

# **Local transport – A view from the summit**

Contributions and insights from  
the first and second Local Transport Summits,  
Oxford 2016 and Manchester 2017

Glenn Lyons\*

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\* Mott MacDonald Professor of Future Mobility, UWE Bristol

## Foreword

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**Planning and delivering successful local transport** involves making sense of transport system supply and demand, reflecting user needs as necessary and advising on how wider social, economic and environmental considerations can be taken into account. It recognises the central importance of connectivity to economic prosperity and social wellbeing in an evolving society, and also the broader impacts transport can have.

This is a challenging task in a world in which multiple drivers of change are presenting new dynamics, opportunities and unknowns. In this context, professional dialogue and constructive challenge to existing approaches and solutions are vital. Such engagement helps ensure that our approach to, and application of, transport planning continues to be reviewed, questioned and potentially revised.

The Local Transport Summit is Landor LINKS's initiative to facilitate this dialogue. We are grateful to the Department for Transport for funding this report by Professor Glenn Lyons of UWE Bristol on the first two Summits. Beyond the high quality discussions that have been made possible by the Summit, this report captures in summary form both a record of the first two annual Summits and insights that have emerged from them. It represents a reference point for what are ongoing developments in thinking and professional practice in a period of significance for the sector and beyond, as transport devolution gives increasing prominence to local transport issues and choices. Our intention is that the report helps to share more widely the matters the Summit has addressed – matters that are now under discussion more widely in the professional community.

We hope it helps to define an agenda for the future of local transport that influences thinking widely and will continue to be developed and refreshed at future Local Transport Summits.

***Peter Stonham,***

*Chairman, Landor LINKS Ltd  
Editorial Director, Local Transport Today*

## Introduction

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This report provides a record of the 2016 and 2017 *Local Transport Summit* – an initiative conceived to focus on the changing landscape for local transport planning, policy and practice and explore the professional challenges being posed as a result.

Getting local transport right is one of the toughest challenges on the transport task list. It involves a mixture of professional skills, political leadership, community and stakeholder involvement, and the efficient but flexible development of available resources to meet a range of objectives, some directly related to the provision of mobility and accessibility, but others that must embrace wider considerations.

The ‘expert’ contribution is a relatively young discipline – by comparison to other professions – still in its early years. It has emerged from the fusion of elements of a number of more traditional professional disciplines addressing physical engineering, planning and operational matters in the area of movement and mobility. As a consequence it lacks a truly unifying template in the sense that it is served by multiple professional bodies, though this can also be viewed as a source of strength through flexibility and an openness to the continuing change that characterises the transport sector. Such change encompasses: the prospect of disruptive technological innovations; future uncertainty about what society will demand of transport; the devolution of governance and decision-making; resource and capability constraints; and questions surrounding the competencies and concepts that are needed to effectively address the transport agenda particularly at the local and regional level.

The importance of being able to foster high level dialogue between transport professionals, and facilitate engagement with other players relevant to the future shaping of transport and mobility, was the spur that led to the creation of the *Local Transport Summit* initiative.

The Summit series has been established as a forum for bringing together senior thinkers and leaders who are committed to making sense of and responding to a changing world, with the interests of local communities and their future at the heart as transport decisions are made. The first Summit was held in 2016 in Oxfordshire with the support of England’s Economic Heartland local authority alliance. The second Summit in 2017 was hosted by Transport for Greater Manchester in the City of Salford. It is intended that the Summit will become an annual event of significance in the transport sector’s calendar.

This report provides a summary record of the first two Summit events. It demonstrates a grasp by the assembled participants of many of the key issues, challenges and opportunities that are faced, and the way these are being tackled in the local context of the host areas. They are not trivial matters. Indeed, addressing them demands an open and exploratory environment – which the summit organisers were keen to provide - and effective communication and engagement with wider constituencies of interest and influence beyond just transport practitioners. There is otherwise the strong risk of them existing in an echo chamber and lacking the agency to make progress and achieve both relevance and validity. With this in mind, while the first Summit laid the foundations by bringing together thought leadership from mainly within the transport planning profession, the second Summit sought to reach beyond only the profession and also showcase the new possibilities that present themselves in an era of transport devolution and political renewal.

The Summit’s first two undertakings have highlighted the uncertainty in context that faces local transport and yet recognised the means by which such uncertainty is starting to be

confronted, and with the potential to turn it into opportunity and achievement. This brings attention to the essence of planning itself – stewardship over helping create a better future. Both the 2016 and 2017 Summits recognised strongly that such planning is not simply a transport matter. A key message is that envisioning the future should begin with a focus on where we want to be, and an agenda of ‘placemaking and people’ as much as ‘movements and modes’.

There does seem to be a broad agreement that a progressive approach to local transport planning will include a need to review, revise and extend the suite of tools and approaches and indeed the very philosophy that underpins transport policy making and the practice and processes that professionals deploy. Such thinking exhibited at the summits is symptomatic of an evolving sector and a transport planning profession determined to mature, and a number of parallel steps are currently being taken to this end.

In looking ahead to the prospect of a third Summit in 2018 it is suggested that attention be given to further engaging younger professionals, starting their journey in the sector, learning from other sectors regarding how to address uncertainty, communication and engagement challenges, and showcasing and constructively challenging the range of scenarios for technological innovation and their potential impacts.

In a period of rapid change, the value of open and inter-active discussion with the flexibility to embrace all kinds of emerging issues cannot be overstated.

### **The context for the Local Transport Summit**

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Landor LINKS, the instigators of the Local Transport Summit, began publishing Local Transport Today magazine just 30 years ago. “LTT” was arguably the first distinct ‘voice’ for those engaged in the planning and delivery of local transport.

2018 marks the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Transport Planning Society (TPS) which itself drew on the emergence of the new community that Local Transport Today nurtured.

At the time of the establishment of both LTT and TPS the web had not long been invented, smart phones did not exist and there was no hint of connected, electric, autonomous vehicles. Mobility as a Service was a phrase not yet coined, although the importance of travel information services was becoming recognised. The founding mission of the Transport Planning Society was around an emphasis on the integration of transport and land use, the recognition of the wider context in which transport decision-making takes place, and encouragement of new thinking on issues such as alternatives to the private car.

It is significant that a key to the formation of the TPS involved gaining the support of four existing major professional institutions, all engaged in some way in the field of transport. These were: the Institution of Civil Engineers; the Royal Town Planning Institute; the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport; and the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation.

All four recognised the overlapping interest they, and their members, had in the field of transport planning. The significance of ‘Local Transport’ in this context has grown materially

in recent decades, and is now a major focus of governmental activity at both political and administrative levels.

In contrast to the rather recent developments above, it is 200 years since the Institution of Civil Engineers was founded<sup>1</sup>.

Why mention such landmarks at the outset to this document? They are a reminder that, in contrast to some other professions, the transport planning profession is still very young and yet exists in a period of change, uncertainty, challenge and opportunity. Efficient and effective *local* transport is, meanwhile, increasingly recognised as integral to people's everyday lives and particularly how urban areas function and thrive. How local transport continues to be addressed will play a significant part in shaping and supporting society, in economic, social and environmental terms.

In many respects the concept of transport planning has been born out of the elements of multiple disciplines that concern transport supply and demand and the role of mobility and accessibility in shaping social and economic activity. This lineage gives rise to a group of professionals for which there is no distinct boundary and, unlike civil engineering, can have no single home in terms of a professional body.

The Local Transport Summit was first launched in 2016 to address key challenges in local transport and provide a *“new approach to discussing and exploring how to take forward an enhanced framework for effective local transport service delivery that meets the changing needs of society, the economy and individual transport users”*<sup>2</sup>. Building upon this first summit in Oxford on 3-4 November 2016, the second Local Transport Summit took place in Salford on 16-17 November 2017. The underlying thinking for this second gathering was *“for those with senior positions and responsibilities to get together to engage and explore the bigger picture that goes beyond just the transport planning profession, involving others with an important input, including political leaders and cross-disciplinary strategic thinkers in an age of exceptional uncertainty”*<sup>3</sup>.

The Summit approach has been intentionally designed to create a forum that fosters knowledge sharing, challenging debate and reflective thinking away from the pressures of the 'day job'. While welcoming wide attendance, participation and contribution has been targeted at those able to bring thought leadership alongside insights from initiatives that are reflective of new thinking and practice for local transport planning.

Oxford and Manchester are locational references for the first two Summits but neither have been confined to the urban centres. The first Summit began with a senior decision makers' forum at Eynsham Hall – an Oxfordshire country house dating back to the 1700s, located 11 miles north-west of Oxford. The insights from this forum were then played back to a wider gathering that continued the first Summit the following day at the Kings Centre, Oxford. The second Summit took place over two days at the Worsley Park Hotel & Country Club, 8 miles west of Manchester.

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<sup>1</sup> And in terms of the longevity of RTPI, CILT and CIHT: 104, 99 and 88 years respectively since they were founded.

<sup>2</sup> Local Transport Today, Issue 705, Page 17.

<sup>3</sup> Local Transport Today: <https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/local-transport-today/news/55083/what-future-for-local-transport-in-an-age-of-rapid-change/>

## Local Transport Summit 2016

The first Summit was organised in two parts. It began with a senior decision makers' forum on the first day. This included a series of briefings, facilitated discussions and a panel discussion. The second day - with a change in venue - was then opened-up to wider participation with morning briefings, a 'question time' panel discussion and a series of workshops.

Senior decision makers were tasked with the following exam question - *"What five key issues could or should most strongly define what is achieved in local transport over the next 10 years?"*. Five parallel group discussions resulted in the following set of responses<sup>4</sup>:

<b>Sharing economy</b> – AirBnB/Uber culture – do we need bottom up open platforms but political willingness?	<b>Where do we live and work?</b> The family demographic – of the future.	<b>Quality of leadership</b> and mayoral roles (and how we accommodate choice)	<b>What jobs</b> are we going to be doing in the future and with what consequences?	<b>Maintenance</b> – predominantly road network as largest asset – working with it more effectively to realise goals
<b>Knowledgeable and engaged public and politicians</b> – speaking a language they each understand of the other	<b>A revival of place</b> – and stronger sense of its meaning	<b>Integration</b> – across modes and with all available technology used to its full potential	<b>Devolution Max</b> – of powers, money, responsibility	Redefining our profession – <b>transport planners as brokers</b> – literacy, accountability, transparency...
<b>Individual wellbeing and health</b> – including social inclusion, nicer places and land-use/transport links to make life more liveable	<b>Clear decision making frameworks</b> which deal with resource allocation, regulation and facilitation of the changing transport market	<b>Data and its analysis</b> – agile inputs and outputs to create a toolkit that is open	<b>Embracing wider behavioural change</b> - shopping, shared economy, car ownership etc. Consumer expectations of choice and their fulfilment (or not)	<b>Mobility management</b> and smart provision, information and use of the network (and is the transport-economy link broken?)

<sup>4</sup> Each row reflects a group discussion outcome

<b>Governance and funding</b> – how to create consensus (bottom up/top down) – how does transport planning regain credibility?	Technology and big data – <b>millennials behaviours</b> in using technologies	Air quality, public health and obesity – <b>quality of life issues</b> driving local transport planning	<b>Housing</b> development, density, parking – resistance to dumbing down	<b>Autonomous vehicles</b> – not passively accepting but shaping and questioning and optimising technology
<b>Understanding</b> and responding to <b>societal heterogeneity</b>	<b>Being brave</b> – thinking and acting innovatively	Holistic planning with particular focus upon the <b>appropriate connectivity</b> to deliver accessibility	<b>Changing skills for a changing world</b> and the consequences for the types of ‘solutions’	<b>Generational change</b> and changing pace of change

Consolidating this further arrived at the following five key themes for future local transport:

- **Derived demand and behavioural understanding** – where we live and work, understanding societal heterogeneity, generational change, jobs of the future, millennials’ behaviour, embracing wider behavioural change, sharing economy
- **The actors involved** – knowledgeable and engaged public and politicians, quality of leadership, transport planners as brokers, changing skills for a changing world
- **Priorities** – revival of place, individual wellbeing and health, quality of life issues, housing, connectivities (not just mobility)
- **Decision making** – governance and funding, clear decision making frameworks, devolution max, being brave, data and its analysis
- **Transport systems and services** – integration across modes and with technology, (road) maintenance, mobility management (MaaS), managing autonomous vehicles

These themes fed into a senior decision-makers panel discussion from which the following points emerged:

- We now have a **mature grasp of the issues** we are facing but those present at the Summit with this grasp represent a **narrow constituency**.
- We need to be mindful of **who constitutes ‘we’** when we now consider the multiple players involved in local transport allied to different forms of democratic participation.
- While local transport ‘successes’ may be hailed, we have also been witness to some **lamentable outcomes at local levels** and these could be repeated without improved approaches.

- We are presented with much technology-led innovation **but technology (alone) will not save us.**
- We have been here before in terms of some of the fundamental aspects of local transport that we are facing and should therefore be **learning from the past.**
- We have a **good diagnosis of the issues but lack the authority to address them** in the ways we would consider appropriate.
- We need **a framework as a basis for action** and a mandate (with funding) to take action.
- There is a need to devote more transport planning attention to **matters that reside upstream of appraisal.**
- The makeup and quantum of skills in transport planning need not necessarily be a barrier to constructively addressing local transport but **professional impotence is a concern.**
- We need to see the pendulum of transport planning swing **from accountability (back) towards responsibility.**

The first Summit highlighted that we have many capable minds and a collective wisdom within transport planning when it comes to addressing local transport. At the same time, the transport planning constituency gathered at the summit risks operating in an echo chamber and lacking in authority to influence unless it is able to engage with and influence the other constituencies and processes associated with local transport.

### **Local Transport Summit 2017**

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The second Local Transport Summit sought to build upon the insights above and continue the debate. Trailing the second Summit included a focus upon finding common ground and embracing uncertainty. Of the former, the following was said:

*“Can there really be common ground and productive collaboration between the politicians, general public and specialist professionals seeking to be involved in this discussion involving transport? And what is the proper role of professionals anyway in a modern society where ‘experts’ are not always regarded as holding the status they once did, now everyone has (and shares) their opinions on almost everything online, and our local political landscape has seen the arrival of potentially more powerful responsible bodies, headed by higher profile mayors.”<sup>5</sup>*

Fittingly, the second Summit was hosted by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) – a transport authority reporting to its first directly elected Mayor, Andy Burnham, who himself – within his first few months of office – addressed the Summit. With its vision-led approach to shaping the future of local transport, TfGM offers a refreshing and ambitious means of embracing and handling uncertainty.

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<sup>5</sup> Local Transport Today – <https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/local-transport-today/news/55083/what-future-for-local-transport-in-an-age-of-rapid-change/>



### ***The event in overview***

Once again the Summit was principally focused upon drawing together a gathering of senior players in local transport – individuals who, it was suggested, are genuinely connected by looking to the longer term, seeing the big picture and wanting to make things better.

With introductions from the joint event hosts (TfGM through the REFORM project<sup>6</sup>, DfT and Landor Links) the event got underway with a series of briefings and ‘provocations’ examining the local transport landscape. Issues raised included the impacts of governance and policy changes in transport and beyond, external issues that are impacting on local transport (including technological and economic change), how to evaluate and appraise transport plans and projects, the role and resourcing of investment and infrastructure, and the professional-public interface in discussion and decision-making. This led into a number of roundtable discussions in parallel which considered: (i) where is the decision making, where should it be and who is setting the vision?; (ii) who is/should be checking the validity of proposals and how?; (iii) what are the politics of transport and what is the professional role in the mix?; and (iv) are we embracing the key issues (e.g. MaaS, shared car use, air quality, placemaking and housing)? There was then a Greater Manchester showcase session with presentation from TfGM and Greater Manchester Combined Authorities followed by an all-female panel representing multiple local transport stakeholders.

At dinner speeches by Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, and Paul Murrain addressed political leadership and urban design respectively – thereby reinforcing the second Summit’s intention to broaden the debate beyond transport planning professionals.

Andy Burnham spoke about his experiences from the first six months of his term of office as the first ever ‘Metro Mayor’ of Greater Manchester. In a polished and well-received speech, he described talked about how transport was the issue he gets most feedback on from the public – reinforcing that it is a high priority for him. He talked about how he believes the north is disadvantaged by current national appraisal methodologies and does not get its fair share of transport funding; and the importance of a more integrated transport system that better serves the needs of Greater Manchester and supports a wide range of desired economic, social and environmental outcomes

Paul Murrain’s insights on urban design included the following: getting urbanism right should come before addressing transport; space becomes place when conducive to human interaction (we are social animals); when investing in our cities we should seek to maximise exchange and minimise travel; mixing land use makes absolute sense; ‘off the shelf’ business parks risk putting margins before good design; some of the healthiest things we do are risky; and health and safety should not be matters that are conflated in design thinking.

Following first day reflections, the second day began with a session on future travel demand before moving into a series of three syndicate discussions addressing: (i) a Vision and Validate update; (ii) future cities and the impact of disruptive change; and (iii) transport planning and urban design. The final part of the second Summit explored professional practice next steps – how new thinking can be incorporated into activities at national, regional and local level with new forms of evaluation and appraisal.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.interregeurope.eu/reform/>

### ***Insights from the second Summit***

There was once again a richness of insight and debate at the second Summit. Perhaps the most prominent issue across the two days was that of agency (or lack of it) – a need for the insights that the transport planning profession collectively holds to be brought to bear upon *influencing* processes, decision making and outcomes.

A number of key themes reflect the substance of the second Summit's encounters and are set out below. This summary is not to suggest consensus of thinking, not least because many of the issues are complex and multifaceted.

#### **Have we got the right tools for the job?**

It is no secret that a number of aspects of the orthodox approaches we follow in transport planning are subject to challenge and/or divided professional opinion on their fitness for purpose. It was suggested that we have a transport system that has been 'accidentally' designed with huge externalities. We have an appraisal system that was invented in the 1960s and, in spite of it being evolved, may not be adequate for supporting the sorts of decisions that now need to be taken. **Does appraisal take sufficient or any account of uncertainty** when, not least, it can assume fixed land-use leading to dubious levels of accuracy and precision? There was considerable discussion of the linked issue of unlocking finance for transport through tracking (and potentially capturing) the real impacts/rewards of transport interventions.

HS2 may be an exception in placing appraisal emphasis not (any longer) on time savings but on development. **Politicians and the public are concerned with jobs, homes, places, opportunities and wellbeing**. As professionals, we would do well to better align our decision-support approaches with these concerns – and better appreciate how other sectors outside of transport are going about making informed decisions. Yet transport appraisal seems well-regarded by Treasury, a matter not to be overlooked.

Appraisal is a territory where professional differences of opinion exist and its complex nature leaves unresolved the challenge of reaching professional consensus that we have the right tools for the job. With devolution and varying scales of decision making, it is not clear that our existing appraisal framework is able to accommodate the measurement of differing values in different ways to suit specific decision making contexts. Even if scope to adapt analytical approaches were available, some concern exists that **we are focused more upon communicating the evidence rather than conveying a story that can resonate with the politicians and the public**.

#### **Have we got the right people for the job?**

It is significant to bear in mind that **many senior people and politicians have not come from a transport planning background** but instead may hail from social work, finance, legal etc. They may find the transport planners they encounter mystifying, worrying, and may even suspect they are being subjected to the transport planners' vested interests. As a result it may be that transport planning matters find themselves less influential than they should be.

Historically, transport planners have been perceived as a profession preoccupied by numbers and wheels and one that attracts men more so than women overall. Communicating that the skills now needed are **as much or more about places and people than numbers and wheels** is important. There was some optimism that the profession is attracting in fresh talent and

diversity as its scope becomes better understood. Yet developing the talent pool is challenging. One local authority example was given of proactively seeking to strengthen the research and innovation content of their team and activities with the result that the pool of applicants for a related post was an order of magnitude larger than that for a transport planning post with similar remuneration.

The importance of diversity and inclusion in contributing to better thinking and with the prospect in turn of better outcomes should be self-evident. The all-female panel at the Summit was a refreshing change from the often experienced all-male ‘manels’ experienced at many transport events. The panel members provided different perspectives on the role that transport plays in shaping urban areas, including views on the relationship between transport and: land use planning; the response of cities to a variety of potential shocks and disruptors; property and development; and community cohesion and social inclusion. It highlighted how diversity reaches beyond gender through bringing together different perspectives from those from different organisations and with different roles. To be able to address local transport effectively requires that unconscious bias is recognised and guarded against.

The urban design perspective brought into the Summit further reinforced the importance of looking beyond disciplinary boundaries. It provided stark insights into the importance of placemaking and the perils of a highways-led approach and poor urban design compromising the importance of human encounter that is at the heart of placemaking.

### Are we living in a bubble?

This theme asks whether there is a disconnect between professionals and the politicians and public. While they may not recognise it in themselves, transport planners are collectively atypical of the general public in their understanding of local transport, especially when looking to the future. It might be suggested that in the context of the Summit it has created an environment that attracts a ‘luxury of thinking’ that is not the preserve of everyday transport planning – important though that thinking might be. Within the transport planning profession there is heterogeneity to be noted between those now retiring who may have more time to think and those who feel time poor in their day jobs where it may be challenging enough to ‘keep the buses running’ and ‘fill the potholes’.

Working in a given profession can lead to a tendency to think the problems that profession is addressing are the biggest problems society faces. It can then be frustrating if the public or politicians do not see it that way. Any bubble transport planning is in is surely dwarfed by the array of social, technological, economic, environmental and political forces that are at play more widely and which set a context for transport planning itself and its degree of relevance and influence. Not only are we struggling to make sense of the challenges from within our bubble but it was suggested that any pursuit of consensus on such matters may be futile when decision making is in the hands of politicians whose role can sometimes appear to be to disagree with other politicians.

### A vision for people and place

It was suggested that the London Mayor’s Transport Strategy upon closer examination can be seen to be a placemaking strategy, with a central focus on a less car-dominated future, including “healthy streets”, improved public transport and delivery of sustainable homes and jobs. TfGM set out its challenge: how to win the hearts and minds of 2.7M people with compelling a vision for change. Vision comes before the local transport plan and indeed the

vision itself has very little to do with transport and transport schemes. It is instead concerned with how society is changing and what to do regarding the environment, social inclusion, an ageing population and economic change. **Placemaking is key - we are social beings who like to come together in vibrant spaces to innovate and spend time.** This may not appear so radical now but would have been so in the 1980s. This new way of thinking must be seized and acted upon more widely (at a time when the revised National Planning Policy Framework has just recently been out for consultation<sup>7</sup>).

There is **a need to have the agency and capabilities not only to develop a vision but to sell this vision to key parties** (notably the public) if not co-create the vision with them. Indeed more broadly in matters concerning local transport ‘being right is not a sufficient condition’ – if as transport planners people are aware of what needs to be done and why but cannot win the hearts and minds of others then professional impotence prevails. Apple and Steve Jobs were depicted as ‘we know what you want better than you do, and we are really good at marketing’.

Reference to the technology sector is a reminder that while the vision should be about people and place rather than self-driving cars, buses and transport network capacity, **responsibility for creating and pursuing the vision is not clear cut.** Indeed there may be multiple visions from different constituencies that may not all be in harmony. **New players in the mobility market seem likely to have more capacity, marketing skills and determination to envision and pursue a future that suits them than is the case for the public sector.** Indeed such players are doing more than selling and providing mobility – they are (also) in the business of selling different forms of accessibility to people, goods, services and opportunities in society. Visioning issues will also vary depending upon scale. Some politicians may have vision that only extends to alleviating the short-term frustrations of their constituents, with less regard to the longer-term implications. Indeed for some it feels that any vision is lacking with a reversion instead to (pet) projects.

### **Setting a framework for system optimum**

The system (of systems) that pertains to local transport is evidently complex and there are multiple and differing views and vested interests at play. In this context, consensus-building is challenging. As such there is an importance to at least trying to establish common ground in terms of how local transport is developed and the vision as the context within which this sits. **Common ground matters in terms of the principles and outcomes that should lie behind the vision for local transport.** Establishing this common ground and ensuring it is a shared reference point for more specific developments requires that public authorities are prepared and equipped to exercise suitable influence (which may now be more readily the case through devolution of transport powers, the establishment of new transport authorities and directly elected mayors). This was aptly summarised at the Summit as ‘my pub, my rules’. When what some people want is at other people’s expense then rules are needed. Public policy is sometimes about stopping people having what they want – resisting demands for the shorter-term requirements because of having the longer-term ‘system optimum’ in mind. Balancing individual travel desires/needs with the collective “good” is the central challenge for transport planning, particularly in urban areas.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

The points above risk painting a sombre picture of the local transport agenda. It is certainly true that it faces some substantial and complex challenges. However, there is appetite to rise to these challenges and TfGM proved to be a fitting host for the second Local Transport Summit in demonstrating such appetite alongside being able to start capitalising upon a new era of devolved local transport planning.

## Where we are and where next

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This short report cannot be a substitute for the first-hand experience of engagement at the 2016 and 2017 Local Transport Summits. What does become evident is that the key issues that matter to local transport are being surfaced and further addressed by the community of thinkers and agents of change brought together by the Summit approach.

**Agency and effective engagement and communication** came through in both years of the Summit as paramount to addressing local transport's future, as does a need to remain mindful of what was referred to as 'transport planning 101', namely the central tenet that transport is a derived demand. Our transport system and its use is there to support, but is also shaping, society. Such shaping requires vision – in the first instance not about transport solutions but about the principles and outcomes for people and place that in turn provide a framework for local transport planning. The 2016 Summit highlighted **placemaking** and this came even more strongly to the fore in the 2017 event.

The second Summit had the need for **common ground** and **embracing uncertainty** as two overarching challenges, building upon the 2016 Summit. These challenges remain but through the Summit, progress has been made in starting to broaden out the constituency of Summit engagement in pursuit of understanding differences of perspective and priority amongst different players. However, common ground may remain elusive if effective engagement and communication cannot be achieved. Both years of the Summit have also elaborated on uncertainty, highlighting some of the shortcomings of our current approaches whilst also pointing to a move away from predict and provide (which is untenable in the face of deep uncertainty) towards 'decide and provide' or 'vision and validate'.

The need to understand the makeup and diversity of the populations that local transport supports was recognised in the first Summit and **the importance of diversity and inclusion** within transport planning, policy and practice in responding to this was underlined in the second Summit.

Beyond the bounds of the Summit environment and its participants, it remains apparent that being 'regime compliant' in terms of our approaches to local transport can be challenging enough, let alone being 'regime testing' and seeking to more strongly address the points above. However, while the first Summit signposted the opportunity of transport devolution, the second Summit brought to the fore early evidence of that opportunity being put into practice. This suggests that **with the right talent, resources and agency it is possible to bring about change**.

Intriguingly, the potential specific impacts of **technological innovation did not feature that strongly** in either of the first two Summits. This may in part be a consequence of Summit design and yet it may well suggest that while such innovation can sometimes dominate the

transport sector airwaves, there are wider ‘foundational’ considerations that will govern the future prospects of local transport in a changing world.

The uncertainty that disruptive technologies (and business models) can bring is clearly something that professionals will need to factor in to both their forecasting and evaluation techniques.

### ***The local transport journey continues***

Beyond the first two Summit gatherings, developments continue to unfold. It is not possible to offer a comprehensive list of these but the following are indicative of the state of flux in the transport sector:

**Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan** – In January 2018 TfN published its draft Strategic Transport Plan for consultation, setting out a 30-year vision for transport investment in the North of England. In April 2018, TfN became the first sub-national transport authority in England and the Strategic Transport Plan will become a statutory document. The Plan recognises the primacy of connectivity alongside the importance of an adaptive approach in the face of a deeply uncertain future.

**London Transport Strategy** – The final version of the Mayor’s Transport Strategy was published on 13 March 2018. Motivated by a wish to create a city for all Londoners, the Strategy focuses upon transforming London’s streets and encouraging more people to use alternatives to the car, alongside creating opportunities for new homes and jobs.

**Scotland’s National Transport Strategy** – A review of Scotland’s National Transport Strategy is underway. In working towards a revised Strategy, Transport Scotland has commissioned the development of a scenario planning tool and process. This is being developed during 2018 with the aim of helping inform Strategy development and examination of policy measures in the face of uncertainty.

**Draft National Planning Policy Framework** – As noted earlier in this report, this document has been out for consultation. Alongside this, during 2018 the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation is in the process of producing guidelines on securing effective integration of planning and transport to meet the requirements of the NPPF. The guidelines will be aimed at those working in developing and planning new places and homes including planners, developers, local authorities, policy officials and other sector practitioners.

**Road Traffic Forecasts** – The last national Road Traffic Forecasts report was published by the Department for Transport in 2015. The report’s approach was significant in its focus upon plausible future scenarios in the face of uncertainty, moving away from reference to a central estimate. The next Road Traffic Forecasts publication from DfT is expected later in 2018.

**The Commission on Travel Demand** – A year on from its launch and after six evidence sessions, on 3 May 2018 an event took place to mark the publication of the Commission on Travel Demand’s first report. The Commission has been examining how travel demand is changing and may change over time and the controversies which exist over current forecasting practice.

**CREATE project conclusion** – The EU CREATE project has run from 2015-2018 and its final conferences took place in May 2018. It has been seeking to help cities to decouple economic

growth and high mobility from traffic growth, recognising the evolutionary stages of city development around the world.

**Transport Planning Professional (TPP)** – Ten years on from this professional qualification being established, 2018 marks the year that Chartered status is being sought from the Privy Council. The Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation and the Transport Planning Society who together oversee the TPP have also embarked upon a review of the competencies expected of a transport planner now and into the future.

**Transport Planning Degree Apprenticeship** – In collaboration with three universities, an employer working group began in late 2017 developing a bespoke degree-level apprenticeship standard. Responding to employers' needs and the impetus created by the Apprenticeship Levy, this aims to provide a new structured pathway towards TPP.

**Young Professionals** – The Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation has now established a Young Professionals Network – bringing together regional Young Professional Groups and individuals who want to influence the future of the industry. The Network will be addressing the future of transport at its inaugural conference in November 2018. In March 2018, the Transport Visions Network – a former group of young professionals aged 35 and under who from 2000 to 2003 examined the future of transport - initiated a (virtual) reunion with a view to considering possible new undertakings.

### ***The third Summit in 2018***

It is not the place of this report in providing an overview of 'the journey so far' to judge what 2018 (and beyond) may have in store for the Summit initiative. However, the range of challenges that need to be followed through - and the apparent appetite for continuing professional dialogue and wider engagements - suggest that the community would be well-served by a third Summit.

The challenge for the Summit initiative is to ensure that each event serves a worthwhile purpose and, to the extent possible, builds upon previous events as well as drawing upon the outputs of the latest initiatives such as those illustrated above and reflects on new and emerging themes that may deserve fuller examination. Some of the challenges examined in the first two Summit events are perennial. This can be frustrating with a sense of being well-versed in the nature of the challenge yet being unable to progress strongly in overcoming it. However, in this regard, it is important to recognise that in the face of powerful forces of inertia, change can take time. The Summit should not shy away from revisiting the challenges and maintaining an appetite for seeking out ways and means of evolving our approaches to how local transport issues and opportunities are tackled.

For the agenda for the 2018 Summit it would be appropriate to consider the following:

- The business of challenging whether we have the right analytical/appraisal tools for the job and how to respond to this is far from complete. This merits a continued focus and may benefit from drawing on a wider range of transport professionals including those from national (as opposed to 'local transport') agencies.
- Agency (the ability/authority to influence) and effective engagement and communication appear paramount to effectively addressing the local transport agenda with robust, resilient and inclusive plans. Can insights from other sectors on

how to address the challenge of setting priorities, achieving equity, effectiveness and public support, be shared and learnt from?

- A focus on senior thinkers and leaders within the sector should not detract from giving a voice to, and learning from, prospective future leaders and solution providers. Can today's young (or 'early career') professionals make an input to Summit debate?
- Technological innovation is seen by many as a disruptive force for the transport sector. The Summit constituency thus far may not be predisposed to fixating upon such innovation. Can a future Summit provide a forum for bringing together different constituencies such that technological innovation (and its impacts – good and bad) can be put in the spotlight and examined in a constructively critical way?
- Finally, a continuing conversation about who (across a wide range of professionals and interest groups in wider society) should properly be involved in the subject of local transport, and the way in which that engagement should be handled inclusively and openly, is surely a matter that must remain high on the agenda.