

## Introduction Slide

### Transport and Logistics

#### Slide 1

The West Midlands is the leading manufacturing region in the UK.

Government must recognise this as part of its drive for a manufacturing led economic recovery.

There has been a consistent failure by successive governments over decades to recognise that investment in infrastructure is a key economic driver. This must change.

There are significant deficiencies in regional infrastructure that need to be addressed and this includes all transport modes: public, private, road, rail and air. We need a vision for the future.

The primary policy objective must be based on a practical assessment of the optimal fully integrated transport approach in the context of effectiveness, cost and genuine environmental considerations, not driven by narrow political dogma.

## **ROAD**

### **Slide 2**

We cannot ignore the huge potential for relieving pressure on the local roads system by maximising utilisation of the capacity on the M6 Toll Road. Despite the problems existing from the ownership and the financing of the Toll Road it is too great in importance to be ignored.

There must be a way, possibly based upon experience with the M40.

Although the motorway was built as a normal publically financed project, it is managed and maintained by a private company, UK Highways. The Government pays for this through a toll system based upon vehicles using the road. Could the Government participate in subsidising M6 toll reduction or elimination at certain times of the day, based on traffic pressures elsewhere? This fits in well with the proven strategy of Advanced Traffic Management (ATM), which allows road space to vary in line with demand.

### **Slide 3**

There has to be a more balanced view of the interface between public and private transport. Public transport has a huge role to play and many improvements are underway. However, the flexibility and appropriateness of private domestic and business road transport is

essential to the development of a properly efficient and balanced regional economy. Some of the concepts related to the prioritisation of public over private transport must be reconsidered because there is clearly evidence that damage is being done to the prospects for city centres and local economies by approaches which are too narrowly focused on preferential treatment of public transport.

In the last few days the Deputy Mayor responsible for transport in London, Isabel Dedring has said that the massive investment in rail combined with other public transport strategy has failed to recognise that 80% of journeys in London are by road. A new focus on roads is essential.

Detailed attention is being given to the problems we see at key road junctions and motorway entrance/exit slip roads. Pinch points have to be identified and improvements made.

Modern intelligent traffic light systems can play an important role in improving traffic flows. The use of flashing amber signals at off peak times would significantly improve the flow of traffic on local roads, but

current legislation does not allow it. The Government must look at this as a priority and clear the way for schemes to be piloted locally so that we can assess their viability on a larger scale. We are advised that DfT is studying this and we await their conclusion with great interest.

Consider new ideas such as the “shared space” pilot in Coventry city centre. This may have significant benefits. Although the deliberate mixing of vehicles and pedestrians seems to be counter-intuitive, there is evidence that traffic congestion is reduced and pedestrian accidents also go down. Although vehicle speeds are much less, because they are stationary for a much smaller proportion of total time, journey times actually reduce. We will be very interested to see the conclusions from this experiment in Coventry.

## **RAIL**

### **Slide 4**

There is clearly uncertainty about whether HS2 will go ahead, despite the prima facie assurances from Government. This uncertainty is damaging and must be resolved quickly.

In the event that HS2 does proceed, we can see that its success will depend on its operation within a fully integrated infrastructure network. If this is not fully developed before the completion of HS2 in 15 years from now, it will be impossible for the potential economic benefits to be realised. Any thoughts by politicians that we can get round to that later should be dispelled right now. Obviously cost continues to be a major obstacle and this is where we need to be more three dimensional in our thinking, due to the timescales. Can the supporting infrastructure networks be designed to benefit the transport network in their own right and therefore contribute to economic growth anyway, even before completion of the full system?

Careful planning should be able to achieve this, but I am not yet convinced that it has been adequately recognised, as we tend to think in two dimensions, not three. In this case, the unavoidably long timescales have to be considered in the process.

The West Midlands will be playing a key role in the objective of maximising the contribution of manufacturing and there is a need for

efficient transport networks to facilitate this. The perceived increase in freight capacity on the West Coast Main Line made possible by HS2 is one of the key reasons for doing it.

It is important to recognise that investment in infrastructure also strongly supports manufacturing.

## Slide 5

Detailed attention needs to be given to the quality of interconnections between rail, road and other public transport.

The redevelopment of the Walsall to Stourbridge Freight Line would provide important additional capacity and we recognise its potential for integrated light rail for passengers and freight.

The huge potential for the redevelopment of the substantial Bescot Yard facility as a rail freight interchange has been recognised. We believe this must be developed as a priority and it should provide the catalyst for investment in the surrounding local road infrastructure.

## AIR

### Slide 6

A key priority is the need for efficient access to BHX via public transport and road user networks. The growth in importance of the West Midlands region in manufacturing and business with international commercial capability makes the efficiency of Birmingham Airport even more important. Therefore road and public transport links need to be comprehensive and efficient, fully capable of supporting the intensive business use that we must expect from a successful manufacturing economy. We support the runway extension to provide local long haul flight capability and also to participate efficiently in national air transport infrastructure.

In this short presentation there is insufficient time to discuss these key priorities in detail. However, I hope that I have been able to suggest areas that we need to focus on because they are absolutely crucial to the successful future of the West Midlands as a primary driver of growth for the national economy.

Thank you.