



## *INDEPENDENT TRANSPORT COMMISSION*

*Britain's independent research charity for transport and land use policy*

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### MEDIA RELEASE

***EMBARGOED UNTIL 01:00 BST, THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JULY***

## **ITC/ORR report shows changing attitudes in the UK towards road and rail travel**

A comprehensive report commissioned by the Independent Transport Commission (ITC) and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) sheds light on the reasons behind the changing patterns of behaviour in road and rail travel in the UK, including car use and ownership.

The report, entitled "On the Move: Exploring attitudes to road and rail travel in Britain" investigates changing attitudes amongst four key groups - younger people, older people, migrants, and business travellers – each of which is having a key impact upon overall travel trends. The research follows on from the original "On the Move" research by Professor Peter Jones and Dr Scott Le Vine, which showed the dramatic extent of rail travel increases and car travel stagnation since the mid 1990s.

A wide-ranging attitudinal survey of the key groups (involving almost 5000 participants), conducted by Social Research Associates and Kris Beuret OBE, explored the reasons for modal choice, the influence of technology, travel purpose, 'tipping points' affecting travel behaviour and whether current attitudes were likely to be temporary or permanent. The following themes emerged as being of particular importance:

- **Economic factors remain a strong determinant of travel choice, especially for younger people**

Younger people are particularly concerned about the high cost of using a car (insurance, parking and learning to drive) relative to their income. The impact of concessionary and advance fares on public transport use is also an important driver of travel choice, while the poor provision of public transport in rural areas is affecting older people who feel that they need to retain a car in order to preserve their independence. In fact, residential location was an important determinant of travel choice among all groups, with urban residents much more likely to use public transport.

- **Technology is already having an impact upon travel choice and behaviour**

Smart technology is helping to change travel attitudes by widening choice and affecting how we value travel time. Attitudes towards the value of travel time are changing especially by business travellers, who are increasingly attuned to using communications technology on the move. Evidence emerged that technology is helping to increase perceptions of safety on public transport. Younger people are much more open to using smartphones and applications to choose between travel modes, and to use new technology for new methods of shopping, such as click and collect from stations, reducing car use.

- **Younger people are 'falling out of love' with the car**

A dramatic finding was the way in which younger people are adopting a more utilitarian attitude towards car ownership. The report found that younger people place greater weight on alternative consumer

*The Independent Transport Commission*

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products, and are receptive towards car sharing and leasing, suggesting that these areas could see huge growth. Amongst minority ethnic groups and migrants, most are much less car reliant, partly due to the high proportion living in urban areas, though there are some marked variations between groups.

- **'Tipping points' that affect travel behaviour are crucial to understanding the permanence of trends**

The research identified a number of crucial 'tipping points' in our lives at which modal choice changes. Car ownership becomes more desirable when starting a family, now more common in people's 30s, while retirement often results in downsizing from a two to one car household. Identifying these tipping points and when they are happening will be crucial if we are to predict future road and rail demand accurately. Meanwhile, the use of public transport modes when young increases the likelihood of continuing to use these in later life, indicating that the trend towards public transport, especially rail, use will continue.

*"This report builds upon the findings of our first "On the Move" study and confirms that, alongside technological and demographic changes, the UK's travel choices are dramatically evolving. The use of public transport is growing across all groups - young, old, business, migrant and minority ethnic groups - while people are adopting a much more utilitarian attitudes towards car ownership. Understanding these changes will be of crucial importance for policy makers given the massive investment that has been promised in the strategic road and rail infrastructure over the next few years,"* commented **Dr Matthew Niblett, Director of the Independent Transport Commission.**

The **ITC research programme** covers a wide range of strategic issues including aviation strategy, the spatial impacts of high speed rail, trends in road and rail travel, reform of our roads and how we pay for them, improving the efficiency in UK freight movements and the interface between land use and transport planning.

- ENDS -

#### **Media enquiries:**

If you have a media query about the release or would like to set up an interview with the report's author, please contact John Stevenson on [john@ti-communications.co.uk](mailto:john@ti-communications.co.uk) or 07824 621756.

If you would like more information on the research programme or the ITC, please contact Dr Matthew Niblett on [matthew.niblett@keble.oxon.org](mailto:matthew.niblett@keble.oxon.org) or 07813 174582.



#### Notes to editors:

- This research study builds upon the **first "On the Move" study** published in 2012 and authored by Dr Scott Le Vine and Professor Peter Jones (also co-sponsored by the RAC Foundation), which used the National Travel Survey to illustrate the dramatically changing travel trends in Britain over the period 1995-2008. This research demonstrated that road and rail travel trends were not behaving as the forecasting models had predicted, with car travel much lower than estimated while rail growth had significantly exceeded expectations.
- The **Office of Rail and Road (ORR)** is the independent economic and safety regulator for Britain's railways and the independent monitor of Highways England. ORR regulates the rail industry's health and safety performance, holds Network Rail and High Speed 1 to account and makes sure that the rail industry is competitive and fair. From 1 April 2015 we have taken on responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the performance and efficiency of Highways England.  
[www.orr.gov.uk](http://www.orr.gov.uk)
- The **Independent Transport Commission** is Britain's foremost independent land use and transport think tank. The ITC is a research charity committed to providing insight and analysis of the most pressing long-term strategic issues in the fields of transport and land use. The ITC explores the long-term consequences of current policy, considers new approaches and makes recommendations on the way forward. For more information, please see our website:  
[www.theitc.org.uk](http://www.theitc.org.uk)
- The ITC, founded in 1999, comprises a small secretariat, an advisory team of 12 voluntary commissioners, and has a base at Cowcross Street in central London. The Director is Dr Matthew Niblett, also Senior Research Associate at the University of Oxford, and Simon Linnett, Executive Vice-Chairman of Rothschild, is the Chairman. The charity has no endowment and is supported by charitable donations from a wide range of leading businesses and organisations (for a full list of supporters please see the ITC website [www.theitc.org.uk/5\\_funding.html](http://www.theitc.org.uk/5_funding.html)), but the ITC retains strict editorial independence from all its funding partners.
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