Mr John Philips – Written evidence (AUV0010)

This is a personal vision from a UK individual who has no political or commercial allegiance.

Re-Thinking Transport Systems

1) A near future possibility for autonomous vehicles is the motorway ‘vehicle train’. This would revolutionise transportation within the UK.

2) Most if not all the technology already exists to create within or alongside the current motorway network an additional autonomous fast lane. This would allow for special vehicles to run close together at constant speed without driver intervention. Such a UK wide network would create significant benefits in economy, travel time, motorway capacity and fuel efficiency. Many of these efficiencies would feed directly into improving business productivity within the UK.

3) Like many such UK-wide innovations, this requires a strong lead from Government. If the UK took a longer term view of transport, energy and business growth, this type of leading innovation would create a vibrant economic sector for transportation and energy. For instance, the creation of a standard for such vehicles along with an implementation timescale would create a strong stimulus for business intervention. Couple such technology with hydrogen based vehicles (fuel cells) and a UK wide grid for hydrogen distribution would take the UK into a leading position in this new transport market. A hydrogen based distribution system would also allow our growing alternative power production systems (solar, wind et al) to economically feed into hydrogen production for off-peak energy storage.

4) It is likely that within 50 years or less the UK will have many autonomous vehicles based on hydrogen and, or electric vehicles. We need to start planning for such change and start creating new infrastructure to help it work in the way we want rather than allowing it to mushroom in an uncontrolled, unplanned mess that removes many of the longer term benefits. Just leaving it to corporations to cream of the short term profitable pieces will not do well for the UK. Let us have a planned, innovative approach and lead the world creating efficient business growth for the UK.

10 October 2016