release.pdf>
4. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/dec/05/income-inequality-growing-faster-uk>
5. By 2020 EU rules are expected to require new cars to emit only 95g/km on average, equivalent to a 2011 hybrid. Carrying 1.5 people on average, new cars would therefore be lower carbon than a current diesel Intercity 125 train (about 70g/passenger km (RSSB)).
6. <http://www.etcproceedings.org/paper/why-are-some-young-people-choosing-not-to-drive>

products make public transport the most convenient and cost-effective option for everybody?

Patterns of work: The amount of work available and the kind of work drives commuting – and access to mobility is fundamental to access to employment. With less space available on peak time trains, would employers encourage flexible working, part time or off-peak hours?

Urbanisation patterns: There has been an expansion of ‘radial commuting’ over the last decade as the economy continues to shift from industry to services. But with most overcrowding focused on London⁷, business expansion may face fewer barriers elsewhere... Shifts in commuting patterns, costs and convenience, and property prices, will be the major drivers of change.

Public perceptions of the railway: Almost everybody influences or is affected by rail, even if only a minority (~12%⁸) of the population are rail users. Some particular aspects of attitudes to rail are:

Customer service expectations have increased in all sectors, and rail is no exception⁹. Improving quality, simpler fares and reduced costs, if achieved, may help people become more comfortable with rail. However, there may be a national tendency by both public and media to complain about rail¹⁰.

Safety: The Ladbroke Grove and Potters Bar crashes had an enormous impact on services, costs and perception of the railway. Now, belief in rail safety is at a high. But another accident could undermine public confidence.

Industrial relations: With the advent of sophisticated technology such as automated signalling and even driverless trains, the railway of the future might be much less labour intensive. How will the unions respond?

The railway supply chain: Will the UK be able to retain local suppliers which produce cutting-edge railway technology more efficiently in the future? And, if not, will it be able to afford the leading technology from suppliers in Europe or China?

7. Fig 5 <http://www.hs2.org.uk/assets/x/558722>.
8. Philip Hammond: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/19/rail-train-tax-fares-hammond>
9. Stakeholder interview
10. Stakeholder interview

Scenario 1

City hubs

Imagine it's 2025. The UK is more prosperous, with new types of industry and jobs. London is no longer the sole centre of business – several vibrant “city hubs” have sprung up across the country. There's a less clear cut North-South divide. People can start businesses and find desirable places to live right across the country.

Free WiFi connectivity is almost everywhere – so people can work wherever they like, and the work-life balance is becoming ever more blurred. A number of city-regions have become powerful hubs – Manchester, Glasgow, Brighton, Bristol, and others.

The railway is in good shape – with good connections across the country. Investment in commuting and intercity routes means it's easy to get from one city hub to another, with frequent services. Many rural services remain, with futher options created by new commuting towns.

Demand is high across the country, so trains are crowded – but you can usually get on, and usually get a seat. Punctuality is good but not perfect. The service is easy to use, with e-ticketing and much better train information. Oh, and the train WiFi is 100% reliable.



ECONOMY, LIFE AND WORK

After a set of concerted policy and infrastructure investments, the UK has grown in prosperity to become a successful 'knowledge economy'.

The north-south divide is less clear cut; London is no longer the sole centre of business as several vibrant city 'hubs' have appeared across the country. They have dense city cores and expanding suburbs, and are home to many new businesses which sell their services to the global economy. For instance Newcastle is the leader in high-tech, low-carbon innovation and Manchester and Liverpool are a focus for the creative industries.

Only the highly educated can benefit from the new kinds of careers emerging within each city hub, pushing low-skilled workers further out of the city. However, there is the beginning of a trickle-down effect to local industries now, and areas such as hospitality and retail are beginning to see growth within the city.

In rural areas, the businesses that support the new industries are thriving and there has been a revival of the 'cottage economy'. Property prices are beginning to rise accordingly.

With internet connectivity everywhere, work/life balance has blurred significantly and Urban Stress Syndrome (USS) has become a well-documented condition.

THE RAILWAY

More than 75% of the railway in the UK has been successfully electrified, and high fuel prices and carbon taxes mean that the public are increasingly turning to rail as the cheapest mode of transport. However, the less profitable services – largely rural routes - have been scaled down because of a focus on the main urban economic arteries.

High-speed rail is being encouraged by the government, and the success of a recent flagship project (construction on schedule and budget) has won public trust and encouragement of greater

investment in similar schemes. An increasingly automated railway means that many people in the industry have lost their jobs in the past ten years.

Getting to suburbs on trains is easy enough, and there is more commuter traffic in and out of cities across the country. But on small countryside routes where rail links were not as economically viable, the network hasn't grown. In some cases, coach services and local link solutions act as extended train lines by synchronising timetables and offering easy fare add-ons.

THE PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

Trains are reliable and cost-effective, and service is good across urban hubs, which means that the trains are also crowded. Standard Class (or 'Crunch Class' as it is popularly known as) has little elbow room to use the WiFi facilities provided – but most people try anyway. There are plans to add rail capacity in the future but for now, measures such as longer trains and platforms and better signalling technology have helped.

Greater connectivity and flexible working practices mean that people have less restricted travel times, so peaks have spread. Train operators are also offering last minute discounts at quiet times through apps such as Train Tracker to help smooth out demand.

Both companies and individuals pay extra to travel in work-centre carriages, often equipped with the latest technology from major ICT brands, where employees can use high-speed WiFi in the comfort of fully equipped offices.

FREIGHT

There is more pressure to move goods around key urban hubs and bigger taxes on high-carbon air freight, so the railway network has invested in more freight corridors. It's still under strain however, and train stations have been repurposed to double as collection centres for local people.



Scenario 2

Local communities

Imagine it's 2025. The UK has stabilised as a low-growth economy. People have adapted to new ways of living and working. Many have moved out of urban areas – they work from home to save money and capitalise on local business opportunities.

For many people, there are shorter working weeks, more working from home and less travel. There's more reliance on local communities – with new digital apps to share skills, tools, favours and journeys. There are new "make-do and mend" services, with people thinking about well-being, as well as material prosperity.

Train services are very limited. The network has been scaled back and there are fewer trains. There's less overcrowding but on fewer services. With little more than essential maintenance, there are more delays. A very basic service – clean, but basic.



ECONOMY, LIFE AND WORK

The UK has stabilized as a low-growth economy. London is still home to a large number of corporate headquarters, but the city has remained roughly the same size over the past thirteen years.

Public services have been scaled back, meaning that cities are often less pleasant and too expensive to live in. People have adapted to different ways of living and working - moving out to rural areas, working shorter weeks and more often from home to save on transport costs.

There is an increased sense of shared responsibility, with a rise in online trading and bartering platforms to share skills, tools and journeys. More people are setting up local businesses which operate purely online, avoiding the costs of premises and making the most of a resurgence in 'make-do and mend' services.

Birmingham is becoming increasingly important as high-speed rail gets closer to completion, and many businesses are beginning to consider relocation for cost savings and greater business opportunities.

TRANSPORT

Over the last 10 years there has been modest growth in demand for transport. Congestion levels are generally lower than today – which has been compounded by road charging as the government attempts to increase revenue.

A new, extended coach network is particularly popular where available for its affordability and speed, though in general there are fewer travel options, with reduced rail services across the network. Car travel is often necessary despite costs, and some communities are starting up shared transport solutions like collectively-owned mini-buses or taxi companies.

iHitch, a smart phone app that makes journey-sharing easier, is growing in popularity and some local authorities have worked to integrate all transport modes so that they are cheaper and more convenient to use.

Cycling has continued to boom as a cheaper way to travel and

some retired rail lines are being used as bike paths.

THE RAILWAY

Funding for rail remains elusive and any available investment goes towards improving routes to London. Operator standards are dropping, and there have been cuts to many rural rail services. As an alternative, the first co-operatively owned train operating company has successfully launched under open-access agreement in the North West.

THE PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

Network services have been scaled back, but high-demand rail routes into London are still reliable, if of basic quality. Longer trains have been introduced on these services, ensuring enough capacity for city commuters and reducing crowding.

Reliability has slipped elsewhere, and cuts in rural rail services have sparked a number of backlash campaigns from NGOs and rural MPs, as well as industry strikes. There are increasing ripples of resentment in communities as people have lost their jobs and whole localities isolated.

On a couple of occasions over the past two years, energy shortages have resulted in part of the rail network being out of operation for a number of hours, stranding commuters and making headlines in the press. The rail industry has had to work hard to protect its reputation and reassure customers of its reliability.

A consequence of difficult financial times has been the growth of metal theft from the railway. As the price of metals has rocketed, thieves regularly steal train buffers and components – causing hundreds of delayed trains a year.

FREIGHT

There is less demand and more room for freight in this low-growth economy – so rail freight has become more affordable. The reduced transport network reach means that members of the public are being paid by logistic companies like DHL to deliver small packages when they travel along less popular routes.



Scenario 3

London - global hub

Imagine it's 2025. Economic growth has been modest. Prosperity is focused on London. As a result, more people are moving to the South East – as it's the place to be successful. London grows as a global hub for business and culture but the economic divide has grown, creating a two-tier Britain.

Property prices around London are very high, but are dropping rapidly elsewhere. Everywhere in the South East is getting built up – building has even started in the greenbelt. Congestion in the South East is at an all-time high on rail and road, and many people have accepted longer daily commutes.

With even more demand in the South East, the railways are overcrowded. The network in the South East is overstretched and this creates delays. You're lucky to get a seat – often lucky to get on at all! There are frequent services to and from London – but much fewer connections outside London due to lack of demand and lack of investment. Likewise, many rural lines are closed.



ECONOMY, LIFE AND WORK

The UK is experiencing modest economic growth, with prosperity concentrated in the South East. More people are leaving other parts of the country to go to London for work, which has the effect of worsening the economic divide and creating a 'two-tier Britain'.

Property prices in the South East are high but dropping elsewhere, and increased in-migration has created a housing crisis. New low-cost 'housing zones' are increasing in the UK greenbelt.

To ease the strain on the transport system and their staff, some employers pay a 'peak-time salary premium' if their employees must arrive at 9am; others have relocated to the South East, and many are encouraging home working. Entire business sectors have decided to work on Tuesday to Saturday.

However, the benefits of smoothing out travel peaks have been outweighed by growing population levels and demand. The rise of jobs that require low-paid employees to be onsite in London has added to demand for good transportation services, and more varied working hours put stress on those with families who need to co-ordinate with the school run and care responsibilities.

TRANSPORT

Despite incremental improvements the increased demand for transport in and out of the capital is straining the system in the South East.

Integrated transport is a key focus for government, who have innovated out of necessity - expanding the Congestion Charge and bike hire zones in London. Car ownership has dropped as households choose to own only one small (and often electric) car that is fine for every day trips and rent long-range vehicles for longer journeys.

Car clubs, car sharing and car rental models are being developed in the South East where they appeal particularly to

individuals with complex commutes.

THE RAILWAY

While main intercity routes still function satisfactorily, unprofitable routes have been reduced or closed down and any available funds put into bus services. There are many "save our station" campaigns, and the closure of stations outside of the South East is blamed on the increasing dominance of the capital.

In the face of continued attempts to streamline railway and tube services, industrial action is common. The government is experimenting with new franchise rules to encourage greater investment in rail.

THE PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

Commuting times are long – 2 hours on average – and peak rail fares have risen considerably. Protests are commonplace: as those on lower incomes are forced to live further out, the proportion of income spent on travel by some is estimated to be up to 40%.

Despite the high prices, reliability has slipped. Passengers may have to wait for several railway trains before they can begin their journey because of delays and congestion, and they often can't get a seat. Seat covers are tattered and toilets less clean than today's standards.

Real-time pricing means that those who travel on less-crowded services are rewarded, and experimentation with new platform and station design aims to increase efficiency at getting people in and out. Turnstiles are a thing of the past as electronic sensors detect when they use trains and charge bank accounts accordingly.

FREIGHT

Freight is in demand in the South East because of growth, but it is difficult to get it onto the railway lines because there is so little room. Most trailers are now double-length "road trains", in order to be able to accommodate the increase in freight volumes on roads.



3. The railway in the public imagination

Saul Good



The railway in the public imagination

Saul Parker and Rosa Bransky

The railway continues to hold an emotional resonance for people. While much of the conversation around the industry today focuses on costs and service levels, there remain strong currents of dormant interest and affection. Rail has a special place in the public imagination and, in setting out to engage with the public about the future of rail in their lives, there is merit in exploring what that is made up of.

As the Manchester and Liverpool railway line neared completion in 1829, a competition was launched to find the best engine to drive the new locomotive. George Stephenson won with the Rocket, the most advanced engine of its day. Dignitaries, engineers and journalists from around the world came to marvel at this great British triumph.

Stephenson's Rocket still captures the imagination. On YouTube today you can find videos which show the excitement of children running along beside the replica of the Rocket in Kensington Gardens in 2010 for the Science Museum's historic exhibition.

This article explores the strong cultural associations people have with trains and train travel – associations which can be tapped into in order to create a new contemporary narrative for the railway.

Showcasing the train

In the 19th Century, the train was celebrated in all its glory. Early train stations put the train at the heart of their design. As Thomas Hardy described, these stations were cathedrals for the locomotive:

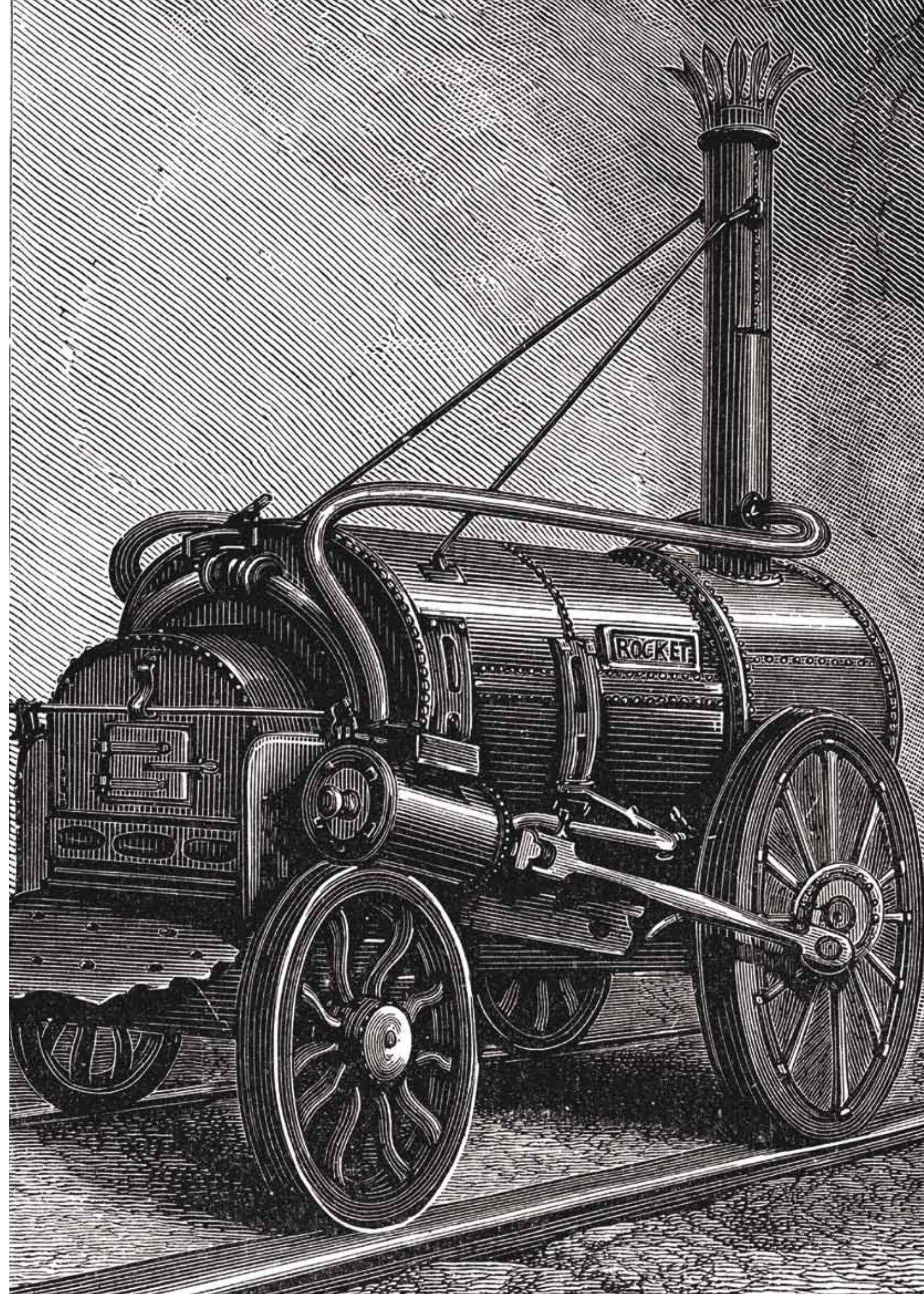
"Shall we go and sit in the cathedral?" he asked...

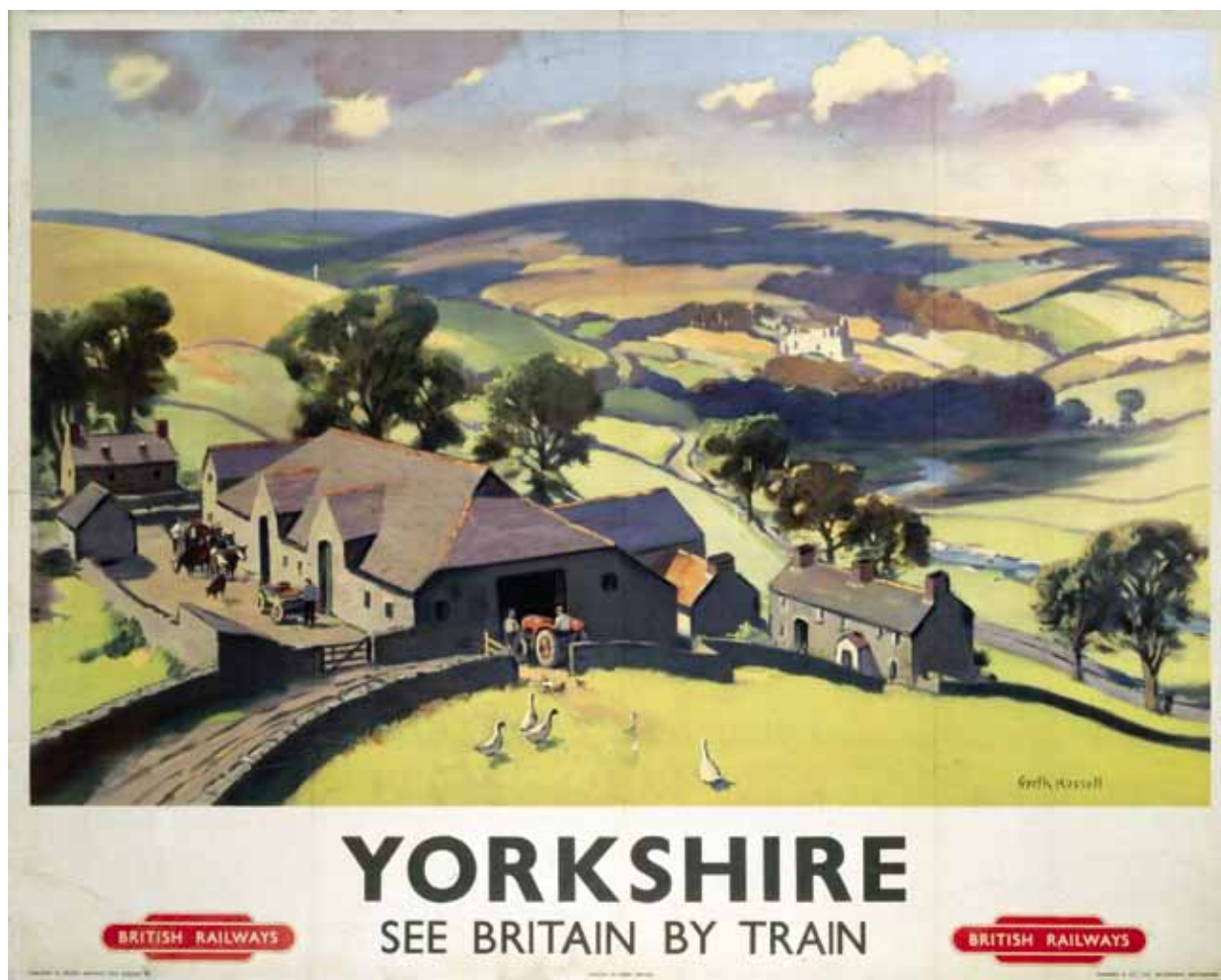
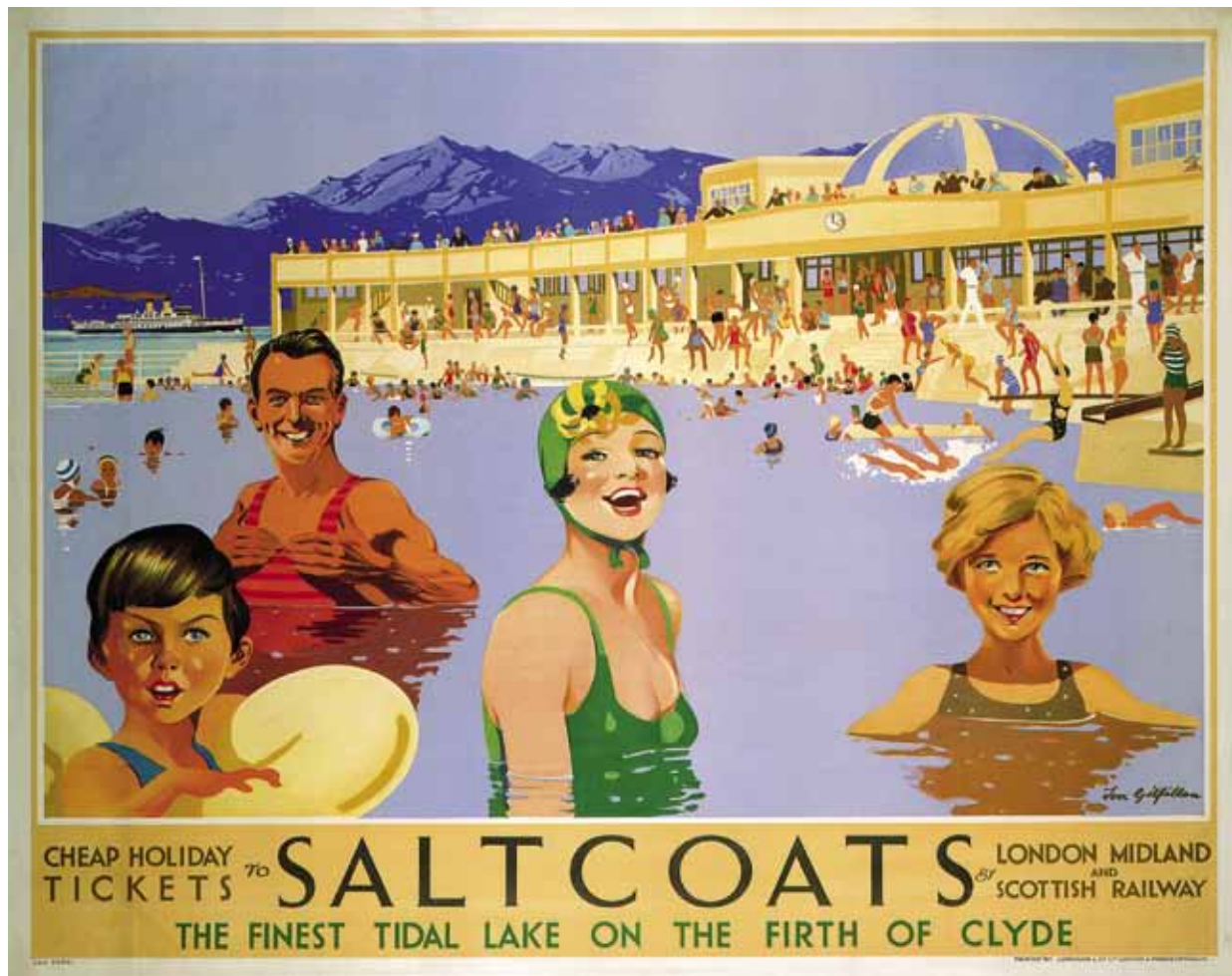
"Cathedral? Yes. Though I think I'd rather sit in the railway station," she answered..."That's the centre of the town life now. The cathedral has had its day!"

Hardy, Jude The Obscure

In the 20th century, the train was increasingly obscured from view. Stations came to mimic airports. Trains were hidden behind barriers. Railway advertising

The Rocket was a breakthrough locomotive design and still inspires interest today. A replica of Stephenson's Rocket drew crowds when it was launched in London in 2010.





Travel posters from the 30s, advertising popular holiday destinations. The railways brought with them an excitement to explore hidden British treasures.

evolved to reference the aeroplane. The emphasis switched from the train to the minutiae of services available on the train.

This was reflected in the 1960s redevelopment of Euston station. Having lost its grand neoclassical entrance, Euston became in the words of the Guardian's architecture correspondent, a

"Dreary, communist Europe-style steel box that weaselled its way here to coincide with the arrival of the latest... InterCity expresses of the mid-1960s... [a] glum, air-terminal design, one in which trains themselves are invisible".

Jonathan Glancey, The Guardian, 15 March 2010

In the 1970s, the Intercity 125 became the fastest diesel train on the planet. Yet its launch was far less theatrical than that of the original trains. As the BBC reported on 4 October 1976, "in the absence of an official ceremony to mark the occasion, few passengers were aware they were making history this morning as the first 0805 left Paddington on time".

There was no official ceremony to provide the new train with an imaginative platform and give it an elevated position in the public consciousness. As trains ceased to be showcased in Britain, other nations - such as Japan and China - have made greater efforts to promote the modernity of the railways and the advance that represents for their country. New initiatives such as HS2 may provide an opportunity to do this in Britain - new designs for HS2 stations may help to showcase the railway. Finding new ways of celebrating the achievements of the twenty first century railway may help develop a new rail narrative in this country.

Railways and the rural landscape

There has always been a tension between railways and nature, often expressed as a contradiction between pastoral life and modernity. Throughout rail history we see the celebration of rural idylls as a protest against railway planning decisions.

The two periods of 19th century railway 'mania' were met by opposition to expansion through the countryside. The romantic poets in particular evoked nature in reaction to the railway, which they saw as a threat to the sublime. And by the late 19th century, there was a growing reaction against the perceived threat to rural life by train lines.

Paradoxically, today we view the old rail network nostalgically, as something which connects us to a rural idyll rather than endangers it. The point is that before tracks have been laid down there has always been a period of protest

against railway planning, whereas afterwards railways are often seen as an integral part of the rural landscape.

One of the great attractions of the railway from the outset was its ability to transport the traveller to Britain's secret havens. Rambling, climbing, bird-watching and swimming all blossomed as popular leisure activities because of the railway. With a new emphasis on domestic holidays and a renewed interest in rural activities, there is an opportunity once again to entice the public to discover hidden British treasures through new and imaginative place marketing'.

Railways, though, do not only take passengers to the countryside. They also take them through the countryside. A great many rail travellers enjoy fleeting but familiar glimpses of rural life through the train window. The 2010 BBC documentary series Great British Railway Journeys opened with a selection of perspectives of the British countryside as seen from the train.

There is something about the vicarious experience of seeing the countryside and rural life through the window, and stopping at remote stations, that is unique to the train journey. Despite the fleeting nature of our rural connection through train travel, many travellers have very personal relationships with the scenery they traverse.

There is therefore an opportunity to celebrate these relationships between trains and the countryside, and to find new ways of revelling in the bond between passenger and nature.

Community connections

From the outset, train travel connected people and communities. This connectivity was about bringing people separated by long distances together more easily. Railway stations were the hubs of the network.

But, as rail travel became less glamorous, the communal sense of trains and stations was eroded. It has become increasingly possible to take a train journey without talking to anybody. And stations have become service hubs rather than social hubs.

However, recent innovations have begun to inject some sociability back into train travel. In 2010, for instance, Homebase in collaboration with Virgin Trains helped renovate Carlisle Citadel station, an early Victorian Neo-Gothic structure that had fallen into disrepair. The waiting room was transformed into a comfortable lounge, a garden was planted on one platform, and a community kitchen was installed. Virgin Trains reported that footfall and time spent in the

A concept illustration for the front of the new HS2 terminal at Euston. New initiatives such as HS2 give Britain the chance to once again showcase the modernity of the British Railway





Trains can be a vehicle for
our thoughts to run free
and a space where we can
use time as we want.

station both increased as soon as the renovations were made public.

Community Rail Partnerships have also sprung up in support of local rail lines. The 2011 Community Rail Awards in Sheffield saw over 60 community rail associations gather to celebrate their work, and these organisations often help to increase passenger figures and improve the atmosphere in stations.

In these ways, and others, there is scope for instilling a renewed sense of rail community by championing local involvement in stations and rail services.

Train time

Time and trains have always been intimately linked. Unified railway timetabling led to the establishment of standardised British clock time. Speed remains a prominent aspect of rail travel: seconds count, and late running trains remains perhaps the biggest gripe for modern train travellers today.

But as important as how long a journey takes is how time on the journey is used. Numerous academics have explored how people use time on trains. For the business traveller today, for example, normal working life can continue on the railway, with plugs at seats and WiFi throughout the journey.

However, within the sphere of train time there is another mode: the notion of suspended time. Alain De Botton often explores this theme and has evoked Edward Hopper's painting *Compartment C Car 293*: 'The silence that reigns inside while the wheels beat in rhythm against the rails outside, the dreaminess fostered by the noise and the view from the windows – a dreaminess in which we seem to stand outside our normal selves...' (Tate magazine, summer 2004)

From Alice in Wonderland to Harry Potter, trains have also been used as a bridge between fantasy and reality – and a rite of passage between one part of life and another. The recent NatWest banking advert uses a futuristic train to transport people through the journey of life. There is something magical about time spent on the train, and some of the most popular cultural products have used the railway to capture the public imagination.

Whilst the functionality of train travel is important, trains are also a vehicle for our thoughts to run free and a space where we can use time as we want. It is in this space that many of us fell in love with railway, and it is in this space that our imagination can be captured again.

Beyond speed

Considering our heritage in rail innovation, there is a distinct lack of pride in our railway at present. The public feel little sense of progress compared to that elsewhere in the world. What is needed is innovation that feels both British and significantly progressive to rekindle Britain's love for the contemporary railway.

High Speed 2 lines could help put a stake in the ground, although plans are mired in debate about costs and time savings. We believe that HS2 could have a symbolic role to play, bringing Britain up to date compared to prominent European rail networks, and giving British people a reason to be proud of their rail system that eclipses any specific time savings.

Much as there proved to be other benefits to the bullet train and TGV progressive train technologies, such as energy efficiency and cleanliness, so it must be possible to construct a progress narrative for British trains that goes beyond speed. Part of the issue with the HS2 debate is that improvements to journey times do not seem significant enough to warrant the investment and upheaval that construction of a new line is perceived to entail – and the significant capacity improvements it would bring have got somewhat lost in the telling.

Writing about high speed rail, Andrew Martin in The Evening Standard, offers a clue for what a possible future storyline might look like: 'Upon completion...the most carbon-efficient, beautiful, silent form of mass transit would be established as the dominant one in the country.'

These elements of environmental efficiency, beautiful engineering, a service which better connects everyone across the country and gives them a travel experience they value, could represent a very contemporary and British form of progress. What will matter is how the story is told, through media, communications, design, and the working culture of the new railway so that we can again tap into the public affection for railways.

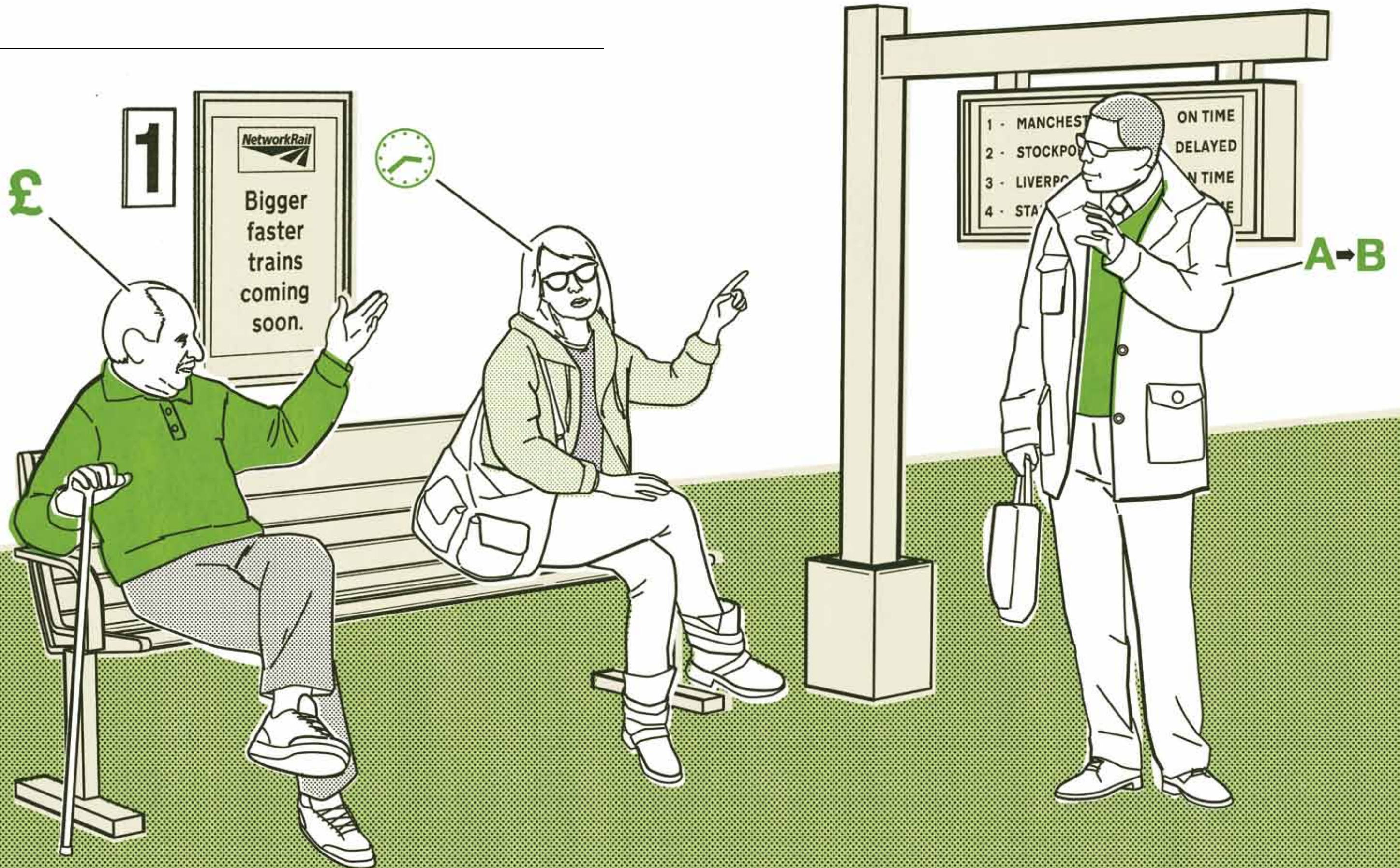
“We have good science and engineering in this country; we should use it.”

Commuter, Exeter

SAUL GOOD is a research and strategy consultancy applying techniques from cultural anthropology and ethnography to social marketing, communications strategy and innovation. Based in London, they work all over the world. Saul Good explored the historical and cultural record of the UK railway to develop a thematic, cultural analysis of trains.

4. A national dialogue

Acacia Avenue



Objectives

The intention was to engage the public in a debate about the role of the railway in the future.

This is distinct from the extensive and important existing research on attitudes to and expectations of the current service of the railway, conducted by operators, passenger groups and other parties. In contrast, this public engagement exercise was to focus on longer term and strategic issues. In that context, it was designed to:

- Understand what the railway means for people in the UK today.
- Understand the role that the railway could play in the future.
- Capture the dynamics of this debate in order to provoke a national discussion and elevate the role of the railway in public life.

Methodology

A series of ten workshops were conducted across the UK in early 2012. The programme visited each region of England, plus Wales and Scotland. For each workshop four different types of rail user were recruited to elicit a variety of perspectives and represent a sense of the national debate:

PARTICIPANT GROUPS

- Commuters - people who use the railway to get to work every day.
- Rural residents - people who live in rural areas and rely on trains for day-to-day living.
- Small businesses – owners, directors or senior managers from SMEs who rely on the railway to run their business, e.g. client meetings, visiting suppliers.
- Non-users/taxpayers – people who rarely or never use the railway but contribute to them through their taxes.

Senior stakeholders from the Network Rail management team and their regional counterparts also attended each workshop, allowing them the opportunity to hear the debate first-hand. The programme concluded in a larger-scale workshop in London with 70 members of the public and 20 senior stakeholders from across the rail industry, including TOCs, regulators, the government, passenger groups, industry bodies such as RIA, PTEG and Network Rail, in order to share the debate with the wider rail industry.

WHERE		WHO	DURATION
Midlands: Birmingham Wales: Cardiff South West: Exeter Scotland: Glasgow London (x 2)	North West: Manchester North East: Newcastle South East: Woking	28 members of the public and up to 4 senior Network Rail stakeholders per workshop	3hrs
London: National representation		70 members of the public and 20 senior stakeholders from across the rail industry.	4hrs

The sessions consisted of a series of exercises aimed at drawing out contrasts and alignments between user groups. The overall structure of the discussion and the exercises used is shown below. Broadly, we began the sessions by understanding the place of the railway in people’s lives today and possible roles for the railway in the future. We ended with an in-depth discussion about the difficult decisions that need to be taken and priorities for the longer term.

1. ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE RAILWAY	A visualisation exercise to draw out individual experiences and associations with travel (road, rail, air), through which people could articulate what they value about the railway.
2. THE REALITY OF TODAY’S RAILWAY	A short film showing independently verified facts and figures about the demand-led growth of the past decade and the density of the railway network today was shown to participants, and reactions were discussed.
3. THE ROLE OF THE RAILWAY TODAY	Participants were asked to imagine that the railway was gone and explore the impact of that, both personally and nationally, thereby allowing them to distil what that says about the significance of the railway in people’s lives.
4. FUTURE SCENARIOS	In order to enable people to shift from the specifics of today’s service into considering strategic priorities, three future scenarios were presented, based in 2025: City Hubs, London Global Hub and Local Communities. They demonstrated different but plausible options for how society and the economy may develop - and contextualised the railway in people’s lives within these scenarios.
5. HARD CHOICES	Forcing people to consider the inter-relationship between conflicting priorities – ie: capacity, speed, quality of experience, performance, frequency, intercity/commuter, freight and the rural network. The public were engaged in understanding the complexity of the trade-offs demanded within today’s constraints.
6. FUTURE PRIORITIES	To surface long-term priorities whilst recognising the potential financial implications, participants in small groups were asked to agree upon, and then present the room with, the case for specific investment options and priorities for the future.

Observations

Would the public be prepared to engage in strategic debate about the railway? If so, what topics most engage them and in what ways? And what is the public view on the future role of the railway? These were the questions we sought answers to through the public engagement programme.

We wanted to capture the dynamics of the debate – in other words, what could be learnt by how the public engaged, as well as what they said. What follows are observations about the most striking points to emerge from the workshops.

The public is very willing to engage at a strategic level

The first point to make is that the participants in the workshops showed surprisingly high levels of engagement. In every workshop, it was clear that they could move beyond the level of day-to-day transactional issues with the railway. They would begin with the familiar complaints and criticisms of the rail operations, but then quickly shift to future possibilities.

They were curious about the business of the railway and decision-making realities. Indeed, after the first few workshops, it became clear that we could increase the pace and the content of the workshops. This, in turn, encouraged richer discussion. People seemed to enjoy grappling with some complex issues, and shaping their vision for the role of the railway in the future.

People distrust the industry

People recognise that the railway gets a constant bad press. They even think that the railway in the UK is 'not bad' – for example, typically, they think that the rail experience is better than queuing at the airport and that the roads are more stressful.

Nevertheless, they do not trust the industry generally. An incidence of that in the workshops was that the public's sense of punctuality was not aligned with the official performance statistics. Some reacted to the achievement of more than 90% performance with astonishment.

"It must be just on my train line in the morning that counts for the 9%." LONDON

"So that means they're only late 9% of the time. Not on my line!" WOKING

"They're like plane statistics. I bet you they use a buffer to get to the 91% figure." EXETER

"You want to come on my train in the morning? I don't know where they get their figures from." LONDON

"You say there's 91% punctuality, but if you're waiting ages for your train in the morning and paid £5 extra, you don't know what you're paying for." LONDON

It brought home how, typically, the industry talks in terms of average performance, rather than the specifics of delay minutes. Yet for members of the public who travel on those routes which regularly experience greatest delays – and which for the industry are the weakest links – that's the defining experience, rather than the national averages. So although the regulatory performance statistics are impressive in themselves, they often failed to resonate with people. To most people, what matters are the minutes they lose in a day because of delays, not the national number of trains which run on time. Furthermore, the reaction of disbelief about the performance statistics reinforces the sense of public scepticism in the industry overall. One key thing which the workshops have made clear is that until the industry shows greater empathy with individual passenger experiences, it will be difficult to win back trust.

"We'd be happy to pay more money if it wasn't going to the profits of private rail companies." EXETER

"We need reassurance that the money isn't going to the fat cats. There needs to be transparency to the public about where the money goes." GLASGOW

"It's important to know where the money is going. This country spends a lot and a lot of it is wasted. We need to know what's being spent: where are the benefits long term?" BIRMINGHAM

"Billions of pounds have been spent on the railways and look at the state of them. Where's it all going?" GLASGOW

Therefore, in terms of the dynamics of the debate, trust emerged as a key issue – in two specific aspects in particular:

- Clarity and empathy about the statistics on how the industry is performing
- Clarity about how future funding for the industry will be spent.

People need more information to contribute in a meaningful way

This is a complex industry and it was clear that, typically, people are not equipped to enter the debate about its future without being given further information. For example, when people began to appreciate the sheer density on the network from increased traffic they engaged with much greater interest. They appreciated the need to make hard choices about the future of the system overall. Repeatedly, the participants became more interested as they understood more – for example, the knock-on challenge of small delays, the trade-off between trains stopping at local stations and faster inter-city journey times, or the growth in freight. It also exposed a frustration in people that they feel they do not understand where the money goes today, whether that is government funding or revenues from fair rises.

Although it is a complex industry, and therefore not easy to decide how much information is enough, it was clear through the workshops that it is possible to give even a little more basic explanation and win back considerable interest and growing trust.

People have a latent affection for rail travel

In the context of a comparison with all forms of transport, there is a mix of positive and negative associations. For rail, road and air, negative

associations include stress, costs and overcrowding. But they are intertwined with positive emotional feelings of freedom and adventure. The railways draw considerable affection and support, from nostalgic memories to associations with a serene experience. There is a strong sense of lost pride in having once led the world in rail travel - as well as more future-based positive associations, such as low carbon and community connectivity. There was also a recognition of train travel being a potentially positive experience, and the network being a national asset. The tension lies between the current unsatisfying realities for many people and the desire to re-create this ideal in the future. However, it was clear in the workshops that there is a genuine store of goodwill to build on.

Through the workshops, we found three keys to making this happen:

- Set the debate in the future: We used the three imagined scenarios for 2025 created by Forum for the Future to throw the debate forward, but within a credible timeframe. That helped to put a spotlight on some of the long-term strategic issues.
- Bring a variety of perspectives into the room. In the context of the workshops, this was achieved by mixing up commuters, rural communities, small businesses and even non-rail users – which established, in miniature, a national footprint for the debate, so people quickly became aware that they were part of a bigger picture. Even the non-rail users were ready to engage with the issue of the railway as a vital national infrastructure.
- Provide easy-to-digest information so that every participant has a starting point. The pivot point for that in the workshops was presenting

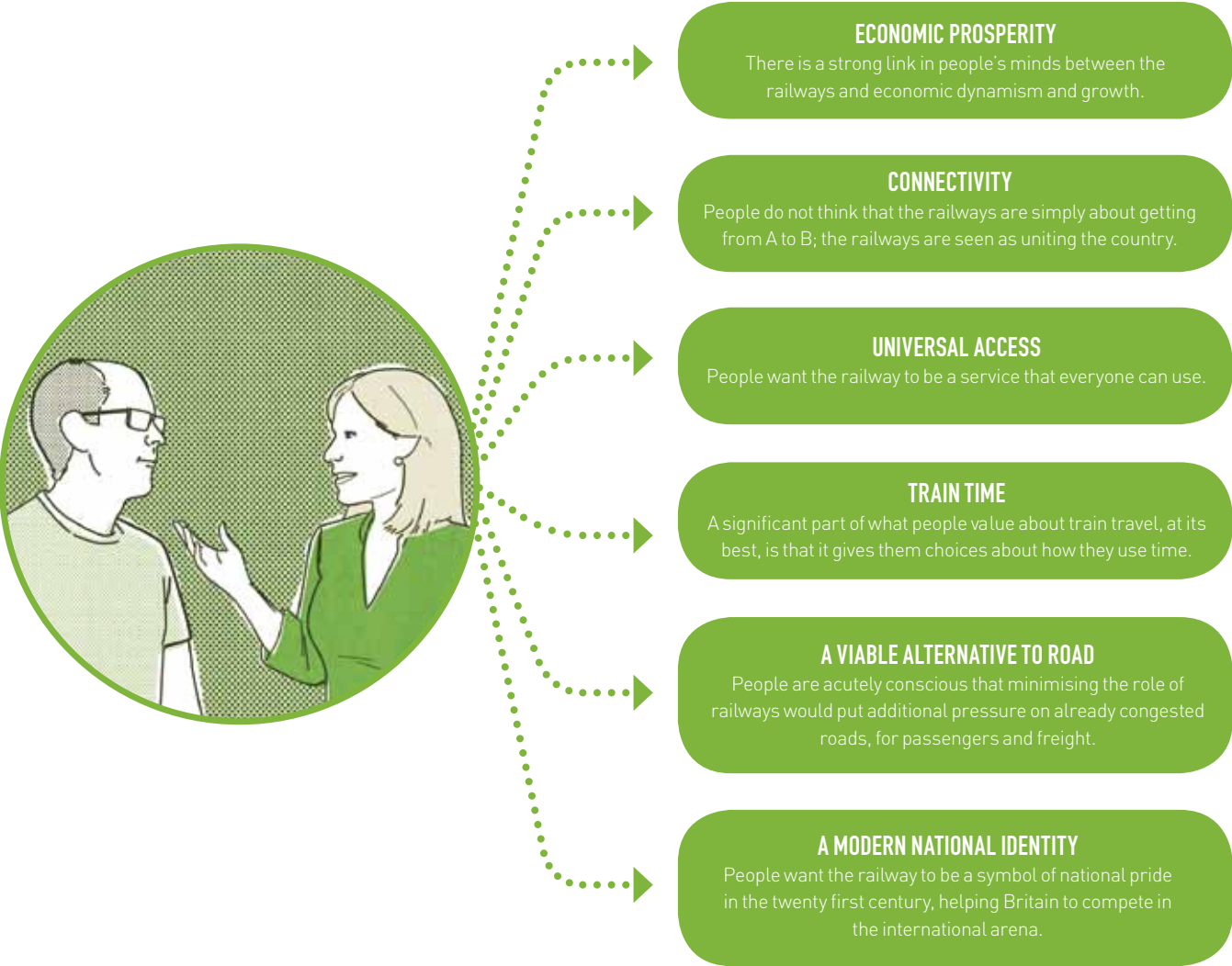
the growth in demand for rail travel. Seeing the increased density on the network, and consequent complications for performance, enabled people to recognise the hard choices involved and made them interested in exploring possible longer-term solutions.'

Above all, the engagement programme showed that the public is prepared to engage in strategic debate about the railway. As we shall see on the following pages ("The Public's View on the Role of the Railway", p.59), they are focussed on six big themes. And the public also have strong views about the importance of a long-term vision for the future of the railway ("The Public's View on the Future", p.80).



The public's view on the role of the railway

From the engagement programme, six big themes emerged about how the public see the role of the railways. Across all regions, for all participant groups, these six themes were consistent. Together, they reflect what the public values about the railway – and provide the building blocks for a future vision of the railway.



What follows is a wide range of quotes from the workshops, which capture how the public expressed their views on each of those themes.



There is a clear link in people's minds between the railway and economic dynamism, growth and success. People are quick to talk about jobs, business, money and wealth, as well as the UK's place on the global stage:

"The UK wouldn't be as economically viable without the trains." BIRMINGHAM

"The railways keep industry moving: deliveries, packages, people." LONDON

"It provides vital energy to the economy: without the rail network, the economy would collapse." NEWCASTLE

"The role of the railway is as a support for all business; small, large, and products as well as people. It's a connecting thing: it's the artery of the whole country." GLASGOW

"The UK would suffer in terms of foreign investment without the railways. Wealth and trade would not be attractive in the UK." EXETER

"We thought it would be catastrophic, financially, socially and on business, if there was no railway system. People would not be able to go to work and run their businesses. There would be an impact on tourism. We looked at the effect on the economy as a whole and on certain people's jobs. There would be a lot of unemployment." WOKING

When people imagined the UK without the railway, they spoke of a loss of economic competitiveness. It signifies a nation that has become backward-looking, an economy that has failed to re-generate itself and another symbol of British decline on the world stage:

"We're a trading nation and our biggest trade is with Europe. We've got to be on a par with them. And their networks are superb. And if we've not got a railway that's on a par with them then we're not competitive." GLASGOW

"It would make the UK look archaic without a railway." LONDON

This dialogue demonstrates an awareness and appreciation that the role and purpose of the railway today is to underpin and reinforce our place in Europe and internationally as a modern, global, progressive country that is growing in prosperity.



The role of the railway is greater than simply getting from A-to-B, according to participants: it is about keeping people connected. There was a strong sense in the workshops that the consequence of a country without railways is isolation. So the role of the railway may be thought of as a “glue” – uniting people’s important relationships, as well as providing connectivity for the country as a whole. The railway makes people feel part of something bigger:

“The railways are like oil, keeping the machine of the UK going.” GLASGOW

“You’d lose contact with friends and family without the railway.” CARDIFF

“Britain would become more localised. You would not be able to travel such far distances. You would have a local economy, rather than a national economy.” LONDON

“When you get out at Paddington, there’s hustle and bustle. I like being part of it.” EXETER

In addition, people recognise the significance of the railway as a connector between communities and city hubs, not just between people:

“A lot of jobs have moved up from London to Glasgow; Newcastle is a big hub as well. I imagine companies are going to want to spread people out with various hubs across the country – in which case, they’re going to need to connect those hubs up and the railway link is definitely a way companies are going to prefer to move people around.” GLASGOW

“It’s a good link to airports. It’s a link to the world, really.” CARDIFF

“It’s an infrastructure network. It links towns, villages, cities.” NEWCASTLE

“The railways keep industry moving: deliveries, packages, people.”
Commuter, London



UNIVERSAL ACCESS

People often talk about the railway as if it were a “public good”: just as the NHS is seen as offering universal access to health irrespective of income or insurance, so the railway is believed to have a role in offering universal access to freedom to travel, irrespective of region, age or income. Not everyone can own or drive a car. Not everyone can afford to fly. But most people can travel the country by train:

“Without a railway there would be greater inequality. People who get trains may not be able to insure a car. It’d make travel more elitist without the railway.”

BIRMINGHAM

“It’s universal. A child can ride the train, but not drive. It’s more evened-out.”

LONDON

“It’s the freedom of choice. We would not be able to use it if we wanted it. I would not want to live in a society where you do not have that choice.”

WOKING

“People rely on the train - like OAPs, it’s their only way of going out and seeing people. The social aspect is as important as the industrial.”

LONDON

“It would damage families to have no railway: elderly people with no other transport, families who don’t have a car – it would be more difficult to visit people.”

EXETER

“Mobility is important to people. It’s losing an aspect of mobility, if we lost the rail.”

NEWCASTLE

“The railway is a social service – that’s what it needs to be in the future. It needs to be accessible to all – and with more links.”

GLASGOW

TRAIN TIME

Many people feel that a special quality of rail travel – that sets it apart from other forms of travel - is that it provides time to work or to read, day-dream, socialise or cement business relationships, as they like. People can relinquish control to the driver. So in comparison to the car, it is often seen as more relaxing. Travelling on a train gives back time – a commodity which is seen to be in short supply for almost everybody:

Time to use as you like

“Trains give you downtime. You have more time to read the paper or a book. I find car journeys tiring. But I actually look forward to the start of the day because I can do something I enjoy.” LONDON

“When I’m driving, I’m thinking about all the things I could be doing and not doing them.” BIRMINGHAM

“It’s getting time back for yourself – we always take a picnic and enjoy it.” GLASGOW

“It’s a sociable way to travel.” NEWCASTLE

“Togetherness. You’re spending a couple of hours on the train. You can guarantee you can speak to the person opposite. If you’re in the car, you’re more stressed out. On the train, if everything’s running properly, it’s a nice social couple of hours.” CARDIFF

“Someone else is in the driving seat.” WOKING

“Obviously, it’s not safe to drive back when you’ve been drinking. It’s more relaxing to sleep on the train.” CARDIFF

“You take notice of what you’re seeing on a train, unlike when driving a car: it’s more relaxing.” BIRMINGHAM

“Just sitting back and watching the world go by.”
NEWCASTLE

Productive time

“In business, time is money. On the train you can do your work... If you have to travel, then going by train is better than the car, because you can do some work on the train. You also arrive more relaxed.” BIRMINGHAM

“One of the key themes is productivity. A lot of people work on the train as they travel. I travel to Newcastle and it takes four or five hours, so I work all the way.”
LONDON

“It’s not stressful, as opposed to driving. If you’re going to meetings, you can take a computer on there, relax, set yourself up.” CARDIFF



“We’re a trading nation and our biggest trade is with Europe. We’ve got to be on a par with them.”

Small business, Glasgow

A common concern about travel is cost: it is increasingly expensive to travel by car because of the costs of petrol, parking and hidden costs like insurance. In addition, for many people, roads are strongly associated with unpredictability, emotional stress and danger. The railways are seen as essential to avoiding even more congestion on the roads. So, for most people, an important role of the railway is to offer a genuine alternative to car travel.

“You need to look at the alternatives to rail. Fares are going up, but how much will it cost in 2015 for a full tank of petrol? I’ve moved to rail because it’s actually cheaper for me. Fossil fuels are running out.” BIRMINGHAM

“I’d rather see a couple of railway lines than duel carriageways.” EXETER

“More cars would bring the roads to a standstill.”
GLASGOW

“It would be chaos without the trains – negative, a stand still. Gridlock everywhere.” MANCHESTER

“You want the train to be the number one choice in terms of transport. With a car, you want to drive because you can get exactly to where you want to go. To do that, the train needs to be more reliable, more cost efficient.” NEWCASTLE

A greener, more sustainable travel solution

“There are environmental benefits... It’s an alternative to the car and congestion.” WOKING

“Greenery, wildlife, countryside... with road, it’s about noise, congestion, aggression.” EXETER

“With trains it’s about peaceful, greenery, colourful and vivid countryside... with roads, it’s about noise, congestion, pollution.” NEWCASTLE



A MODERN NATIONAL IDENTITY

The British railway is something people want to be proud of. In almost every workshop there was someone with a passion for engineering or history who talked about the leading role that British design played in the past; other participants were quick to pick up this theme, expressing the aspiration that Britain should win back its leading position - and that the railways should be part of this. Often, issues of national identity surfaced through comparisons with other national rail systems, which were perceived to be superior in some way. The public desires a railway that symbolises progress for the country.

"You see in places like Japan and France and Switzerland they have these incredible trains that go twice as fast as ours. It makes me wonder why we're spending money on the same old things that aren't working, instead of looking at different modern options that will keep up with the times." CARDIFF

"We have good science and engineering in this country; we should use it." EXETER

"That's what the government should be putting forward. They shouldn't say, 'Hallo, Mrs. Perkins, sorry, we're going to put this through your backyard.' They should tell the nation, 'Look where we are now. Look where we were twenty years ago. Look at what we can achieve.'" BIRMINGHAM

"Without the railway, the UK would be seen as backwards: unconnected to itself and to the rest of the world." GLASGOW

"Even Italy has better railways than we have." LONDON

"We want to be proud of our trains, like in Japan." NEWCASTLE

"We want the prestige of having a better system to compete on a Euro-stage. Trains are faster in France and Germany." NEWCASTLE

"It's our railway. It's for us to use. It's British, it belongs to the people." BIRMINGHAM

Hard choices and trade-offs

Participants in the workshops were asked for their views on some of the difficult decisions and trade-offs that lie at the heart of the railway system today. They were briefed on the following choices:

- Capacity versus performance
- New capacity versus updating existing infrastructure
- The impact of more freight on the lines versus more passenger trains, etc.

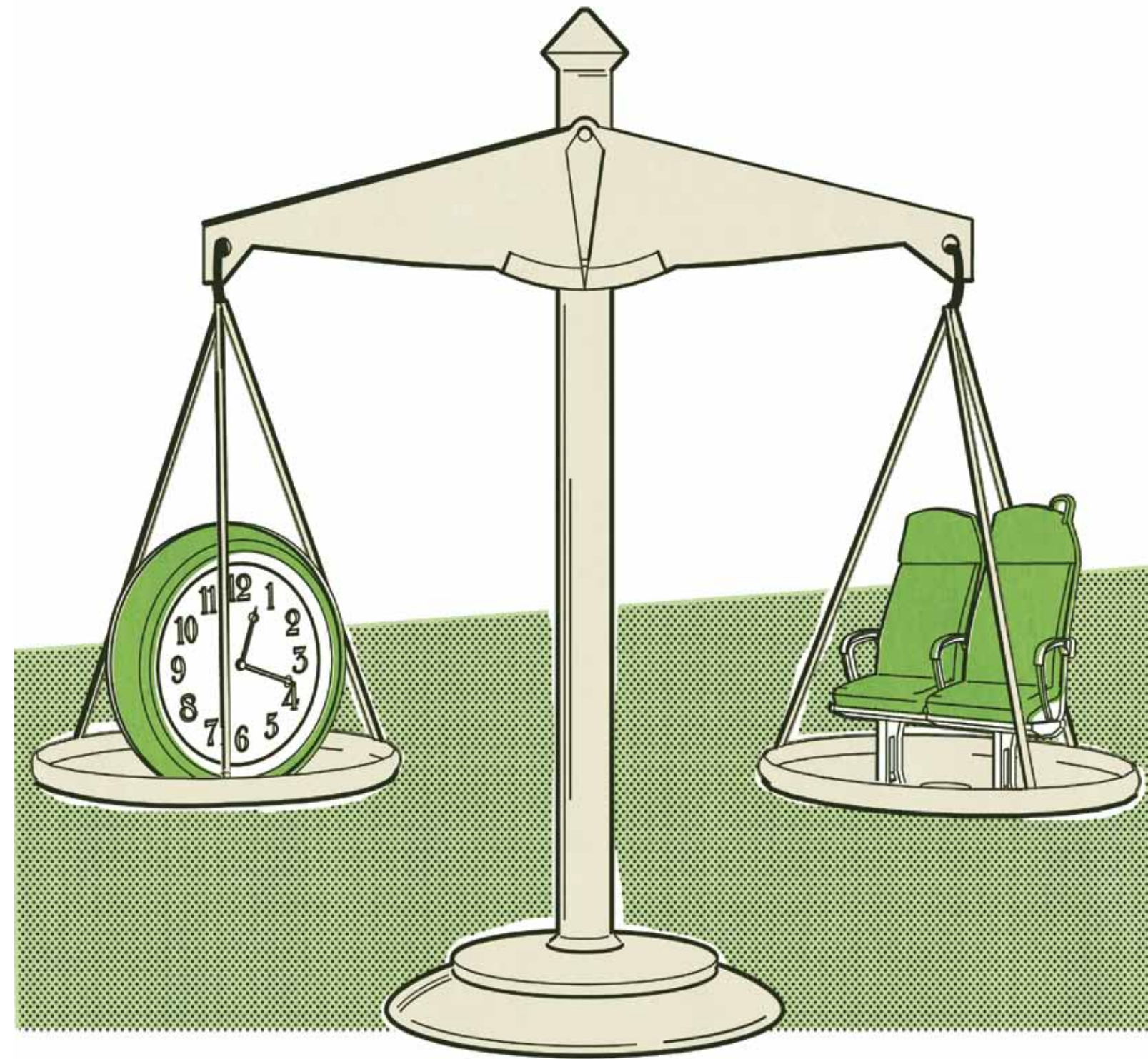
By explaining the growth of traffic on the network and then enabling people to consider the inter-relationship between different priorities - specifically, speed, quality of experience, punctuality, reliability, frequency, intercity/commuter, freight and rural services - the participants began to understand the tension between the various choices.

Armed with some of these issues, they were then asked to step into the shoes of those who operate the railway and come to their own views about the priorities for the future.

Performance versus capacity

As the discussion unfolds, people start to understand why the trade-offs and tough choices exist, and begin to engage with the difficult process of prioritising and decision making.

At first, the instinctive 'no brainer' choice is performance – but as the conversation continues, capacity becomes more of a preferred option. The dynamics of the argument between performance and capacity is illustrated over page.



Performance

Most people say they would rather have certainty over their journeys and plan for them, than worry about not getting onto a train or having to stand up. This is particularly true for commuters and those for whom there is not a frequent train service, such as rural residents:

“We’d rather be on the train than on a platform waiting for one. It was a unanimous vote: we’d rather be on time.” NATIONAL WORKSHOP

“Trains that run on time is the Number 1 choice.” CARDIFF

“An assured service is better than a sketchy one.”
MANCHESTER

“If you get good performance, people will get on the trains and then train companies can invest in capacity.”
LONDON

“You can’t say to your boss, ‘I’m late, but it’s OK because I got to sit down’.” LONDON

Capacity

For those who have more flexibility, they can work around performance issues and would rather have a good quality of experience on the train itself:

“As a commuter, I’d prefer to have a seat, calm, and know that I’m going to get where I’m going. Rather than the stress of wondering if I’m even going to be able to get on the train.” CARDIFF

“We’re not using the trains for small journeys, we’re building a day around train travel where we can build in lateness. We want a comfy seat, to be able to work, have a table for laptops.” NEWCASTLE

As the discussion unfolded, many people began to feel capacity is the over-riding issue – and that, without an increase in capacity, performance improvements will be limited. Choosing capacity felt to them the longer-term solution:

“We went for capacity because we just want a seat at the end of the day. When you step back, you need to invest in the future really.” BIRMINGHAM

“Having capacity would increase performance.” EXETER

“There will be more and more people on rail. So what else can you do but improve capacity – and hope performance holds up.” LONDON

Some participants had experience of disruption leading to improved service and increased capacity and were quick to provide positive feedback:

“On the line that was created from Edinburgh to Glasgow via Bathgate, it had a really clear economic benefit on the whole area. It went from undesirable to the place to be.” GLASGOW

“I live at the end of the Jubilee line and I’ve had to put up with three years of upgrades and works. After three years, it has been worth it.” LONDON

“With the East London Line the regeneration and local pride is palpable and it’s happened in such a short amount of time.” NATIONAL WORKSHOP

Top-of-mind questions for the public

The public repeatedly asked a number of questions during the workshops. Hearing the answers – and being armed with more information – seemed to help people better engage with the challenge.

WHY CAN'T WE HAVE DOUBLE-DECKER TRAINS LIKE EUROPE TO IMPROVE CAPACITY?

Our Victorian bridges make double-decker trains impossible without re-building all the bridges or significantly lowering the tracks under them, which would slow down the trains in order to manage the incline.

WHY CAN'T WE HAVE LONGER TRAINS TO IMPROVE CAPACITY?

We can. However, it would only be a short term fix because the density of traffic already on the existing lines means they would soon fill that additional capacity.

WHY CAN'T WE GET TRAINS TO STOP AT SMALLER STATIONS TO IMPROVE THE SERVICE FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES?

We can. However, that would slow down the inter-city services considerably because they use the same tracks.

WHY DON'T WE PUT FREIGHT ON THE TRACKS AT NIGHT TO FREE UP SPACE ON THE NETWORK DURING THE DAY?

At night, there are around 3,500 maintenance and operations staff working on the lines for planned maintenance, renewals and upgrades. If that work

could not be done at night, we would have to close sections of the network totally during the daytime to get access to the tracks.

WHY CAN'T WE USE ADVERTISING ON TRAINS TO FUND THE INVESTMENT NEEDED?

Advertising would not raise the kind of money needed to pay for modern infrastructure.

WHY DOESN'T THE INCREASED REVENUE FROM THE GROWING PASSENGER NUMBERS FUND THE NECESSARY UPGRADES ON THE RAILWAY?

They do, in part. Operators of profit making lines make payments to the government (agreed when the license fee is granted) to fund rail projects, including maintenance, upgrades and subsidies for loss making lines.

WHY DOESN'T THE INCREASE IN REVENUES FROM GROWING PASSENGER NUMBERS REDUCE THE NEED FOR FARES INCREASES?

There was a long period of under-investment on the railway in previous decades. The investment over the past ten years has been used to make up for that, making the railways safer and more reliable. But as more people take the train, so more investment is needed for maintenance and new projects to modernise the system. A proportion of passenger fares are paid to government to pay for those improvements and for the continued running of loss making services.

“Short-term pain for long-term gain: building a foundation for the future.”

Small business, Manchester



The public's view on the future

The public were asked about their views on the future. Overwhelmingly, they showed strong support for the need to take a longer-term view of the railway than we have today. To stimulate debate and get an understanding of people's priorities, participants were presented with three models for the future of the railway, with indicative associated levels of investment.

- Model 1: basic maintenance – requiring little or no more funding than in today's framework.
- Model 2: basic maintenance plus upgrades to the existing lines – requiring some additional investment.
- Model 3: basic maintenance plus upgrades to the existing lines plus new lines – requiring considerable additional investment.

The participants were asked to work in groups to make their decision about what was needed to create the railway of the future, against the different models. There was some lively discussion around these options. At a personal level, there was much debate between the different perspectives. But when asked to come to a view about the future requirement of the railway, there was a strikingly high degree of agreement.

Given these choices, the majority of people voted for higher levels of investment, i.e. Model 2 and Model 3. This was a strongly expressed view in every workshop in every region - even when presented with the challenge of it requiring additional investment. When asked to defend their choice, people looked to the long-term benefits and the overall economic and social prosperity of the country, over the immediate loss that they may incur by way of disruption and increased fares or taxes.

The following pages summarise the main threads of the debate.

Model 1: basic maintenance

A few people chose Model 1 – the lowest possible investment level, representing basic maintenance to support the existing infrastructure. There were one, two or three voices in each workshop. We wanted to ensure they were heard, even though it meant encouraging an individual to speak up often against the prevailing view of their discussion group. It was important to do so both to capture the specifics of the case they were making and also to counter any preconception that the workshop might tacitly be requiring people to support the case for higher levels of investment.

People who chose this option typically did so because they didn't see investment as a realistic choice in the current economic environment or because they did not trust the industry to deliver:

“Within the budget for the country, I don't think we should be investing a lot of additional money into the railways. I don't think it's the biggest problem area. If I had the Government's money, I can think of more things to spend it on than the railways.” NATIONAL WORKSHOP

“We won't put any more money on the ticket until the high speed train, electrified line, better stations, new trains and more trains are in place. Once all this is done, we can move to Model 2. We'd be happy to go to further models, but only if those conditions are met.” EXETER

“I felt that some of it was about confidence. We'd put all this money in with all these promises, but will it actually happen? I'd rather have a little bit and get by. As a small business, while I'm waiting and going through this inconvenience, can I survive?” LONDON

Often, people who chose Model 1 initially would shift their preference during the course of the discussion, influenced by the debate around them. They did not persuade others to their case.

Model 2: basic maintenance plus upgrades to the existing lines

The arguments for investing in Model 2 centred around the need for improvement, tempered with a sense of caution given today's economic climate and an anxiety about how the improvement will be funded:

“We chose Model 2 because the timescale for the scenario is 2025. With Model 3 you have too much too soon. Model 1 is too little too late.” NATIONAL WORKSHOP

“In terms of the principle, we did prefer the Model 3 option, but we're realists... The second option is a compromise but it's more achievable and likely to succeed. We have to bear in mind the economic climate and this investment would add to the austerity measures.” NEWCASTLE

“It's sensible and practical, especially given the slowness of the recovery economically.” EXETER

Model 3: basic maintenance plus upgrades to the existing lines plus new lines

There was strong support for the need for a longer-term view of the railway than we have today. These are some of the voices from the national workshop:

“It's worth investing in the future now.”

“We have to start thinking in the long term of where we'll be in 2025. There's no point in just putting a little bit of money in. We have to start thinking long term.”

"It's short sighted to think it's not a good idea to do it. Without the railways and various industries that rely on them, we'd damage the economy."

"We need to invest heavily to catch up on years of underinvestment. We need a bigger vision of the whole issue."

That view was echoed in the workshops around the country and was the key factor for the groups which chose the Model 3 option, which was always the majority:

"At some stage, we have to get ahead of the game."
BIRMINGHAM

"Short term pain for long term gain. Supply and Demand. You have to reinvest. It would be good for tourism. It would bring us together with Europe."
CARDIFF

"In the long run, it will be cost effective. The other two options are just propping something up, not addressing the problems. Short-term pain, for long-term gain: building a foundation for the future."
MANCHESTER

This perspective was shared across different interest groups, including those who do not use the trains themselves:

"We don't think we can afford not to invest - because we'll all be beneficiaries at some point... We need a one-time investment hit, over fire fighting."
COMMUTER, LONDON

"We felt that it's essential for the survival of businesses and long term investment in the UK economy. New lines would over time improve both capacity and performance.... It would increase availability for leisure and also international tourism, which again helps the economy. It's something worth fighting for."

SMALL BUSINESS, LONDON

"We decided to go with the higher of the options, because we think society would benefit from the investment, so it has a knock-on effect whether we use the trains ourselves or not."
NON-RAIL USER, LONDON

The groups advocating Model 3 were asked to make their case to the other participants for their decision. It was striking how, in each instance, they brought together a number of different arguments in their concluding remarks. They wanted to put forward a considered view and were fully engaged in the debate:

"We have to think of the long term. Investing in the railways creates more jobs... You can't just put a little bit of money in. In a couple of years, you'll be back to where we started from."
LONDON

"We're talking about a massive capital project that will stimulate jobs. We need to promote overseas investment. We want to build this network and leave a legacy for our kids. It will be an opportunity for putting pride back in our country."
EXETER

"We want to invest in the economy and invest in local communities by creating a better railway. There's the opportunity to build skills, grow the manufacturing base and spread our reliance from the South East."
CARDIFF

"We realise there's an argument for spending that money: we would get a more efficient and better service to be proud of, that people would use. It would take people off the roads. It would be a great economic gain."
BIRMINGHAM

Observations from Network Rail Employees

Network Rail employees attended each workshop as observers unidentified initially and then responding to questions. Their feedback on the dialogue was very consistent, with the same themes resonating across the country. The over-arching themes which made an impression on them were as follows:

THE GOODWILL OF THE PUBLIC AND THEIR READINESS TO ENGAGE:

“My over-riding impression was of a positive feel good factor towards rail when put in a national context.”

“Enquiring as to what people want was very well received and stimulated very informative debates.”

“I was pleasantly surprised at the goodwill towards Network Rail. The engagement was very positive.”

THE NEED FOR EXPLANATION ABOUT HOW THE RAILWAY NETWORK OPERATES:

“We need to explain how the railway systems work, eg: many hadn’t realised we need to maintain the network and need access to the tracks to do that.”

“They were fascinated when they heard what we actually do – the number of people out on the track at night doing maintenance, the number of cables we have and how it affects service, the number of services we enable, and so on.”

“There was a lack of understanding of who is responsible for what – they did not care: to them, it is the railway system.”

THE PUBLIC APPETITE FOR STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS TO THE SYSTEM OVERALL:

“There’s an overwhelming desire to invest to fix the system and improve performance.”

“I was surprised that non-rail users were prepared to pay for the railway because they saw the railway as vital for avoiding other forms of transport becoming over-crowded and unusable.”

PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF THE RAILWAY:

“There was lots of recognition that the rail network is vital to the growth of the economy: that it will have a positive impact on our status as a progressive forward thinking country competing in the global market.”

“For small businesses, disruption was a key concern – ie: if trains don’t run, I go out of business. It was that stark to them.”

“The economic and social benefit that rail provides came across very strongly.”

“My over-riding impression was a positive feel good factor towards rail when put in a national context.”

Network Rail Employee

“It’s worth investing in the future now.”

Commuter, Woking

Conclusion

In all workshops, across the country, the result was striking: whether commuter or non-rail using taxpayer, small business owner or rural resident, people are ready and willing to engage in a debate about the future of the railway. Given the weight of negative perception often expressed about the railway, that could not be taken for granted. However, it did prove, repeatedly, to be the case.

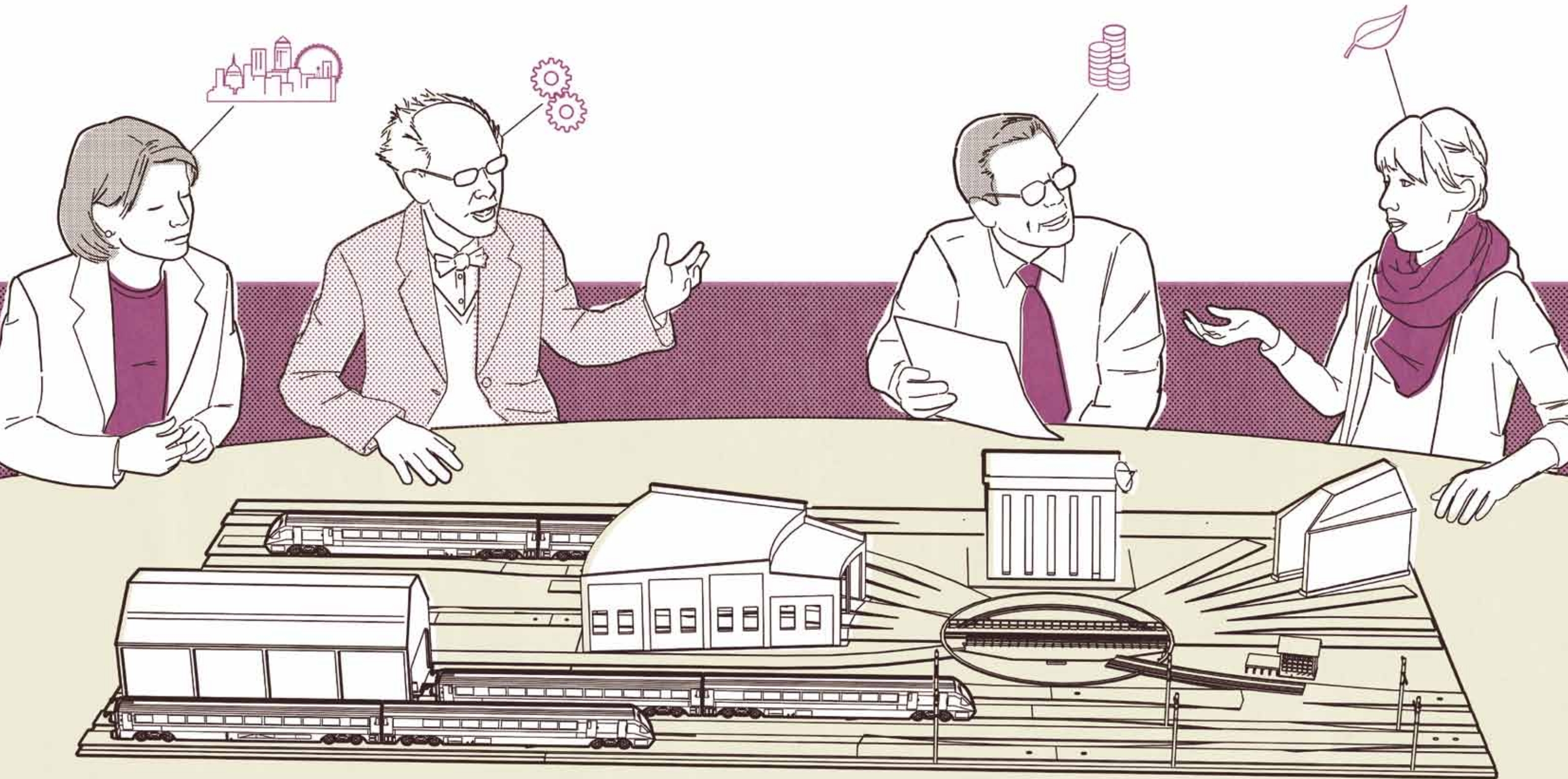
Also, people have a view about what the railway is for. The themes which emerged were consistent across different interest groups and across the country. The railway’s role in underpinning prosperity and economic growth was at the forefront of everyone’s minds. Also, connectivity and universal access. At its best, people value time on a train as a distinctive quality of rail travel. They expressed a strong desire for the railway as a symbol of pride in the contemporary world.

Nevertheless, there is a significant lack of trust in the industry, which shows up in people’s response to even official statistics on improved services. It demonstrated that factual argument alone will not win public support; showing empathy for the individual passenger experience will need to play a key role in any wider engagement. The other major inhibitor to a more strategic level of debate was lack of information about the realities of today’s railway, including how the money is spent – which, in turn, reinforced mistrust. However, the public engagement workshops demonstrated that when they are provided with explanations, people are interested in the future choices for the nation’s railway.

Overall, the public are ambitious for the future of the railway. Even recognising the challenges of disruption and of funding, they want the industry to develop a coherent, long term view.

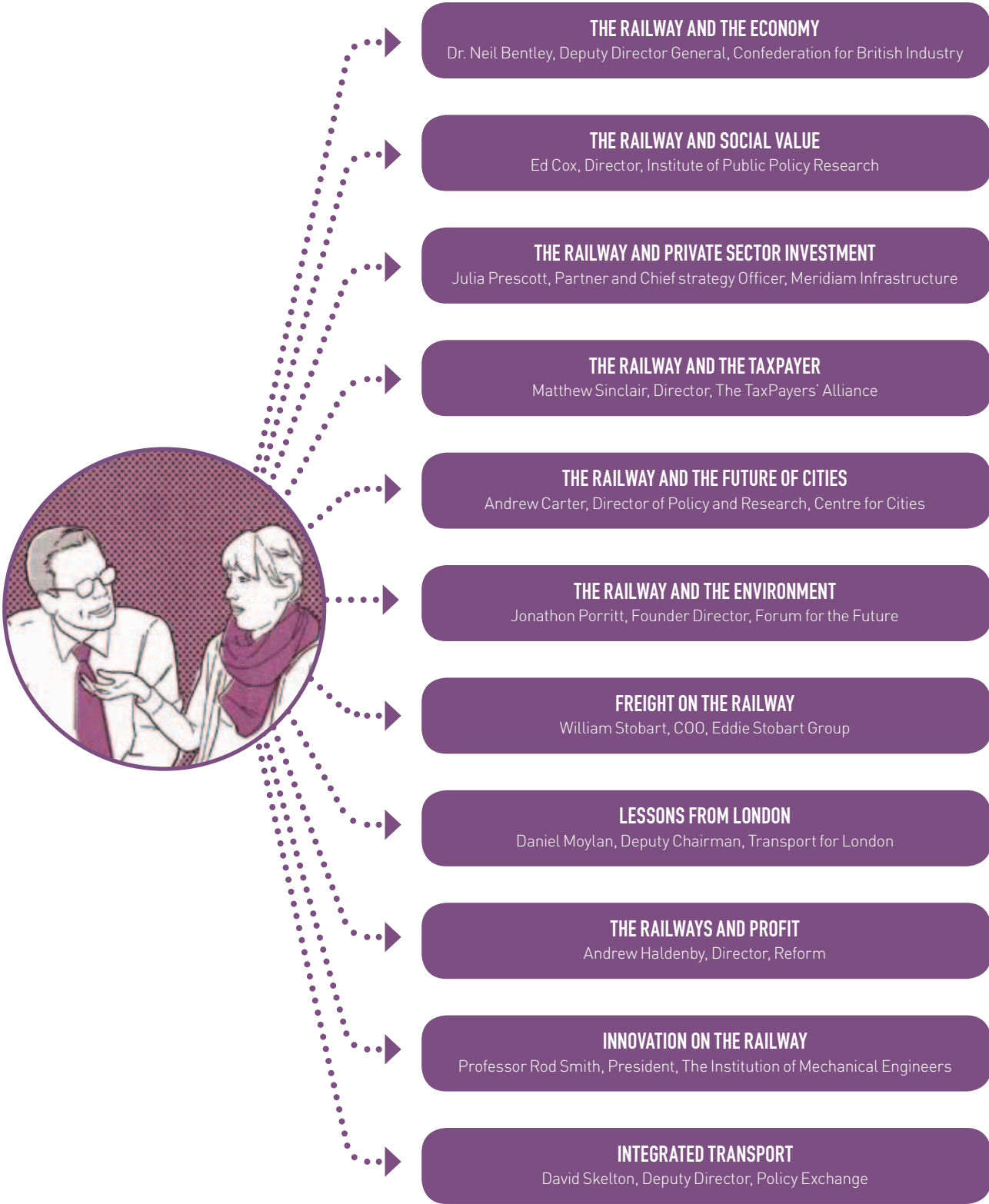
ACACIA AVENUE is an international qualitative research consultancy, committed to giving clients intelligent answers to difficult strategic questions, enabled through rigorous evidence-based research. They align the commercial needs of organisations and businesses with the contemporary needs of their customers or more broadly, with the general public.

4. Perspectives on the railway



The role of the railway – setting an agenda

Each article in this section offers an expert point of view on a key aspect of the railway’s role in Britain – such as its importance to the economy, the role of the private sector, the social value of railways, and the role of rail in the transport of freight. There is much discussion of these topics individually, but they are seldom considered as parts of the same whole. Just as with the public engagement, it is only by seeing how the dynamics of these topics interrelate that we can create a strategic vision for the railway. So bringing all these different perspectives together into one place sets an agenda for national debate about our railway’s future – with the intention of initiating further, broader conversation.



The railway and the economy



Dr Neil Bentley
Deputy Director
General, CBI

History reveals a compelling link between transport infrastructure and economic prosperity. New and faster connections enable economic opportunities, making regions and markets more accessible for business and the public alike. The UK's railways spread like arteries throughout the land, carrying customers and freight, and feeding supply chains to pump trade and growth around the country. In my mind, the future of the railways and the future prosperity of the country are inextricably linked and I welcome this report's focus on how to make our rail network fit for the next generation.

A network vital for business, supply chains and investment

We all have an interest in the future shape of our railways. With the government looking to boost economic recovery through business investment, regional rebalancing and export growth, reliable, efficient and affordable infrastructure plays a critical role. With a first-class rail network we can help to maintain the UK as a world-class business location.

But poor rail infrastructure can present barriers to efficiency and growth. If we cannot secure the necessary investment, we risk national and international repercussions. Without good connections, businesses struggle to meet the demands of customers and suppliers, and those vital connections facilitating trade and business are lost. More importantly, without ease of access between markets to catch the eye of investors, we lose international credibility and attractiveness as a place to invest.

CBI surveys show that four in five firms believe the quality of transport infrastructure has a significant impact on their investment decisions. Every week I talk to CEOs in different regions and sectors – and every week I hear this message reaffirmed. This is a priority for business and a priority for me – and this is what should be driving our discussions about the future of the railways.

Getting the policy right to drive investment...

Business has three key demands of a future rail network: more capacity, increased reliability and greater connectivity. The government's recently published Rail Command Paper is a step in the right direction, recognising the importance of an ownership and maintenance framework that incentivises sustained investment. Business welcomed the government's intentions to implement many of McNulty's recommendations. Plans for closer working between Network Rail and the train operating companies to drive down inefficiencies will bring benefits for passengers and freight-users. Similarly, a greater degree of flexibility within franchise agreements and the possibility of extending them for longer periods should boost investment in capacity and quality.

But this is only a stepping stone. The Command Paper merely sets the intended

“New and faster connections enable new economic opportunities, making regions and markets more accessible for business and the public alike.”

Dr. Neil Bentley, CBI

direction of travel. While it ticks the right boxes, it also invites further questions. How is this future rail network going to integrate with other transport modes? What kind of investment is required, and is funding assured? Will the network connect people and goods as seamlessly with local transport infrastructure as with international hubs? Many of these questions are already being played out in discussions about the government's flagship project: the new high speed rail link (HS2).

...and supporting the 'big ticket' projects to deliver capacity and boost growth

In giving the green light for HS2, Transport Secretary Justine Greening evoked the spirit of the Victorian age and their passion for ingenuity and engineering. While this comparison may be premature, it cannot be denied that HS2 could be a shot in the arm for capacity and performance and an international advert for UK construction.

High speed rail could benefit the UK economy for many decades. Are the time savings important? Of course, but speed is a means to a more important end: unlocking capacity. With HS2, the capacity released along the existing West Coast Mainline will free up space for increased rail freight movements. Passenger demand on the West Coast mainline is set to double by 2033, so HS2 will come not a moment too soon.

But the real prize as far as business is concerned will come from the link to the north. To squeeze the greatest benefits from this project, the second phase of high speed rail needs to be constructed as quickly as possible. That will start to connect our northern cities and regions, hopefully sparking a rebalancing effect.

Links to HS1 and our international gateways, such as Heathrow, will eventually give businesses easy access to global markets. But with countries such as China forging ahead with infrastructure investment, one cannot help but feel impatient about the timescales required to deliver our more modest proposals.

A vision for the future of the railways

If we are to deliver HS2, and any other 'big ticket' projects necessary, we need to look beyond the rail industry for the solutions. We need a competitive construction sector with the right skills and processes, combined with a faster planning system that enables sustainable development. Most importantly, we need a shared vision from government, business and the public about the kind of railway we want in this country. This report is a valuable contribution to this most important debate.

The railway and social value



Ed Cox
Director, IPPR North

Any 'fresh vision and purpose for the railways ... which carries a stronger mandate from the public' must consider social value. But there's a danger when discussing social value that it's considered to be less important than - or even detrimental to - economic value. Whilst competitive market economies provide goods and services for profit, this need not preclude wider benefits in the lives of individuals or society. Indeed, the impact of the railways over two centuries shows how economic and social value can be delivered in tandem.

This is broadly recognised by the public, government and the rail industry. In its Green Book, HM Treasury has a definition of value for money which takes in the 'whole-of-life costs and quality' of goods and services. This is reflected in the Department for Transport's New Approach to Transport Appraisal (NATA) which sets out a methodology to consider the wider economic benefits of transport investment. But in reality balancing social and economic value is complex and contested.

The early railways were promoted almost exclusively by commercial interests that were largely for local benefit and the transportation of freight. The amalgamation of railways that became the London and North Western Railway in 1846 enabled it to become the largest joint stock company in the world later in the century.

But appetite for passenger travel, coupled with a number of fatal rail accidents, eventually led to rail regulation and a growing awareness of wider social value. The Railway Regulation Act of 1844 introduced minimum standards for rail passenger travel and also a provision for compulsory services at affordable prices. The introduction of 'third class' compartments was accepted grudgingly by rail companies, but proved revolutionary in its impact on passenger numbers and greater mobility.

This historical example illustrates the most important dimension of social value: access to opportunity. Whilst there's a relative dearth of research on transport and social inclusion, almost by definition a lack of access to jobs and services is a key factor which leads to disadvantage and exclusion. Variations in the use of different modes of transport sit at the heart of this debate. Growth in car ownership (and the relatively limited growth in motoring costs) has benefited a significant majority. But with nearly two-thirds of those in the poorest 20 per cent of households not owning cars, for them, this has meant an increasing reliance on public transport where costs have soared in recent decades.

So at present, Britain's railways contribute little to widening opportunity amongst lower income groups. Many would argue that the problem lies with the structure of fares and subsidy.

After many years of significant underinvestment, annual public subsidies to rail increased dramatically to nearly a third of one per cent of GDP between 1996 and 2010 – an amount comparable to France, though less than Germany. Yet, average fare costs in the UK are still high in comparison with other European nations. On other social outcome indicators, including convenience, speed, comfort and environmental performance, again, the UK performs badly against European comparators.

Nowhere is the debate about rail subsidy more acute than in rural areas where, by virtue of their low population density, it's deemed unprofitable to provide frequent services to many stations. In its responses to recent Department for Transport consultations, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) called for greater emphasis on micro-franchising and smart, integrated 'regional' ticketing systems - pointing to the success of such approaches in Germany in growing rural train use.

There's also significant disparity in transport infrastructure investment from region to region. Analysis of the National Infrastructure Plan shows that more than 84 per cent of major transport infrastructure funding is currently being invested in London and the South East, compared with just 6 per cent in the three Northern regions.

Whilst a case is often made that transport investment in the South East has the social value of reducing congestion in the capital city, it nonetheless seems unjust that per capita investment in London and the South East might be five hundred times greater than in the North East. This problem is rooted in the system by which transport projects are appraised with clear emphasis on technical cost-benefit calculation.

Research by the LSE shows that at present there are 40 per cent fewer passenger journeys between Leeds and Manchester than we might expect, largely as a result of poor infrastructure and high costs, and research by the OECD cites transport infrastructure investment as a critical factor in driving economic growth in lagging regions.

To conclude, social and economic value belong together. A railway system that privileges short-term profitability and economic efficiency over wider social benefits is likely to fail in terms of long-term economic and environmental improvement. Equally, a railway provided for social good alone is unlikely to survive. The current system in the UK has yet to strike a good balance and railways overseas have much to teach us. History shows a greater emphasis on social value might ultimately lead to substantial economic benefit.

“Two centuries
of railways show
how economic
and social value
can be delivered
in tandem.”

Ed Cox, IPPR North

The railway and private sector investment



Julia Prescott

Partner and Chief
Strategy Officer,
Meridiam

"Making growth happen means there is no alternative to investing in greater capacity and better connectivity". (Railway Command Paper 2012).

To realise this aim, given the fiscal constraints faced by the UK Government, substantial new capital investment in the railways will involve the private sector. Indeed, in the UK's National Infrastructure Plan published in November 2011, utilising private investment is proposed as one of the strategic solutions for the development of UK infrastructure.

The nature and form of this investment is vital in determining cost and acceptability. Network Rail already makes substantial use of private sector funding from the capital markets through Network Rail's 'AAA' rated Debt Issuance Programme ('DIP'). This private sector funding is focussed on the corporate borrowing of Network Rail rather than specific development requirements of the railway network. The 'DIP' raises low cost funds but there is a limit to the amount that may be raised in this manner from investors without some form of diversification. The risk of this funding is focussed solely on Network Rail. Alternative private sector funding through a concession type structure for new infrastructure could offer investment diversification and public private risk sharing. One early example of utilising private funding was the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. Due to lower than expected usage, private funding proved unsustainable on a pre-construction basis and funding of this stage was ultimately undertaken by the Government. HS1 has now been sold to the private sector but on an operating concession basis supported by payment through track access charge contracts over a 30 year period. A view has developed that this is the optimum way forward for new development – that the construction period is funded by the public sector, and then a concession is refinanced for its operating period through the capital markets. Whilst attractive in theory because institutional investors are drawn to invest in an operating period such a solution does not engage private sector investment from the earliest stages of development and underestimates the capacity for capital markets to take risk. The critical need for funding is at the earliest stages of capacity creation, rather than an injection of funding into existing capacity. Outside the UK, major rail projects involving new construction are being financed through private investment on a concession basis. In France in 2011, the €7.8bn 340km Tours-Bordeaux, €3.4bn the Bretagne Pays Loire 214km and in 2012 €1.6bn Contournement Nimes Montpellier high speed railways were financed by a mixture of private equity and banking debt together with significant contributions from the public sector in the form of guarantees and grants.

Funding new construction railway schemes with private investment is complex but not impossible. The risk parameters need to be ringfenced with defined interfaces and precise accountability.

“Without substantial private sector investment, major rail schemes will be cancelled or delayed.”

Julia Prescott, Meridiam

Following the demise of the monoline companies who provided insurance policies to cover project risk, and allowed the capital markets investors to purchase 'AAA' risk, little project funding for public private infrastructure has been made available from the capital markets, the majority coming from the now constrained banking markets. However given the lower returns and higher risk seen in the sovereign debt market, institutional investors are more attracted to direct lending to infrastructure. Ratings are critical in determining investor interest from the capital markets – the lowest acceptable rating for such infrastructure lending is likely to be 'BBB+' or equivalent, although an 'A' is preferred. These ratings provide a clear comparator in relation to other opportunities. 'BBB+' ratings for infrastructure development generally is obtained on a post construction basis only. However ratings could be enhanced from the outset of construction through a variety of methods – bank guarantees for the construction period, strong security for contractor liability, parent company guarantees, liquid security to cover any delays. Corporates could provide enhanced support (in the US markets contractor support can be equivalent to 100% of the contracts).

This type of support has been achieved in the Canadian infrastructure market where due to the level of contractor support at the construction stage projects are rated at 'A', with institutional investors providing debt from the capital markets from the earliest stages of the creation of new infrastructure capacity.

For the operations period, a form of 'availability' payment structure will be necessary to achieve the appropriate rating, potentially through track access charge contracts either from Network Rail or potentially through one of the new regional companies.

The achievement of rates as high as 'BBB+' for concession based debt funding could revolutionise the funding of major infrastructure developments on UK railways – it would provide access to the enormous pool of long term investment available from institutional investors and provide a substantial additional source of funding for developing the UK's railways alongside the 'DIP'. There is little doubt that unless substantial private sector investment can be attracted into major rail schemes they will be subject to cancellation or delay that will lead to further congestion on existing services. New infrastructure will ease congestion, reduce journey times and increase comfort. They may also benefit from the financial disciplines of the private sector including accountability for specific projects, a holistic bid and competitive risk process, long term whole life costing of projects, including maintenance requirements and a long term – rather than short term – approach.

The railway and the taxpayer



Matthew Sinclair

Director, The
TaxPayers' Alliance

How does rail policy best serve the taxpayers' interest?

All rail passengers are taxpayers. And most taxpayers use the rail network to some extent. But there is a distinction between the interests of the broad majority of taxpayers who have to pay any subsidies that the railways receive and the relatively concentrated populations who use them the most. Except in the centres of major cities, most people do most of their travelling on the roads, and that is not going to change. The disparity in the scale on which the two modes are used is so large that even if the railway could handle twice as many passengers, and took on all of those journeys from cars, that would remove less than 10 per cent of traffic off the roads¹. Rail policy needs to limit the financial exposure of those taxpayers who don't use the trains much as well as deliver a cost effective service for the customers who use the railway the most.

Research for the TaxPayers' Alliance in 2009 looked at relative transport spending and found that rail transport received 10 times more spending per passenger kilometre than the roads, and eight times more per freight tonne kilometre. While some money is returned by rail to the Exchequer, it isn't on anything like the scale of the over £30 billion a year paid in motoring taxes.² Given that whether or not someone drives is largely a result of population density,³ that set of policies is simply redistribution from people on average incomes in the suburbs and rural areas to relatively fortunate commuters and those travelling long distances.

All this might not matter for the rail industry if it was politically stable or provided a good service for its passengers. However the cut in Fuel Duty and cuts in rail subsidies announced within the last year show that politicians are going to respond to the interests of motorists. Particularly if plans for a new high speed rail line go ahead which would vastly increase the level of taxpayer subsidy to the rail industry, there will be continued political pressure to show that subsidies to the rail industry are kept under tight control and that motorists are getting a better deal than they have been. At the same time rail passengers feel ticket prices are unfairly high and want to see fares cut even if it means less investment in the network. But passengers feel this (and complain about it) because they pay for tickets regularly. Taxpayers do not feel it (and hence do not complain) because it is taken from them quietly through PAYE. Policy makers must not ignore this disparity.

To offer taxpayers a better deal, we need to do two things: provide realistic services at a realistic price on the different types of railway – intercity, commuter and regional; and deliver better value for money in the sector overall.

Intercity trains face competition from other modes of transport, over relatively

1. Department for Transport, Transport Statistics Great Britain, 25 November 2010
2. Available here: <http://www.taxpayersalliance.com/transportspending.pdf>
3. Based on census statistics comparing population density and probability of driving to work

short distances cars, and over longer distances planes. At the same time that part of the network is already largely able to cover its costs. Passengers should pay the full price of their tickets which do not need to be regulated as closely. More flexibility about the prices would also help to limit overcrowding at points where the price changes sharply, like the Friday overcrowding on the West Coast Main Line after 7pm. In order to control the cost, the aim should be to get the best value out of the existing investments and avoid overly expensive and disruptive new major projects right now.

Commuter fares do not have to rise too much before the services fully cover their costs. Once they do that the best way to manage the pressure on commuters is to ensure that they have a decent set of choices in terms of type of ticket. Given that there is less competition from other modes of transport this is also the part of the network where it is most important to get the regulatory structure right.

Regional trains are the most dependent on subsidies. With declines in rural bus services and train services likely to suffer we need to look at more imaginative responses than a simple trade-off between lousy, irregular services and very high costs to the taxpayer. More demand responsive transport such as used widely in Europe would cost less than running lots of largely empty trains and buses and better serve those passengers who do really need the service. Over time that can mean much better value for money.

To achieve all that there will need to be a structure that improves incentives in the sector. Happily serious thinking about how that can be achieved is taking place. At the moment, regulation can't work effectively because Network Rail is a monopoly. Network Rail regions should be separated in order to foster competition much like in the water and electricity industries. The ORR should regulate each of them separately. The Network Rail regions should be privately owned so that the shareholders will have, and be able to exercise, an incentive to drive management to increase efficiency which is lacking in the current structure. The public service aspects of rail would be maintained through the existing franchise system. As part of the 2011 McNulty Review, it was estimated that the efficiency gain from introducing separately owned regional infrastructure managers would be worth a present value of over £10 billion.⁴ That kind of saving will make it easier to satisfy the needs of both passengers and taxpayers.

There is a limit to the patience of taxpayers who don't use the railway but are asked to pay for them. As well as shifting the burden from taxpayers to passengers we should also be looking to increase productivity through allowing more commercial incentives to operate so that the overall cost is reduced and the trade-off is less unpleasant.

4. Available here: <http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.10420>

“We need more than a trade-off between lousy services and high taxpayer costs.”

Matthew Sinclair, The TaxPayers' Alliance

The railways and future of cities



Andrew Carter

Director of Policy
and Research,
Centre for Cities

Cities are the backbone of the UK economy

As the economist Ed Glasear demonstrates in *The Triumph of the City*, cities make us 'richer, smarter, greener, healthier and happier'. As the UK economy continues to struggle to recover from the financial crisis the future of the UK will increasingly depend on the success of its urban areas.

Already containing most of the country's private sector employment and high skilled workers, cities will be critical to getting the UK back on the path to private sector growth and job creation, particularly when public sector spending for the foreseeable future will be limited.

In the short term, all cities will need to grapple with weak economic growth, increasing demands on services and cuts to local authority budgets and workforce. In the longer term, economic trends such as globalisation and technological change mean that competing with emerging economies will become ever harder.

UK cities will increasingly need to compete in higher-value, knowledge intensive markets. Many of these higher-value businesses cluster together in cities that offer access to specialist skills and proximity to key markets and suppliers – so-called "agglomeration benefits". These benefits particularly apply to a range of sectors including publishing, media, IT, universities and financial and business services.

Transport can play a significant part in helping to facilitate more economic activity

The greater the number of people and businesses that can be accessed within a given amount of time, the greater the size of the agglomeration benefit. This depends not only on physical proximity, but also on a city's transport infrastructure. Typically, the better a city is connected internally and externally, the better placed its residents and businesses are to take advantage of economic opportunities. This is because an effective transport system:

- supports business interaction;
- connects people to jobs and widens the labour market;
- opens up new markets for companies; and
- increases competition leading to higher levels of productivity.

This is one of the main reasons that London and surrounding cities such as Reading, Milton Keynes and Cambridge are very strong economic performers. In this way, investment in transport infrastructure can increase agglomeration benefits.

“Transport investment is proven to support economic activity within and between our cities.”

Andrew Carter, Centre for Cities

Transport also has a key role to play in helping to connect people to jobs

The geography of jobs across Britain is changing. Over the past 20 years higher skilled jobs have increasingly concentrated within city centres. At the same time, more than 60 percent of UK cities have experienced a shift of lower skilled jobs out of their city centres and into their hinterlands. This has led to increasing levels of mismatch between where lower skilled people live and where job opportunities are located.

Transport has a key role to play in helping overcome this problem, particularly when considered alongside other policies, such as training, that are aimed at helping individuals access jobs.

Investment in transport infrastructure needs to be a critical part of the Government's solution to economic growth

Although Government spending will be reducing for the foreseeable future, government will still have comparatively significant spending power. Therefore what the Government chooses to invest in will have an impact on cities and towns across the UK.

Transport investment is proven to support economic activity within and between our cities. It delivers real benefits in terms of supporting business interaction, connecting people to jobs, opening up new markets for companies, increasing competition and productivity, and widening the labour market.

As we look to the future there are two issues that Government and cities need to continue to make progress on. First, as it becomes possible, Government needs to increase the share of the capital investment budget spent on transport. This means, as well as committing to increase the public investment budget in future years, it is also vital that the Government makes the most of the current smaller infrastructure budget over the course of the Spending Review period. Working closely with cities on how to prioritise this spend will be important.

Second, Government needs to devolve more powers and funding to cities to give them the flexibility they need to respond to their distinctive economic challenges. The examples we've seen emerge through the 'City Deals' process - initially in Manchester and hopefully soon in Leeds - are blueprints that other cities should learn from, adapt and implement without delay.

The future of the UK is dependent on its cities. And cities are dependent on their people and businesses. Ensuring cities provide the infrastructure people need to make the most of future economic opportunities is a challenge we all need to address.

The railway and the environment



Jonathon Porritt

Founder Director,
Forum for the Future

It is easy to forget that there was a time when the future of rail looked very doubtful. With car ownership booming in the 1960s, Britain's comprehensive rail network was drastically cut back and looked as if it might fade into history in the face of all the seductive attractions that the car seemed to offer.

London's planners even prepared to create a network of elevated urban motorways which would slice through large parts of the city at rooftop height. You can still see what this might have looked like in the shape of the M40 Westway, one of the few parts of the plan actually constructed. As to the impact on the city's inhabitants, there is still a major complex of social housing in South London with entire windowless facades. These brutal "barrier blocks" were built along the expected route of one of the motorways, as an enormous defensive wall to shield the people from the vehicles.

Happily, these illusions did not persist for very long. We soon realised that you cannot just keep pouring ever increasing numbers of cars into cities that were never designed for that purpose.

More recently, other equally fundamental limits have emerged, which affect the future of the car not just in Britain's cities, but worldwide.

The most topical of these is visible outside every petrol station, in the shape of record fuel prices. These reflect two harsh truths. Firstly, we are now competing for the available oil with billions of people in the emerging economies who understandably want to consume it the way we've been doing. Secondly, we are failing to increase oil production to meet this demand. We just can't find enough new sources to replace the depletion of existing oil fields.

But the most important limit to car based mobility is one that we have already hit head on: climate change. It is now becoming apparent that the global emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases (which are the principal cause of accelerating climate change) are already higher than the worst-case projections made just a few years ago. Almost all governments now recognise they have to reduce transport related emissions – even if they're not yet making a very good job of it!

So the limits to personal mobility are here - and UK car traffic has, in fact, been dropping since 2006. At the same time, rail has boomed, as the renaissance of our city centres has brought increasing demand for just what rail does best – delivering large numbers of people down tight corridors into our cities. And rail, if managed correctly, is not nearly so exposed to the sustainability constraints that affect cars – indeed, these are rails strengths. It is a much more efficient user of space and energy, and with electric trains already the norm, has the potential to be independent of fossil fuels, depending of course on

progress in decarbonising the electricity grid. But there are a number of critical factors to take into account in translating this potential into a low carbon transport future.

First, rail does not exist in a vacuum. It is part of a much wider system, dependent on the car parks, buses, bikes and 'public sphere' that feed the stations, at the same time interacting with the motorways and airlines it competes with. Despite this, there is an obstinate reluctance to plan this transport system in any kind of co-ordinated (let alone genuinely integrated) way. The tale of the bus that leaves the station just before the train arrives remains depressingly familiar, and the wretched treatment of cyclists by some train companies and stations shows just how far we've got to go to match best practice in most European countries.

Then there is the question of whether rail is truly low carbon. It certainly can be, if it is electric and run on low carbon power sources. But too many of our trains are still elderly diesels, and the most efficient new cars can now compete with these trains on carbon intensity. If rail is to remain the low carbon mode of choice to help drive down overall emissions, we must prioritise new electrification schemes - as well as the grid decarbonisation which is so critical for all sectors of the economy.

Finally, we need to remember that transport is not an end in itself, even though policy and appraisal methods tend to treat it as such. What we need is not to get from A to B for its own sake, but to access the goods, services, employment opportunities and people that we need to live full and prosperous lives. There are many (and increasing) ways to do all of these without physical transport. Rail may have many sustainability advantages over road, but these will be wasted if we fritter away available capacity and push rail into its own limits.

Above all we must avoid the "predict and provide" approach which inflates demand and proved so self-defeating for roads. Achieving a sustainable transport system means managing demand across all modes, while facilitating other "virtual" ways of accessing what we need.

By prioritising action on these factors, rail will be in a position to consolidate the position it quite rightly lays claim to, as the backbone of a low carbon transport system.

“Rail is the backbone of a low carbon transport system.”

Jonathon Porritt, Forum for the Future

“1 train,
1 locomotive,
and 1 driver
can move the
equivalent of
more than 30
lorry loads”

William Stobart, Eddie Stobart Group

Rail freight: trucks trolleys and trains



William Stobart

Chief Operating
Officer,
Stobart Group

It probably surprises people that the UK's most famous road haulage company now operates a growing network of rail services. Yet it is no accident that the Stobart Group strapline is "The Future of Multimodal Logistics," as we see rail playing a key role in the continued development of our transport operations.

Our involvement in rail extends back by more than a decade. We first started thinking about how rail could complement our road haulage operations in 1997, as much for circumventing road congestion black spots as to address growing concerns about fuel prices and sustainability.

At the time, the railways were still emerging from privatisation, with encouraging signs of investment in the network, new traction and rolling stock, and in new rail freight interchanges. Indeed, we were one of the first occupiers of the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT), which has since become the national hub for our rail service network.

Plans were drawn up during 1997 for a network of in-house trainload services, moving freight between DIRFT and terminals in Scotland, the South East and South Wales. There was also the prospect of making a push into mainland Europe via the new Channel Tunnel. The speed with which the plans were developed was in no small part due to support from Railtrack, starting a partnership which has continued to this day with Network Rail.

We took our plans for rail to an advanced stage over the following 12 months, but despite strong support from the rail industry and Government, we remained concerned that rail service quality was still some way off the level necessary to satisfy our requirements and those of our major customers. With some reluctance we put our plans on hold.

In 2003, our involvement in rail took a major step forward, when the company linked up with WA Developments, a civil engineering company which specialised in rail. The catalyst for our first dedicated train service came from one of our major customers, Tesco, which decided that its new distribution centre at DIRFT would be served by rail, as well as road, for moving goods out to stores. The tender for the distribution contract required that all bidders include rail services in their submissions. Drawing on our previous experience and backed by our in-house rail engineering capability, we developed our proposals and secured the initial 3-year contract.

Working closely with Tesco, train operator DRS and Network Rail, we set about creating a new rail service specification, using the same robust performance regime and contingency plans as Tesco would expect from its road hauliers. Our first service for Tesco started in September 2006 between DIRFT and Grangemouth, linking distribution centres in DIRFT and Livingston in Scotland.

The service attracted considerable media interest, not least because the DRS locomotive was repainted in Stobart livery and christened “Eddie the Engine”.

Leaving at 06.31, the train was scheduled to arrive at 16.06 in Grangemouth, from where the goods were delivered by road to Livingston. The train left Grangemouth at 18.11, arriving back at DIRFT at 02.57. The service was fully-loaded in both directions, with Tesco providing 100% of the volume travelling north and 90% of the southbound volume, while other Stobart customers provided the remaining southbound volume. The DIRFT – Grangemouth services continues to operate.

The hard work of planning the service paid dividends, as the robust performance regime assisted in achieving a reliable operation. Contingency plans were tested in February 2007 when a Virgin Trains *Pendolino* unit derailed on the West Coast Main Line at Grayrigg; whilst most of the freight trains to and from Scotland were cancelled over the following days, the DIRFT – Grangemouth service remained in operation, our careful choice of containers allowing them to operate via a diversionary route on the Settle to Carlisle line.

As the Midlands – Scotland services became established, the environmental benefits were highlighted in Tesco’s annual Corporate Social Responsibility report, stating that the rail service had produced a net saving in CO₂ of nearly 3,000 tonnes in its first year of operation against movement of the equivalent traffic by road.

Today, we operate a network of rail services across the UK, linking DIRFT with Scotland, the South East and South Wales, together with a service from Glasgow to Inverness. We also operate a major rail container terminal at Widnes, served by 4 giant overhead gantry cranes, which handles up to 7 trains per day of third-party container traffic from Felixstowe and Teesport.

We continue to advance the scope of our rail freight services, often in extremely challenging conditions, from moving time-sensitive fresh produce over 1,000 miles from Valencia to London, through to plans to move local store deliveries by rail over distances below 100 miles.

The ability of rail to move the equivalent of more than 30 lorry loads using 1 train, 1 locomotive and 1 driver, saving around three-quarters of the fuel and emissions of road haulage, produces a range of benefits across operational, commercial and environmental perspectives. Whilst trains can never replace trucks as the prime mover of our distribution operations, we do see our rail service network expanding wherever the combination of distance, volume and accessibility makes rail the logical choice of mode. To paraphrase a hackneyed phrase, the train is increasingly capable of taking the strain!

Lessons from London



Daniel Moylan
Deputy Chairman,
Transport for London

London as we know it exists because of the railway. In a matter of decades London grew from being a small, densely packed, mildly insanitary city with boundaries not much wider than those that existed in medieval times into one of the largest conurbations on earth. Investment in London’s railways, and later the Tube, succeeded in knitting together a disparate range of towns and villages, with the suburbs growing between them.

And that pattern of travel still determines the social and economic life of the capital today. Around 80 per cent of all journeys into central London, the UK’s most highly productive area, are on the Tube or the National Rail network.

No other city in the United Kingdom is so dependent on rail for its economic life. Getting to work by car is just not an option. And understanding what makes London tick is important, because London produces such a high proportion of the nation’s wealth and generates a “tax export” to the rest of the country calculated at up to £19 billion a year.

So the first lesson from London is that London matters to all of us throughout the country – and that rail matters very much indeed to London.

The next lesson is that, if you stop investing in rail, your assets and the service you can offer quickly go backward. In the post-war period, London’s population went into decline. Governments of the day thought this was irreversible. Some even welcomed it (falling for the false idea that the decline of the greatest wealth producer would mean a more equitable distribution of wealth for others). As a result, investment, always tight following nationalisation, dried up almost completely. But, London recovered and its population began to grow again.

By the 1990s, while funds had been made available for some grand projects (such as the extension of the Jubilee line and the upgrade of the West Coast Main Line), the older Tube lines and much of London’s suburban rail network were in visible decay. Staff morale and the regard of the public for their transport system hit new lows. This was all a consequence of continued failure to invest in maintenance, renewal and expansion.

The third lesson from London is therefore really the logical conclusion of the first two: that investing in rail in London is vital to the economic life of the whole country: a pound spent on rail in London benefits the rest of the country directly (because so many of the inputs to the rail system are sourced from outside the capital), but even more dramatically indirectly, because London needs its rail system to thrive and London’s thriving is good for us all.

In recent years, investment has started to flow again. The upgrades of the Jubilee line and Victoria line are complete, the East London Line has been

“80% of all journeys into London are on the tube or rail network.”

Daniel Moylan, Transport for London

transformed into London's newest overground railway, and the Docklands Light Railway network has been expanded in length and capacity. Soon London Overground will complete an orbital route around London. Massive station expansions are in hand in central London to deal with existing congestion and to prepare for Crossrail. And other major projects are under way. These include Crossrail, Thameslink, and the upgrades of the Northern Line and the sub-surface Underground lines. And there is more to come. The remainder of the Tube network requires upgrading and much needed, although still inadequate, investment in London inner-suburban railways is planned.

Few doubt that having a single democratically accountable voice for London has been a significant contributor to unlocking this stream of investment. So the next lesson is that accountability matters. A Mayor who is acutely dependent for re-election on the performance of the transport system has a keen daily interest in ensuring it operates well and in a way that suits the needs of passengers, not the operators or the bureaucrats. The contrast in service, station ambience and recent passenger growth figures between the London Overground network and the stopping services offered by train operating companies elsewhere within the capital show what can be achieved when the turbo-charge of democratic accountability is added to the transport system.

That is why the Mayor has been so keen to take on responsibility for franchising some of London's key inner suburban networks. Not everyone in the rail industry or the Department for Transport supports this, but the objectors are remarkably reticent in coming up with their own proposals for bringing these services up to London Overground standards. Things might be different if they were directly and democratically accountable to their passengers.

And the final lesson is that we should not allow, as has happened so often in the past, temporary economic difficulties to bring investment to a halt. It is rarely remarked that what distinguishes the current Government from so many of its predecessors when faced with hard times is that it has striven to maintain investment in infrastructure even while reducing Government indebtedness. That is a lesson we should all take heed of.

The railways and profit



Andrew Haldenby

Director, Reform

In spite of the obvious differences, the debates on rail privatisation and public service reform have become linked. The most fiery reactionary voices use the example of rail privatisation as a warning against public service reform, especially the greater private sector delivery of health companies (say). This demonstrates the unfortunate politicisation of the public services debate, and how ill-informed the political debate can be. But, looking more objectively, what are the real lessons for public services of the involvement of the private sector in rail.

One issue is simply the involvement of the private sector at all. Here the political temperature varies according to the public service concerned. For roads, there is no political opposition at all to the use of the Private Finance Initiative to build roads (although that may change if existing roads are “privatised” in some sense, for example through the introduction of road pricing and the transfer of their ownership to private providers). For rail, no major Party supports the simple renationalisation of the railways (although RMT, the rail union, does do so). For health, all major Parties agree that private companies should be able to treat NHS-funded patients, but it is highly controversial. For state education, no major Party would allow private companies to deliver schooling at the taxpayers’ expense, although this is allowed for some children with special educational needs (and it is common in other countries).

Despite these differences, it is true (and regrettable) to say that the political debate has turned against the involvement of the private sector in this Parliament. The cause celebre has been the NHS, and specifically the Government’s proposed reforms of that service. It is a separate story, but suffice to say that when the Government came under pressure over a specific point of its reforms (how healthcare should be commissioned), it began to give ground on every politically sensitive part of the health debate. This included the involvement of private companies. Yet private companies have been delivering care very effectively to NHS-funded patients, with extremely high rates of patient satisfaction. In other countries, their use is routine. In the region of Valencia in Spain, healthcare in districts with private sector delivery costs 25 per cent less than districts with public sector care.

Despite this, under great political pressure, the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister now routinely say that there will be no “privatisation” in the NHS under their watch. While they technically mean the introduction of private medical insurance (on the model of America), of course the implication of their words is that there should be less private involvement in the delivery of healthcare at all. Private health providers are already withdrawing from the NHS market as a result. The shift in NHS policy is casting a shadow over the whole of public service reform, and certainly strengthens the hand (for what it is worth) of the opponents of the private sector in railways.

Another issue is charges for public services. Rail is funded partly from the taxpayer and partly from charges (in the form of fares). The level of fares is sensitive but their

“Private companies are nervous of broadcasting their successes in public service delivery.”

Andrew Haldenby, Reform

existence is not. Here, rail is clearly ahead of other public services. The nearest comparison is charges for higher education (i.e. tuition fees), but these remain extremely controversial. Otherwise the idea of charging of healthcare and state education remains off limits. Charges for healthcare (sometimes called co-payments) are common in other European countries, as a way of making patients more conscious of the costs of services before they demand it.

A further issue is the ownership of public services. The private ownership of public services is politically sensitive. The structure of Network Rail is itself a product of the wish to avoid a traditional for-profit model, with external shareholders. There is intense interest within Government in alternative ownership models for other public services too. This is often discussed under the heading of “mutuals” i.e. organisations that are owned by their employees rather than by shareholders. Francis Maude, the Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office, has spoken of a wish that, by the end of this Parliament, around 1 million of the 5 million public sector workers should be employed in mutually-owned organisations. In reality this will be next to impossible to achieve. The Government faces an extremely difficult trade-off. Should it give temporary advantages to new mutuals to encourage their establishment, which distort the market for public services? Or should it allow mutuals to compete with other providers, in which case they may well feel at a disadvantage, and not enter the market at all?

This whistle-stop tour of UK public service policy suggests that what is needed above all is a coherent policy across Government. Such a policy would allow the benefits of private sector involvement to be brought to bear more widely. Through greater clarity, it would, eventually, turn down some of the political heat. Clearly politicians would play a central role. Their choice, and it is a difficult one, is to use their mandate to speak on behalf of millions of consumers (with diffused voices) even if that poses a challenge to the producer interest (which is smaller but has more political muscle). But there is a responsibility on the private sector too. At the moment private companies, I think, are somewhat nervous of broadcasting their successes in public service delivery. They are happy to list them privately, when bidding for contracts for example. But they are chary of engaging in the public debate, for fear of trespassing into politics and embarrassing public sector clients and friends with talk of their greater efficiency. I would ask these companies to have more confidence. Their experience and success (and failings too, of course) should have tremendous influence on the development of policy. There is a healthy trend towards transparency in government at the moment, and a more open debate about public service delivery would be consistent with that.

Innovation on the railway



Professor Rod Smith

President,
The Institution of
Mechanical Engineers

Today's railways are very different from their ancestors because innovation and new technologies from a wide range of applications have been successfully incorporated over the years. There is no reason to suppose that this trend has ended.

Much is said about the door-to-door journey and the overall effect of the combination of transport modes on the passenger and the environment. It is rather pointless to improve only one part of the journey, whilst others go unimproved. Our own experience tells us that because of long and awkward connections, many people choose the convenience of cars. However road congestion will get worse and the costs associated with motoring will rise, not only fuel but parking and probably road charging. Therefore one of the key tasks of a 21st-century railway will be to assist in reducing the extra time and the extra inconvenience: tasks just as important as reducing the point-to-point rail journey time.

There are of course physical constraints. It is very difficult to anticipate some kind of beaming up process, so eagerly anticipated 50 years ago. However, if private transport becomes more difficult, what may happen to public or public/private transport? The urban taxi may well become less personal and more like a minibus. Strangely this can already be seen in developing countries. The advantages are prominently of cost. Simultaneously, minibus taxis will reduce congestion because of higher passenger loading.

Although the railway is the greener alternative, it only achieves this if the load factor is high throughout the day. The busiest period is the commuter peak, which defines the equipment needed to operate the service and adds to the urgency to fill relatively empty trains throughout the day. Differential pricing is extensively used, but more strategies are needed to smear out the peaks and to reduce the need for 9-to-5 commuting. Information technology will assist in this venture, but we need to rediscover the role of the walk-on railway, versus the straitjacket of advanced purchase fares if the utility of the railway is to be fully exploited.

Readers might be forgiven for thinking that this is not a particularly radical agenda. In many ways they are right, in that there are few major technical changes which will impact on railway operations in the next 20 to 40 years. Of course, railways will continue to adopt from other technologies, for example information technology which will enable, the purchase, distribution and use of tickets to become much easier and more flexible. The operations of trains may also be improved by the adaptation of in-cab signalling which will determine a moving block in front of the train and hence increase both safety and capacity. Nevertheless, the routine methods of reducing rail congestion remain things

like the separation of routes by the elimination of switches and crossings, the use of the same platform every time at terminus station and the elimination of conflicting movements through the building of flyovers and multiple tracks.

All this is expensive and the railway will have to come to terms with its high fixed cost and maintenance base. Few railways in the world operate at dense enough capacities to generate a profit solely from railway operations after infrastructure costs are covered. Recognition of this fact may well have reduced the zeal to privatise non-profit making railways in Western Europe and elsewhere. In many cases state subvention is the only thing keeping most railways solvent. Hard choices need to be made between the closure of unremunerative operations and the increased investment levels needed to make the more intense parts of the network operate smoothly, efficiently and therefore profitably.

Perhaps the most radical idea that I can suggest for the medium term, is the development of a national transport policy which will consider simultaneously how road use by buses, coaches, taxis, private cars and freight can be allied to the use of railways, aeroplanes and shipping. The question of airport capacity which is a threat to business efficiency can have many alternative solutions if a national network of high-speed railways spreads the geographic base of a hub airport away from the already overdeveloped southeast.

At the other end of the travel scale, the local commuter journey, in many cases now impossible on public transport, may well be achievable if urban areas develop truly integrated public transport with sufficient attractiveness and efficiency to entice car users away from their cars. Ideally, trains and buses should enable people to complete their journeys efficiently both in terms of time and energy use. This requires a rational discussion about where our energy sources are to come from in the future and how we can generate electricity while reducing carbon dioxide output.

We already have at our disposal the most efficient fuel railway traction, that is, electricity. But how this electricity will be generated in the future, will define how green the railway can become. Continuity of plans to further electrify will help reduce costs and it should not be beyond the wit of engineers to develop low-cost supply systems particularly for lesser used lines. But this needs to happen within the context of a broader national conversation about the various energy options available for the future, including renewable energy and nuclear.

“It is rather
pointless to
improve only
one part of
the journey,
whilst others
go unimproved.”

Professor Rod Smith,
The Institution of Mechanical Engineers

Integrated transport



David Skelton

Deputy Director,
Policy Exchange

An ambitious transport policy is a fundamental part of any growth strategy. A first rate transport infrastructure is absolutely fundamental to the future economic success of the country. The UK needs a transport infrastructure to match its economic ambitions and rail, road and airports all have an important part to play in ensuring that we are a major economic player in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Transport is a major part of the economy. It plays many roles and is a key driver of growth in the UK and across the regions. Effective airport hubs ensure that foreign businesses are attracted to the UK and that we are connected to foreign markets. Our docks, ports and railways are essential to move inputs and final goods into the country and around our regions, as well as being essential to UK firms looking to export. Of course our roads, railways and airports also ensure that businesses and individuals can get where they need to, whether it be for business, pleasure or a mixture of both.

However, it is widely accepted that our transport system is creaking. By the mid-2000s the cost of road congestion in the UK was estimated at £20 billion. The 2006 Eddington Review warned that the UK's transport network was in many places close to capacity and by 2025 the cost of congestion would rise by another £22 billion. The Review also highlighted some of the areas where transport could be improved and put forward areas for potential reform. Little of this has been taken forward.

It's time to realise that elements of transport policy cannot be considered in isolation. There is no point having an excellent road network if our railways are overstretched and our airports aren't good enough to compete with the rest of the world. We don't just need to cater for our transport needs now, we also need to consider what kind of transport infrastructure we might need in ten or twenty years time.

All of our modes of transport are suffering from problems of congestion and capacity – road and rail is overcrowded at peak times and can be underused at other times of the day. In the short term, Government can use demand management techniques to help reduce the pressure on transport networks. Effective use of information might also be key – utilising social psychology ideas such as 'social proof'. Showing people how more pleasant their journey would be if they travelled earlier, making far more effective use of information systems and considering how to optimise responses to overcrowding could all help to deal with road and rail capacity in the short term.

Innovative thinking is required to address these issues in the long term. Clearly, old solutions have been tried and tested and haven't managed to address the

“Our transport system is creaking and by the mid-2000s the cost of road congestion in the UK was estimated at £20 billion.”

David Skelton, Policy Exchange

problems faced by our transport system today. What is also clear is that Government alone cannot afford to solve all of the problems faced by the transport system. Given tight constraints on public spending, it's pretty clear that more needs to be done to leverage private sector finance into infrastructure projects and to reward investors for doing so. This will involve going beyond the current models of public/private partnership and finding new ways of working. It will also require a more forward looking approach to assessing and providing for our transport needs.

At the same time, Government should consider the role that competition can play to ease some problems faced by our transport networks. Airports and rail are both areas that would benefit from being opened up to greater competition – forcing providers to focus more on the needs of users and citizens and deliver improved and higher quality services.

Aviation policy is probably the most high profile and the most controversial element of a modern transport policy. Thankfully, politicians are now beginning to realise the importance of aviation to the economy and the importance of an aviation strategy to any strategy to create jobs and growth. The UK can't stand by and watch its major competitors open up new aviation routes to emerging markets while it remains hamstrung by a hub airport operating almost entirely to capacity. Nor can it ignore the effects on business and tourism of limited airport capacity.

There is little point though, in going for quick fixes or easy, headline grabbing solutions to an issue that is so important to the future of the British economy. An aviation strategy needs to be realistic and focused on our economic needs over coming decades – considering the benefits of a variety of options and deciding on the option that best meets our emerging aviation needs and enables us to compete.

Trains, planes and automobiles can no longer be considered in isolation. Given the importance of transport infrastructure to our long term growth prospects, it is imperative that we consider our transport needs as a whole. Policy makers need to be innovative and bold as they look to create a transport network fit to face the economic challenges of the 21st Century.

Voices of the industry

We invited a range of industry players to join the final workshop in the series. They participated in the debate along with representatives of the public from across the country. What follows are comments from some of those industry players, outlining what they see as their priorities for the future of the railway.

ATOC

ASSOCIATION OF TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

Demand for rail travel is booming, more than at any time in almost 100 years. I want the railway to cater for and stimulate that growing demand by a programme of sustained investment to improve capacity and reliability; and through the industry committing itself to continuous business improvement in areas like customer service, information, ticketing and retailing, and by working together to make the railways more affordable. That way the clear benefits and opportunities that rail travel offers can be enjoyed by an even wider range of people than today.

TRAVEL WATCH

One of our key transport user priorities is 'frequent and comprehensive transport'. London is a rapidly expanding 24-hour city and its people need transport services to match. Capacity must keep pace with a growing population. The programme of upgrades to the Underground must be continued. Rail users need longer and more frequent trains, with more spacious stations and new lines to relieve the pressure. The Mayor must use his powers to bring all our local railways up to the standards achieved by London Overground.

ORR

RICHARD PRICE, CEO

Rail customers and taxpayers have high expectations of our railways and need to be sure they get a good deal for their money. Railways are a long-term business with investment decisions made today having implications for decades to come. That is why it is essential that all players in the industry work collaboratively to deliver a railway that delivers for customers on cost, safety and performance.

CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT:

The era of basing development around roads and cars is over, killed by increasing congestion and the need to tackle climate change and dependence on oil. Future economic development needs to have the railways at its centre - with stations as the gateways and hubs of our towns and cities and the railways as spines along which industry, warehousing and housing are placed. Railways also need to be part of end-to-end journeys, rather than just station-to-station, with cheaper smarter tickets, guaranteed connections and good interchange with other transport the norm rather than the exception.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT

Our rail network matters... to our quality of our life... our national wellbeing... and our country's future prosperity. For this Government it's a simple equation... good transport equals good economics. But, too often, we find ourselves frustrated and disappointed when the cost, punctuality or comfort of rail travel don't come up to scratch. I believe that Government and the rail industry can and must do more for passengers and for taxpayers. Of course, investment has a huge part to play. That is why we've been investing in our transport infrastructure... because that's one of the best ways to support business, generate growth and create jobs. (From Hansard, 8 March 2012, Col. 1028).

PTEG

High quality rail networks are essential if the economies of the major regional cities are to thrive - the rail networks in Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool and Newcastle have seen major growth in recent years which has outstripped that experienced in London. Much of this growth has come directly from taking passengers off the road, but rail is now a victim of its own success as our rail routes are full and the trains suffering from overcrowding. We've squeezed all we can from the existing train fleets and infrastructure and we now need to invest to provide the modern, high-quality urban rail systems which are essential to underpin future growth in our great regional cities.

CPRE

Part of CPRE's vision for 2026, our centenary year, is a revival of rural railways. This is not just to give more people and freight a choice about how to travel, it is also needed to reduce the traffic on roads and the resulting impact on the countryside. Although rail travel has reached record levels, in rural areas the rail network remains a fraction of its former self and stations can be hard to get to. We believe Government and the industry should ensure rural railways are more than just an afterthought, by being as ambitious for them as they are with their plans for cities and high speed rail.

“We want to invest in the economy and in local communities by creating a better railway. There’s the opportunity to build skills, grow the manufacturing base and spread our reliance from the South East.”

Small business, Cardiff

“We want to build this network and leave a legacy for our kids. It will be an opportunity for putting pride back in our country.”

Rural resident, Exeter

Acknowledgements

Network Rail would like to thank the members of the public who took part in the debates around the country, and without whose involvement this programme would not have been possible.

BLAISE PROJECTS DEvised THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME AND PROVIDED EDITORIAL DIRECTION FOR THE REPORT.

Blaise Projects works with companies to develop a narrative about their role in the future, which can be used to support business strategy, service delivery and communications planning. Blaise aims to promote the positive role that business can play in society.

FORUM FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPED THE SET OF SCENARIOS TO PROMPT DEBATE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE RAILWAY IN THE UK, INCLUDING FOR USE AS STIMULUS IN THE WORKSHOPS.

Forum for the Future is a non-profit organisation which works globally with business and government to create a sustainable future. It aims to transform the critical systems that the world depends on, such as food, energy and finance, to make them fit for the challenges of the 21st century.

ACACIA AVENUE RECRUITED THE PARTICIPANTS FOR AND CONDUCTED THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

Acacia Avenue is an international qualitative research consultancy, committed to giving clients intelligent answers to difficult strategic questions, enabled through rigorous evidence-based research. They align the commercial needs of organisations and businesses with the contemporary needs of their customers or, more broadly, with the general public.