



Economic
and Social
Research Council



Department
for Transport

ESRC Policy Fellowships 2021: Opportunity description

Fellowship Title: DfT Connectivity Levelling Up

Host department: [Department for Transport \(DfT\)](#)

Host Team: Strategy Unit, Local & Regional Transport Analysis and Transport Appraisal & Strategic Modelling

Summary: Opportunity to provide theoretical and applied economic analysis to the question of how transport can best support the economic and social levelling-up of places.

Policy topic: Transport, Levelling Up

Potentially relevant academic disciplines Applied Economics, Political Science.

Relevant research career stage: Mid-career

Practical details

Start of 3-month inception: December 2021

Length of core placement: 6-12 months

FTE for core placement (range): 0.5-1

Location requirements Flexible, occasional visits to London (in line with government guidelines in regards to COVID19) to engage with policy and analytical colleagues. May be desirable to link with international experts but likely to be virtually rather than by travelling.

Necessary level of security clearance: [Baseline Personnel Security Standard](#) will be required and may require 4-6 weeks to obtain. See [National security vetting: clearance levels - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Detailed description

Transport is a key enabler to the Levelling Up of the UK. This brings with it a broad range of economic and social research questions, including:

- How do we better understand the role transport in the economic and social development of places?
- Which transport improvements are most likely to improve local economic and social development of places? Who benefits from transport investment? How does this vary from place to place and by type of investment? Are the benefits additional or mainly displacement?
- What types of improvements are most effective, ranging from large improvements such as High Speed Rail to local transport such as local roads, bus, light rail and active travel?
- How does this vary from place to place, including by type of place (city, town, rural), population (skills, business environment) and existing travel behaviour and transport provision? Are there any straightforward criteria or guidelines that could suggest where

improvements should be made and what those should be, or are places so varied that this is not possible?

- How does transport interact with complementary interventions, policies and demographic factors in improving wider economic outcomes such as employment and productivity? How should transport and other policies (e.g. planning and development, education, skills, business location, business environment, skills) be designed to maximise economic and social development of places?
- How does the quality of experience for transport users affects local economies, quality of life, the pride people have in their localities and the attractiveness of places to live, work and set up business?

Government work on levelling-up continues to develop and the role of the Fellow will become much clearer following the publication of a White Paper on Levelling-Up later this year. We would expect to work with the Fellow to refine the questions that the Fellow could most usefully address.

The individual would work closely with three analytical teams that work closely together on levelling-up. These are the Strategy Unit, Local & Regional Transport Analysis and Transport Appraisal & Strategic Modelling. Each of these teams has a mix of analysts that provide analysis to support policy development. The individual would be co-operating with a number of analysts and policy officials. They would also have a named individual who would work closely with them to provide support, advice and guidance. DfT has a very positive and supportive culture and other analysts and policy officials would also provide support and assistance.

Opportunity-specific person specification:

Applications will be assessed against the following opportunity-specific requirements in addition to the generic eligibility and call criteria.

Skills/ expertise:

- Strong background on economic growth theory and economic geography
- Good applied economic skills, including skills in econometrics, secondary data analysis and ability to synthesise evidence
- Ability to draw on different disciplines and different sources of evidence, particularly social and behavioural science (desirable)