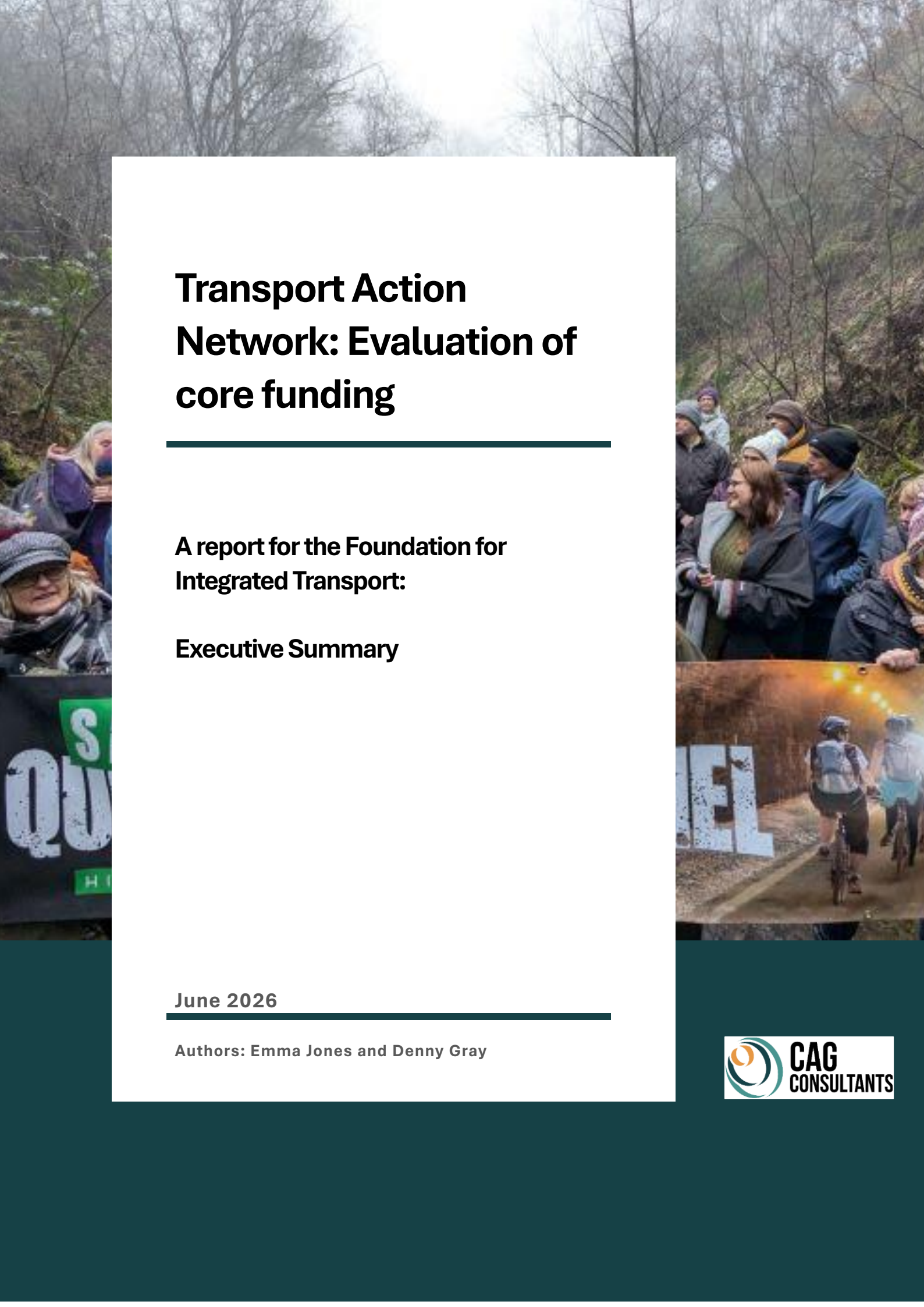




Transport Action Network: Evaluation of core funding

**A report for the Foundation for
Integrated Transport:**

Executive Summary

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1 Executive Summary

This report presents an independent evaluation of the Foundation for Integrated Transport's (FIT's) core funding to Transport Action Network between 2022 and 2025. It assesses whether FIT's £240,000 investment delivered strategic value by strengthening Transport Action Network's (TAN's) delivery, increasing scrutiny of major road-building schemes, and advancing FIT's wider missions.

The evaluation used a theory-based mixed-methods approach suited to complex campaigning and policy-influencing work, where impact is often indirect and difficult to attribute to a single organisation. Evidence was drawn from document review, stakeholder interviews, a survey of grassroots campaigners, three detailed contribution-analysis case studies (Stonehenge, Rimrose Valley and RIS2), media analysis, policy text comparison, and citation tracking.

Overall, the evaluation finds that TAN delivered strongly against most funding commitments and generated clear strategic value for FIT. Its strongest contributions were in increasing scrutiny of road-building schemes, strengthening grassroots campaigning capacity, and reinforcing policy and public narratives in favour of sustainable transport.

The strongest evidence of impact concerns TAN's role in supporting local campaigns, which contributed to a full review of all road schemes, and led to the cancellation of a number of major projects. The evaluation found multiple outcomes where TAN's contribution was assessed as critical or highly significant, including in two of the test cases: the cancellation of the A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Road through Rimrose Valley and the A303 Stonehenge tunnel proposal. In both cases, TAN helped sustain and professionalise the campaign through legal coordination, fundraising, strategic support and transport expertise. While the final cancellations also depended on wider political and financial factors, TAN's contribution was assessed as significant to critical. In the third test case - reductions in RIS2 road investment funding and increased scrutiny of the roads programme - TAN's contribution was assessed as significant. TAN's legal challenges, policy interventions and support for grassroots opposition played a meaningful role in raising political and public scrutiny of road-building, although the overall outcome was also strongly shaped by fiscal pressures and political change outside TAN's control.

Beyond the case studies, the evaluation found that TAN played an important backbone role within the sustainable transport sector. TAN recorded more than 2,000 instances of direct support to grassroots campaigners during the funding period and sustained networks, webinars and campaigner events that were highly valued by local groups. Survey evidence suggests this support was critical, with many respondents stating their campaigns would have been weaker, slower or potentially unsustainable without TAN's support.

The evaluation also found substantial communications influence. Across reviewed media coverage, TAN's framing on climate impacts, poor value for money, induced traffic, and the case for public transport and active travel appeared frequently and credibly. This influence was strongest in specialist transport media but was also visible in national outlets including the BBC, The Guardian, Forbes and the Financial Times.

Evidence of direct influence on formal government policy was more limited. Policy text comparison across four policy areas found that relatively few of TAN's detailed asks were fully reflected in final policy outputs, and only two showed moderate evidence of distinctive TAN influence. This should not be read as evidence of weak performance: in advocacy settings, influence often operates through coalition work, agenda-setting, scrutiny and narrative change rather than direct textual adoption.

The evaluation identified several key factors underpinning TAN's effectiveness:

- Persistently reinforcing the arguments against road projects, creating opportunities for review when political and financial conditions shifted.
- Strong integration of national expertise with local grassroots campaigning.
- Flexible and adaptive messaging aligned to changing political priorities.
- Strategic restraint in choosing where not to intervene.
- Good understanding of the details of transport policies, political climate and institutional mechanisms, combined with nimbleness and flexibility, allows them to respond effectively to ever-changing political and financial conditions.
- The importance of flexible core funding in enabling rapid response, long-term relationship building and organisational resilience.

At the same time, TAN faced significant challenges, including hostile political rhetoric towards campaigners, rising legal costs, donor fatigue, limited organisational capacity, and uneven local campaigning strength. The evaluation also found that some legal and policy interventions achieved increased scrutiny without ultimately changing the government's direction of travel in the short term.

Overall, the findings suggest that FIT achieved strongest value where relatively modest core funding enabled wider system-level influence and strengthened grassroots capacity. Future funding is therefore likely to achieve greatest impact where it supports organisations operating at the intersection of national advocacy, legal and policy expertise, and local mobilisation, with sufficient flexibility to respond to a changing political context.

Cover photo credit: 'Save Queensbury Tunnel' campaigners, © Chris Todd, Transport Action Network



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