

Commission sets out focus for major 2023 assessment and asks for input

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An advisory executive agency, the National Infrastructure Commission, has announced which areas it will focus on in its next major assessment, due in 2023.

The areas have been shortlisted in a baseline report, after analysing key sectors.

In a statement, it said its priorities include exploring how mass public transit projects could help tackle congestion and support productivity in city regions, as well as the potential role of demand management measures, such as congestion charging.

The commission has said it also wishes to examine how a cross-modal approach to surface transport could increase trade between cities and make areas more attractive to live and work in. The commission has said the need for such a plan is emphasised by major investments in high speed rail and strategic roads, which require proper integration and consideration of both passengers and freight traffic.

Additionally, this baseline report also outlines the organisation's plans to investigate how to

improve transport asset management to increase resilience.

The executive agency says its chosen transport priorities reflect public concern over the condition of local roads and that, according to the commission, urban and interurban transport connectivity is poor in many places. The baseline report says a continuing reliance on private cars means congestion has a big impact on travel in city regions, particularly at peak times, while in many instances driving remains a quicker option than public transport for travel both within and between cities.

The transport-related projects are set to join five other challenges addressing three strategic themes the commission said will frame the second National Infrastructure Assessment: reaching net zero, reducing environmental impacts and building resilience to climate change, and helping “level up” communities across the UK. The assessment will set out costed policy recommendations to government to ensure the UK is ready for future challenges and opportunities, including over the next 10 – 30 years.

Writing in the baseline report’s foreword, Sir John Armitt, chair of the commission, notes that the three strategic themes identified by the Commission “each pose urgent and wide ranging questions. Each draw broad political and public support for their end goal. Each, however, offer few quick wins or cheap fixes.”

“We will now embark on this work – informed by input and insight from industry, political leaders, representative bodies, other organisations across the country and the public – and formulate policy recommendations to put forward to government,” he adds.

A call for evidence process has been launched, with interested stakeholders invited to submit data to the commission to inform work on the topics it has identified. The commission will also undertake sector events, regional visits and social research as it develops its recommendations.

The baseline report can be found [here](#).