UoH SMU Roundtable Leisure and Tourism

This report documents the third in a series of roundtable discussions in 2023/24 commissioned and sponsored by Transport East[1] for the Rural Transport Learning Network and organised by the Smart Mobility Unit at the University of Hertfordshire.

The series builds on earlier roundtables hosted by the University of Hertfordshire between 2020 and 2022 to address the shortage of research and policy on transport outside cities and in rural areas.

The format for this roundtable was a two hour online meeting via Microsoft Teams and consisted of presentations by speakers followed by questions and discussion, both verbally and via the chat function.

1.0 Participants

There were 29 participants. Sectors represented were: sub-national and local government, technology/innovation, transport consultancy, academic research, non-governmental organisations, statutory bodies, visitor attractions and destination management organisations. Stephen Joseph chaired the discussion.

The following abbreviations indicate the sector making comments:

REGG   Regional transport body
CC   County council or unitary authority
INNOV Innovation sector
CONS   Consultant
ACAD   Academic
NGO   Non-governmental organisation
STAT   Statutory body
VIS   Visitor attraction
DMO   Destination management organisation

[CHAT] denotes written contributions made in real time during the spoken dialogue. Reactions are shown in brackets after the comment e.g. (like 1.)

2.0 Theme

The theme for this roundtable was the future of transport for leisure and tourism outside cities in rural areas. Topics to consider were:

- What are the lessons from these and other initiatives to promote sustainable tourism in rural areas?
- What are the opportunities, benefits and barriers for less car-based tourism and leisure travel and access?
- Ways forward for local authorities, tourism and leisure groups, transport operators and bodies such as National Parks in promoting less car-based tourism.

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[1] Transport East runs the Rural Mobility Centre of Excellence
https://www.transporteast.org.uk/rural-mobility-centre-of-excellence/

3.0 Summary

The meeting heard from four speakers with expertise in transport for leisure outside cities. Three of these had a primary focus on making leisure and tourism travel more sustainable. The fourth represented an organisation involved in community engagement with the rail sector whose work results in behaviour change for sustainable travel. Participants responded with questions and comments and discussion followed.

Alistair Kirkbride made the case for the right governance structures and empowered local leadership to decarbonise transport for leisure in rural areas. Visitor travel can be broken down into six main components. Travel to the destination has the largest carbon impact and is the hardest component to tackle. Best practice for 'within destination' travel can be found overseas, including the Austrian and Swiss Alps. With the correct governance and funding these models can be applied to UK locations so that car-free travel becomes an integral part of the visitor experience.

Nat Taplin founded explained how Good Journey enables destinations to attract car-free visitors. Good Journey provides advice and support to communicate travel information, design discount schemes and develop infrastructure and services for visitors to navigate the 'last mile'. Good Journey works closely with The National Trust, RHS and other major destinations and is also now working with local authorities eager to promote sustainable leisure travel.

Jools Townsend showed how Community Rail Partnerships build community resilience and social capital by engaging people with their local stations and railways. This work takes many forms and involves a wide range of people who are often new to or lacking confidence in travelling by train. The Community Rail Network brings partners together locally to improve transport infrastructure, services, ticketing and accessibility. Communities with a strong sense of pride and cultural connection to their local railway make more sustainable travel choices.

Hope Valley Climate Action is a community led project in the Peak District National Park. Roger Clarke spoke about the group's nationally significant sustainable transport pilot, Travelling Light. Community engagement and co-creating solutions are central aspects of the project. With the benefit of DfT funding and strong political support, the group has obtained improvements to rail timetabling and ticketing and, by raising awareness of bus service shortcomings, persuaded the County Council to install real time bus information. Travelling Light helped the subnational transport body promote a project for peer-to-peer car sharing and EV charging and is now involved in an Active Travel Masterplan with the County Council. Key to the HVCA vision is reducing vehicle use and the group favours exploring options for traffic management in the National Park.

Barriers which emerged from discussion ranged from transport taxation (VAT on combined travel and entry tickets) to the meandering rivers of the Broads making bus travel, especially across county boundaries difficult. Devolution was seen as a double edged sword. More local control of rail would allow innovative services for tourists. However concentration of transport powers at subnational level can mean a loss of resources and skills for meaningful local community engagement. On the whole there was agreement that transport for leisure is poorly addressed in transport planning and more should be done to find synergies between resident and visitor travel needs.

There was wide agreement that viewing transport through the lens of the visitor experience is transformational. Sustainable travel is an easy sell when it is enjoyable and integrated into a holiday experience, for example by including guestcards for free local travel with hotel bookings. Enabling car-free travel to rural leisure and tourism destinations is increasingly important because younger cohorts are driving less. Affordable and convenient alternatives to the private car would also reduce the recruitment problems faced by the rural leisure economy.

Cornwall, Wales and Scotland offer lessons for managing transport for leisure in rural areas which can be applied elsewhere in the UK. New funding for non-metropolitan areas in the Midlands and North of England (LITS) was welcomed, as was a new duty on public bodies to seek to further the purposes of National Parks. Likewise the forthcoming general election was seen as an opportunity for positive change.

Overall there was a sense of a vacuum in leadership and management of the leisure and tourism sector. This may explain why this roundtable generated such active discussion and participants were unusually eager to share contact details.

By contrast there was strong feeling that communities are a rich resource with the skills and knowledge to find innovative solutions and inspire behavioural change if given the opportunity. People are willing to embrace new ideas and create a sense of vision and new possibilities. Local communities therefore need to be invited to engage in developing new governance structures for managing visitor travel.

4.0 Presentations and Discussion

The following speakers circulated papers in advance

- Alistair Kirkbride, Consultant – Decarbonising the visitor journey
- Nat Taplin, Good Journey – Welcoming car free visitors
- Jools Townsend, Community Rail Network – Engaging rural communities with rail and enabling sustainable leisure travel
- Roger Clarke, Hope Valley Climate Action – Travelling Light

4.1 Alistair Kirkbride – Decarbonising the visitor journey

Alistair is a freelance researcher and consultant in visitor and resident travel and transport in rural areas. In 2023 he was awarded a Churchill Travelling Fellowship to examine how to decarbonise the whole 'home-to-within destination' visitor journey, focussing on the role of traffic restraint[2]. In 2020 Alistair was awarded a Foundation for Integrated Transport fellowship in 2020 to develop the case for the Lake District and Peak District National Park Authorities to take on transport powers[3].

The problem

Visitor journeys are important because they generate significant carbon emissions and currently there is no plan to address the problem. Leisure travel emissions remain persistently and stubbornly high regardless of trends in overall transport. Moreover there is no ownership of these emissions. Many different people and organisations are involved but no-one has ultimate responsibility.

Research for the National Parks Partnership Programme has exposed the scale of the problem in relation to their destinations[4]. The National Travel Survey shows that younger cohorts are driving less. Research into tourism in the Lake District shows that visitor markets are changing substantially. It is not clear how destinations are planning to address these trends.

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[2] https://www.churchillfellowship.org/ideas-experts/fellows-directory/alistair-kirkbride/
http://lowcarbondestinations.org/

[3] https://integratedtransport.org.uk/project/alistair-kirkbride

[4] https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/documents/conservation/new-forest-national-park-greenhouse-gas-emissions-assessment-report/

The six component model

Alistair has developed a model of visitor travel with six components. Component 1 is the first and last mile of the journey to the destination. Component 2 is the journey to/from the destination itself. Component 3 covers 'within destination' travel. This has multiple aspects: integrated extensive transport, walking and cycling routes and services, micromobility and other distinctive and fun transport and finally guest travel cards (free and paid). Components 4, 5 and 6 are traffic and parking restraint at the destination, baggage transfer, and marketing and governance respectively.

Most attention is usually applied to component 3, travel within the destination, but the majority of carbon emissions are generated in component 2, the journey to/from the destination. This is also where there is least ownership of the emissions.

The six component model of visitor travel was used to scrutinise European destinations and understand how each component can be decarbonised and integrated. Many places address some of the components of the model well but nowhere succeeds in all aspects. A useful approach is to envision the desired future end-point and work backwards to identify the actions required in the present.

Alistair's findings agree with existing research that the governance structures for tourism and transport in the UK present a colossal problem for reducing emissions from visitor journeys.

Case studies

SWISS ALPS

Swiss tourist destinations are very good at imposing traffic restrictions. There are excellent examples such as Zermatt, Saas-fee, Wengen and Mürren where visitor car access is highly managed and transport access is an integral part of the visitor experience. For example, a hotel booking in Saas-fee automatically includes a guest card for free access to bus and cable cars at the destination. This is a major lesson for the UK where travel is not treated as part of the visitor experience.

However, the downside is the colossal size of the car parks at the entrance points to these destinations. The car park at the train station which provides a shuttle service into Zermatt has 2100 spaces for cars[5]. Alistair encountered a strong reluctance to discuss the proportion of visitors arriving at Zermatt by car compared to train. This is a drawback of the Swiss model. It appears that destinations are addicted to the parking revenue. There is also a slightly artificial 'theme park' feel to some of these destinations.

AUSTRIAN ALPS

The visitor experience here was very high quality, with a good public transport network and free travel for visitors via guest cards. The Tirol separates 34 destinations at the scale of the valley with each providing guest cards for free bus travel and optional extras as paid for perks.

Werfenweng[6] in the Salzburg alps has a rail station with free shuttle buses to hotels. Mainstream electric vehicles are available to hire on a 'pay as you go' basis, along with a wide range of 'fun' e-mobility options. The guestcard provides free travel on the W3 buses and free transport and access to events such as Christmas markets in Salzburg.

Station shuttles and excursion destinations and hiking areas in our neighbouring communities of Werfen and Pfarrwerfen. E-V cars can be used free of charge with the Werfenweng Card, depending on availability. W3 bus (coordinated to the trains) and E-LOIS will reliably take you from A to B within

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[5] https://www.zermatt.ch/en/Media/Attractions/Matterhorn-Terminal-Taesch
[6] https://www.werfenweng.eu/en/

our village at any time. Unlimited and free use with the Werfenweng Card. From
https://mywerfenweng.eu/en/mobility

USA YOSEMITE PARK

Yosemite National Park has adopted a different model for managing traffic: seasonal timed visitor numbers[7]. Reservations are required to drive a private vehicle into the national park at certain times of the year.

Governance

DEFRA commissioned a Landscapes Review[8] in 2018 from Julian Glover to examine the future of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England. The review concluded that governance changes were needed to remove barriers to addressing problems caused by visitor travel. At present, organisations with powers over and responsibilities for transport and traffic are different to those with knowledge of visitor demographics and destinations.

In 2020 Alistair was commissioned by the Foundation of Integrated Transport to research the governance problem highlighted by the Glover Review. The resulting report[9] recommended an optimum governance model for access and transport to England's National Parks. This suggested where the control of different measures should reside and which governance structures, powers and responsibilities are required. These recommendations were informed by existing knowledge and expertise, including Cornwall County Council's approaches to managing visitor access.

Subsequently the relevant transport authority, Cumbria County Council, was reorganised and in April 2023 split into two unitary authorities. The report's recommendations need to be read in the light of this.

Locality focussed governance structures work very well. In Switzerland, valley-based governance oversees decision making and spending in the car-free villages of the Jungfrau. Each locality has a destination management organisation (DMO) linking the visitor business community with transport providers. This ensures a consistent approach to setting and using income from a combination of visitor levy, business levy and government funding.

Tools for local revenue raising exist in the UK, such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Something similar could be used to transform visitor travel here but BIDs are very different in scale to the approach adopted in the Swiss and Austrian Alps.

Also, in the UK there has been no comprehensive plan to do things differently and therefore no debate about what new funding would be used for. As a result discussions of tourism taxes cause controversy. A good example is the media reaction[10] to mention of a tourism levy for the Lake District.

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[7] https://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/fees.htm   (Alistair did not visit Yosemite in person).
[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review
[9] https://integratedtransport.org.uk/downloads/Alistair_Kirkbride_final_fellowship_report_December_2021.pdf and https://integratedtransport.org.uk/could-different-governance-unblock-long-standing-national-park-access-and-transport-problems
[10] https://www.thewestmorlandgazette.co.uk/news/23404978.calls-tourism-tax-criticised-business-boss-jonathan-denby/

Compared to elsewhere, the UK is not very good at bolting down accessible mobility and transport to and within visitor destinations. We need clarity about the mobility systems required before we can plan the revenue model and make funds available for implementation.

The UK should learn from Cornwall County Council's success doing transport differently in rural areas with high visitor numbers. Also the Bus Services Act gives powers for local authorities to regulate timetables.

Appetite for change

There is no doubt that people are hungry for change. For example a pre-booking system[11] has been introduced at the Pen y Pass car park in Eyri (Snowdonia) National Park between April and October, with enforcement to address the hundreds of cars illegally parked on verges. Parking charges have also been increased. There is a park and ride with a shuttle bus lower down the valley. This has worked very well with few complaints from visitors.

New market research from the Lake District[12] shows there is an appetite for different kinds of transport services. People want managed access at busy times.

Conclusions

Action is required to decarbonise visitor travel. From studying overseas models we know the components required but at present it is unclear how the UK will approach the challenge.

Governance structures need to change otherwise we will remain stuck with short term projects dependent on short term funding.

Once at the destination, transport must be an integrated part of the visitor experience.

Travel to and from the destination is the biggest source of leisure carbon emissions but there are no easy solutions. Switzerland and Austria are aware that they have great public transport products and services but the majority of people still use a car to get to their holiday destinations.

Questions and comments

ACAD4: My own research confirms Alistair's findings. There is a lot of responsibility shirking between local authorities, central government and public transport operators. For example the issue about security for women using Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is no-one's problem. So there is a conflict with governance.

NGO7 [CHAT]: Hi. I should say that I have a chapter in the part time PhD on Rural MaaS and Tourism. I hope to be able to share the insights from the data collected in 2024 as the chapter is now written!

NGO11 [CHAT]: Link between visitor experience and transport choices is really interesting - and something we're keen to explore at NT places.

DMO1 [CHAT]: Love the idea of creating an "experience" from the transport to the venue/area.

CONS1 [CHAT]: Great presentation! The issue with 'travel to' is the gap between main corridors and rural destinations - we have done some work on connecting a rural destination (Slimbridge) and the

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[11] https://snowdonia.gov.wales/visit/snowdon/pen-y-pass-car-park/
[12] https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/what-we-do/transport and https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/news-events/news-there-is-an-appetite-to-travel-differently-in-the-lake-district-2023-11-28

local rail station working with community transport and commissioned by the CRP. The WWT was fantastic at promoting the link.

GEOGRAPHY

STAT2: The Broads Authority faces a challenge because its territory is dotted across the landscape in a patchwork of designated and un-designated land. Roads don't follow river valleys here. Also if the Broads Authority was a transport authority it would have to cater for a lot of non-visitor travel as well as resident travel.

ACAD1: Could a tourism BID work? University of Hertfordshire is working on this.

STAT2: Not sure about a tourism BID as the problems are not just financial. For example, if Wroxham, as our gateway town to the Broads were to become a car-free destination there would be a problem with the Highways Authority because this is also the main commuter route between all of North Norfolk and Norwich.

4.2 Nat Taplin – Good Journey: welcoming car free visitors

Good Journey addresses the need for more sustainable visitor travel in the UK[13]. Good Journey is about helping people in the UK to have car free adventures of all kinds: day trips, holidays and short breaks. Founder/Director Nat Taplin has been promoting sustainable transport and tourism for over 25 years.

The problem

60% of scope 3 (indirect emissions) from visitor attractions come from visitor cars. 22% of all households in the UK have no car, representing 15 million people with less access to leisure, nature and the outdoors. A survey on the free shuttle bus from rail stations to NT Wallington near Morpeth this summer found 8 out of 10 passengers had no access to a car, so the bus was the only way they could visit the attraction[14].

Good Journey approach

Good Journey teams up with visitor attractions to generate more car-free visitors. Most visitor attractions associate cars with money, since currently 90% of visitors arrive by car. The upshot is that popular destinations become overwhelmed by cars and we know that the public is concerned about this. For example in October 2023, images of the overflow to the overflow car park at Cliveden House attracted 179K views on social media.

Visitor attractions' websites typically have poor information on public transport and other non-car options for access. Good Journey helps provide easy step by step travel information, a live journey planner, plus information on walking routes from the nearest bus stop or train station. Good Journey keeps the public transport information updated thereafter which is one of the hardest things for visitor attractions to do themselves.

Visitor attractions working with Good Journey give a reward of some form for people visiting car free, usually a discount on entry. In return, they can display the Good Journey mark.

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[13] https://www.goodjourney.org.uk
[14] https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/north-east/wallington
https://www.goodjourney.org.uk/attractions/wallington/

There are simple changes attractions can make to change behaviour. One example is putting the car-free travel information at the top of the 'getting here' page on the website. Research has proven what a major effect this gentle nudge has.

Good Journey has now signed up approximately 400 attractions, with particularly good representation of the major historic houses in the UK. The Good Journey website has over 150 car free itineraries for people to explore a particular area, with guides for car-free adventures across the UK.

Results

Blenheim Palace was the first major visitor attraction to join Good Journey in 2018. Over this time the annual car free visitor numbers have increased from 5,000 to 41,000 because of good public transport, a worthwhile discount and very prominent messaging about arriving car-free. Green travel now permeates their public communications.

All five RHS gardens (Harlow Carr, Bridgewater, Rosemoor, Wisley and Hyde Hall) are now in the Good Journey scheme, giving a 30% discount for car free entry. The RHS has also been experimenting with different models for shuttle buses. At Wisley the RHS teamed up with a community transport provider to run their own bus for several years. Visitors using the shuttle bus have risen from 3,000 in 2022 to 8,000 in 2023. The local authority has now agreed to operate the route for 2024 using larger vehicles.

In 2023 Good Journey ran a pilot with ten National Trust (NT) properties in the North East of England to encourage more car-free visitors. This was a success and will be rolled out to 50 NT properties across England and Wales in 2024.

A new cycle link from Aylesbury Vale rail station and Waddesdon allows access to the NT property of Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire[15]. This brought in 70,000 visitors in the first year, demonstrating the appetite for change. Other similar examples exist across the UK.

Norfolk became the first Good Journey County[16] in 2023, to be followed by Suffolk in 2024. Good Journey supports these counties to manage marketing campaigns promoting itineraries to explore by train and bus.

Future plans

Good Journey will scale up and extend existing work with the National Trust to include more properties and other national organisations. This will attract smaller organisations on board in a snowball effect.

Good Journey will continue to help visitor attractions make practical changes on the ground. This can include improving access to bus stops, improved signage for walking and cycling, better walking routes, options for left luggage, areas for drying wet clothes for cyclists and walkers, free tea in the café.

The organisation would also like to see a combined scheme for train fare/bus fare/discount entry at a national level. This has happened in the past, as 'one off' projects in conjunction with rail companies.

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[15] https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/walking-cycling-and-wheeling/view-walking-cycling-and-wheeling-routes-2/waddesdon-greenway/
https://waddesdon.org.uk/your-visit/getting-here-parking-access/
[16] https://www.goodjourney.org.uk/norfolk-good-journey-county/

The ultimate goal is for car-free visitors to always receive a warm welcome at attractions. Ironically at present a dog arriving in a car is often received more enthusiastically than a person arriving without a car.

Questions and comments

STAT2 [CHAT]: Does that bus user survey (NT Wallington) have a public link? that figure could be really useful for evidencing investment.

ACAD3 [CHAT]: In the UK we may share with people all the travel options but we do little to actually make them possible and the underlying acceptance is that car is king. UK politics is very clear at the moment that we cannot challenge car use.

DISCOUNTING ENTRY TO ATTRACTIONS

NGO7 [CHAT]: Question for Nat... Does the Blenheim Palace project also include the events that are held there? For example the international horse trials etc?

NT [CHAT]: Blenheim's discount is for normal entry, but the transport services run for all events.

DMO1 [CHAT]: Would attractions offering a discount to those arriving on public transport/without car have to charge more to those arriving by car in order to offer a "discount" to those not arriving by car? Many small businesses are operating on very slim profit margins already, so offering a discount could affect their bottom line, or falsely raise prices to others.

NT [CHAT]: responding to NGO12 They could just freeze the car-free price, while increasing the car price year on year

NGO12 [CHAT]: Nat, do you have any stats on impact discounting entry has i.e. change in number of active travel/public transport visitors?

NT [CHAT]: Blenheim Palace have increased car-free visitors from 5,000/year to 40,000/year, with 30% car-free discount (like 1)

NGO12 [CHAT]: that's impressive!

NGO8: The WWT used to discount entry, or offer a free coffee, to encourage car-free travel to their sites. This was possible because while most sites are not very accessible, most are close to a national cycle route. Some sites are very well connected to public transport, such as Barnes in London, with a larger cost implication of discounting entry for car-free visitors. During Covid sadly it was impossible to make the case to maintain a uniform discount across the organisation and as a result the discounts were dropped entirely.

GOOD JOURNEY COUNTIES

REGG11 [CHAT]: Thanks Nat - looking forward to rolling out Good Journey in Suffolk in 2024. Opening up some positive conversations already with partners.

JT [CHAT]: I was interested in the example NT mentioned of Norfolk becoming a Good Journey county - how is that working?

ACAD3 [CHAT] I'd be really interested to hear more about Norfolk activity.

NT [CHAT]: Norfolk CC have sponsored 25 attractions to offer car-free discounts and Good Journey travel info, as well a series of intineraries for train, bus, bike and foot, plus marketing campaign. (like 1)

DMO2 [CHAT]: West Norfolk has a GJ membership. We really need county-level funding for public transport to ever make west Norfolk (at the least) a GJ area.

DMO2 [CHAT]: Major rural tourism attractions in West Acre, Castle Acre, Great Massingham and lots more simply do not have any public transport infrastructure at this time, and would not run for profit in the near future (speaking as a local rural bus user myself!) during a time when LAs finances are being squeezed even more.

TOURISM AND TRAVEL HABITS

ACAD4: People need to learn new skills to adopt new modes of travel. Research suggests that people are more open to trying different sustainable travel modes in a leisure and tourism setting. This has an implication for marketing because it gives us the opportunity to get people to try new routines. And if people travel differently on holiday there is the possibility of skills transfer to a day-to-day setting. So leisure travel can help break down the barriers to new mobility experiences.

4.3 Jools Townsend – Engaging rural communities with rail and enabling sustainable leisure travel

Community Rail is a growing, community-led grass roots movement which works closely with the rail industry, community transport organisations and government partners. The Community Rail Network is a national not-for-profit umbrella body engaging and empowering communities across Britain to get involved with their local railway for sustainable and inclusive travel. There are currently 77 Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) and 1200 station friends and volunteer groups helping communities to get the maximum value from their stations.

While CRPs are very diverse, there is a concentration of members in rural areas and a long history of promoting rail based tourism. Many have a focus on promoting nearby leisure and tourism destinations. Even where partnerships are not in tourist areas there is usually a focus on local history and heritage and opening up outbound sustainable tourism and leisure.

Resilience, social capital and behaviour change

Rail lines with CRPs have historically experienced stronger passenger growth; they also recovered better after the covid pandemic. CRPs bring people together, create cohesive communities and increase social capital. There is strong evidence for the social value created by CRPs both through volunteering and the work members do to break down barriers to mobility. Sometimes these transport accessibility changes are life changing.

Research shows that local engagement and empowerment are essential for people to make changes to their behaviour. This is particularly true in relation to transport where there are a range of practical and perceived barriers to behaviour change. A widespread lack of confidence in and familiarity with using public transport has built up over time. Many young people and families grow up either with car dependency or mobility restrictions if lacking access to a car. Rebuilding this confidence is best done at a grassroots level.

Platform Rail[17] is a community rail education scheme in the South West of England. It engages thousands of children and young people each year, giving many their first taste of rail and indirectly influencing parents' attitudes to travel. These initiatives inspire sustainable leisure travel with trips to green spaces for wellbeing as well as enabling access to education, training and employment.

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[17] https://platformrail.org/

There is a video online[18] about combatting loneliness in young people by using the train to access nature with the support of a peer group. It also underlines why confidence building in using public transport is needed.

Advocacy and integration

CRPs engage with marginalised groups and disabled people, organising days out whilst at the same time enabling their voices to be heard. This work helps the rail industry to understand the lived experience of diverse groups of people and to put their needs on the agenda. For example, on the Bentham line the CRP works with northern and local charities get involved in making the line, staff and stations more dementia friendly.

CRPs also work to integrate active travel, buses and shared mobility with rail services to enable sustainable end to end journeys. This is especially important for leisure and tourism journeys which are typically longer and more complex than day to day trips. Tourists are more likely to have bulky luggage and/or travel with children and there is more peril if a connection fails in an isolated location. The local knowledge of CRPs is very valuable for addressing these challenges.

Community Rail can draw on local knowledge to make modes work better together and improve collaboration across operators, which is generally sorely lacking in our experience. CRPs innovate solutions especially to close gaps caused by bus service cuts[19]. Examples include the Rivington Park Rambler in the West Pennines and its sister service to RHS Bridgewater, run by local bus companies but instigated and promoted by the local CRP. The Tyne Valley Line CRP is introducing e-bike hire to better connect Haltwhistle with Hadrian's Wall.

Modal shift follows naturally

Community Rail can do a huge amount towards achieving the mode shift required to decarbonise and create a healthier and more equitable mobility. This can be more about having fun and bringing people together than explicitly pushing the green agenda. For example 'bucket and spade' trains[20] in Essex take hundreds of families to the seaside each year, who otherwise would rarely use the trains.

Local rail can be an attraction in its own right. CRPs have a strong tradition of actively promoting local railway history and culture, leading to a sense of discovery and excitement for local communities. CRPs are using digital channels more and more.

Research conclusively shows that using the local landscape, culture and pride of place encourages an increase in care for the environment. Sustainable behavioural change happens seamlessly as part of the work of CRPs.

Conclusion

CRPs are a key tool for co-creation and collaboration and can help develop better forms of governance for leisure travel. It is crucial that those who are developing and operating transport are made responsive to local needs and the needs of visitors. CRPs empower communities to lead the way, shape their transport future and influence how visitors are treating and respecting their localities. CPRs are inspiring greener forms of tourism and enabling people to value and protect their

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[18] https://communityrail.org.uk/reports-and-research/tackling-loneliness-with-transport/

[19] https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/rivington-rambler-bus-to-run-again-this-summer/ https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/bridgewater/plan-your-visit/shuttle-bus-frequently-asked-questions

[20] https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/about-us/news-desk/news-articles/all-special-event-trains-running-in-essex-in-2023 https://esscrp.org.uk/events/bucket-and-spade-trains/

communities. Generally there are not enough of these participatory approaches in the transport or the tourism sectors.

Particular opportunities exist for engaging and enthusing people around rail-based leisure and tourism. Over decades the private car has developed an iron grip on lifestyles, communities and perceptions of what freedom, leisure and mobility mean. To break free of this and get transport moving in a better direction needs empowerment and momentum from the grassroots up, to build pride and ownership around the alternatives to car travel.

Please feel free to talk to CRN or local CRPs.

Questions and comments

CO-DESIGN

AK [CHAT]: Agree Jools. I was looking at how residents benefit from visitor-focussed services, but it became clear that co-design through good governance is what makes things work - i.e. all involved in design. Oh, with a bit of benign dictatorship. (laugh 1)

CONS1 [CHAT]: Ah, co-design… For the Slimbridge shuttle we had one councillor shouting that 'no one needs a bus we've all got cars'… luckily he was not the only voice but it was quite a 'gulp' moment. (like 1)

STAT2 [CHAT]: Need a Jacki Weaver (laugh 1)

CONS8 [CHAT]: Really interesting presentation Jools, the community empowerment aspect is one we champion in my work both with the Car Club and at Edge. In some recent research we conducted it highlighted some key challenge areas that local communities feel are missing from their transport offer[21]. (like 1)

CONS8 [CHAT]: We also mapped the communities' needs against existing transport modes which showed that no existing solution supports their needs. There is a need for a connected multi-modal transport offer which is linked to empowered communities to create social, economic and environmental change.

SUB-NATIONAL BODIES IMPACT ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CONS8: I'm very interested in community empowerment and working in this way in my consultancy (Edge – anonymise) and in the Derwent Valley Car Club helping people make better transport choices. But there is a trend in that now we are moving away from community and local authority level decision making towards combined authorities. Local authorities have lost the ability to understand and speak to local communities. Although the combined authority uses DfT's place based decarbonisation rhetoric, the reality is that a very different approach is being taken and the community's voice isn't getting through. These need to be included.

CONS8 [CHAT]: In addition our research with local authorities highlighted a lack of real community engagement and empowerment due to a lack of resources, budgets, and knowledge on how to engage effectively. (like 1)

JT [CHAT]: Interesting point by CONS8, that sometimes it's assumed that devolution automatically means bringing decision-making closer to communities, but actually the process and importance of engaging and empowering communities can easily be side-lined. There are often networks of local

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[21] File was shared after the meeting by email 230831_CCIAB_Feedback_Webinar.pptx

groups and campaigners that can be key allies and advocates in creating the change we need, but they're often not seen and treated in that way. (like 2 heart 1)

4.4 Hope Valley Climate Action and Travelling Light

Roger Clarke convenes the travel and transport group of Hope Valley Climate Action (HVCA)[22].

Background and approach

The Hope Valley is mid way between Sheffield and Manchester and in the centre of the Peak District National Park. There are 3 to 5 million visitors a year, mostly arriving by car on day trips from the conurbations. For the last four years Hope Valley Climate Action has been raising awareness about and encouraging action on climate change at personal, group and community levels alongside advocating for policy change.

Travelling Light[23] is HVCA's nationally significant sustainable transport pilot project. The vision for transport in the Hope Valley includes integration, active travel and good quality public transport alongside a move away from private vehicles. Tranquility is seen as an asset valued by visitors and residents alike.

The approach is for the community to co-create solutions with the local transport authority and public transport operators and use lessons from other communities and projects in the UK and overseas.

Community engagement

Community engagement is a very important part of the whole picture. HVCA works with local residents, visitors and partner organisations such as the destination management organizations 'Visit Peak District' and 'Visit Derbyshire'. There is also a joint project with the Community Rail Partnership at Bamford Station at the moment. Maintaining momentum is tough because it takes a long time to deliver visible achievements in transport. Getting real time information for buses provided a helpful quick win to increase community confidence in the project.

Active travel

Active travel is neglected, especially in rural areas. People say they can't walk or cycle on rural roads because it is too dangerous. This must be addressed because many of the journeys visitors want to make will be short and on public roads. Designating some of those roads with low speed limits and priority for walking and cycling is very important.

At the outset HVCA promoted active travel through cycling with 'try an e-bike' day events. People were keen but felt unsafe on the local roads. So HVCA is very pleased to be working with Derbyshire County Council on an Active Travel Masterplan for the Hope Valley. While lots of walking happens in the hills, there is no network of good paths and safe routes between local settlements in the valley itself. For example making simple trips from home to school or from the campsite to the pub or local shop are difficult on foot or by cycle.

Public transport

Public transport is at the core of provision for leisure travel. The HVCA is for integrated, multi-modal transport access to the Hope Valley. There needs to be one network, one ticket and one timetable

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[22] https://hopevalleyclimateaction.org.uk/about-hvca/

[23] https://hopevalleyclimateaction.org.uk/travel/travelling-light/

across modes with seamless modal transfer for travellers. Separate provision for visitors is not helpful. For example Chatsworth House employees need public transport access just as much as visitors do.

Public transport services by rail are especially good now that, in response to pressure from HVCA and others, Northern Trains agreed to change to a clockface service every hour for all five stations in the Hope Valley. Situated at the start of the Pennine Way, Edale is the busiest rail station with 120,000 passengers per year, yet it has the smallest residential settlement.

Bus services are pretty poor and HVCA is lobbying for improvements. Two 'use the bus' campaigns revealed how concerned people were about poor reliability, poor quality services and lack of information about buses.

Shared mobility

Travelling Light includes a shared mobility project for car clubs and peer-to-peer car sharing in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and Midlands Connect, the sub-national transport body. HVCA's role is to promote these practical projects but also conduct community conversations in each of the villages to collect views on issues and possible solutions from local people and visitors. Commonplace, the citizen engagement platform[24] was used to collect views and suggestions for projects.

Demand management and integrated planning

Shared mobility is fine, but can only scratch the surface of a much bigger issue about how to manage access into popular areas like National Parks. This is a thorny issue because people feel strongly about it. But it's an area to explore further, whether through pricing or physical restraint, as well as providing good public transport alternatives.

Up to now the transport network has been planned from the point of view of the resident community and hinged largely around commuting and local community use. Whereas the way forward is to think about visitor travel in terms of the routes, the kinds of services that are on offer and when they run. All stakeholders now need to start looking at transport in the Hope Valley as part of the visitor experience not simply as a functional means of getting into and around the area.

Funding

HVCA has been fortunate to be supported for an initial period by the Department for Transport. This enabled a great deal of community engagement but sadly the multi-year funding has now been withdrawn. However the community interest remains strong and there is a good partnership with the local authority. HVCA has worked to get the politics right, especially with the two local MPs and politicians at the local authorities.

Conclusion

Visitor travel is a neglected subject. 30% of people in Sheffield and Manchester have no access to a car. HVCA wants people to come and enjoy the National Park but residents and visitors agree that the biggest problem diminishing this enjoyment is too many cars.

A key issue is to change governance structures. Public authorities have to set the agenda, not simply for public transport but also for public provision for active travel and managing car use. The creation

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[24] https://www.commonplace.is/

of a mayor for the East Midlands is a promising development, based on the transport achievements of the mayors in Greater Manchester and in South Yorkshire. Whatever else there will be a General Election in 2024 and this will bring new politicians and new possibilities. So HVCA wants to inform regional and county and national level priorities.

Questions and discussion

REGG1 [CHAT]: Roger to what degree do you see seasonal variation in demand for travel in Hope Valley? That's a big issue for us in the South West that makes appropriate year-round provision (and journey time) a challenge.

RC [CHAT]: Hope Valley travel follows a weekly cycle even more than a seasonal cycle. Weekends are the popular times. That's no different in principle from former patterns of commuting into cities.

ACAD3 [CHAT]: There is also a real challenge for rural communities who attract relatively large visitor numbers compared to their local residential numbers but there is no single destination who would be responsible for the management of those visitors. In the mix is also how you manage/provide support for Parish Councils to take action. (like 1)

AK [CHAT]: I wonder whether its useful to consider single sites (e.g. NT/WWT location) and areas (e.g. national park / valley / coast) differently?

AK [CHAT]: ...and in the Lake District, "visitors" who live locally vs those from further afield vs those staying, all lead in (usefully) different directions in terms of how we might consider their travel demands.

AK [CHAT]: https://situcumbria.org.uk/ = business led valley-scale visitor travel initiative

JT [CHAT]: Agree with RC that when we take an engaging, empowering approach at a local level people do get it. Sustainable travel isn't as divisive and sticky an issue as some make out. Tangible, visible projects that improve localities are key, as is building ownership around change. (like 2)

ACAD1: Agree CRNs have loads of great practical experience to share on community partnership working.

4.5 Additional Discussion
The following additional points were made by participants using the chat function in zoom.

E-BIKES
This was a major topic of discussion in the chat.

NGO12 [CHAT]: Interested in people's thoughts on how huge growth/popularity of e-bikes will change things and what the opportunities are there?

CONS1 [CHAT]: They'll make a massive difference if they can get on trains so they can do the 'last mile' bit.

CONS1 [CHAT]: The long distance trains in Europe are getting better at carrying bikes but they were awful up until a couple of years ago.

NGO12 [CHAT]: 100%

STAT2 [CHAT] Although the Journey as an experience, the walk from Hope Station to Castleton YHA is about 3 miles and a lovely start to your holiday in the peaks.

ACAD3 [CHAT]: We see much more of these (e-bikes) around the Norfolk Coast, enabling people to travel between villages and also enabling older people to stay active for longer.

NGO9 [CHAT]: For e-bikes, safe places to lock them up will be particularly important given the cost.

STAT2 [CHAT]: If your destination has wheel benders in place of Sheffield stands you are not cycle friendly - probably a message for the Good Journey folks to push.

AK [CHAT]: For what it's worth, on my visit, e-bikes were for rental/day out or visitors brought them with them. I found very little e-bikes integrated as part of the "transport" system. Cogne has 200 e-bikes in bike share scheme. https://www.alpine-pearls.com/en/die-perlen/italy/cogne

NGO11 [CHAT]: E-bikes are really popular on our properties (multi-use trails and bike hire) - need to extend to the journey to our properties.

AK [CHAT]: Initiatives like https://www.e-bikesafaris.com/ seem to be growing - i.e. provide e-bike for use for whole visit.

JT [CHAT]: E-bikes have the potential to make a huge difference in rural areas, and many of our members are involved in installing hire schemes/hubs etc at stations, BUT they don't get around the issue of a lack of safe active travel routes/infrastructure, which as Roger just said is problematic just about everywhere. (like 2)

CONS8 [CHAT]: They will make a big difference in areas with good infrastructure both in terms of safe cycling routes and at visitor destinations safe and secure parking, charging. In areas without safe routes sadly it will only affect those who are highly motivated and not the masses. Our experience previously found a really high uptake and interest with e-bikes especially in our hilly area for leisure purposes.

CONS1 [CHAT]: Completely agree - rural 60mph national speed limit roads are a disaster for walking and cycling. And no pavements! (like 2)

DMO1 [CHAT]: I run a very micro bike hire business in Norfolk, and am lucky enough to have a 9 mile stretch of council owned path next to a narrow gauge steam train route on our doorstep. We are constantly asked about e-bikes, but have resisted so far due to insurance and liability issues as a tiny business. Conversely in the village we are based the road is way too dangerous to encourage cycle travel - with huge lorries mounting pavement regularly as they can't pass in opposite directions through the village. (like 1)

PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONSTRAINTS
RAIL CAPACITY
AK [CHAT]: Both Austrian and (less so) Swiss rail have key capacity issues - especially for peak leisure demand... possibly only allowing a few % reductions in approach car use. Coach revival? Ridesharing?

STAT2 [CHAT]: This is also becoming an issue on British railways to an extent. Greater Anglia in the East is now back to pre-covid travel levels but with a big shift from commuter to leisure. Anyone who has been on the Cambridge to London train on a Saturday can confirm this issue.

NT [CHAT]: Yes, leisure travel is now the growth area - with trains often now busier at weekends than on week days.

RC [CHAT]: The trick is to plan public transport for local people and visitors together. Visitor use can help make bus and rail services more viable for local use. (like 2)

RAIL DEVOLUTION

STAT2: We have been asked why we can't provide special trains for bird-watchers by linking up parts of track and little-used stations. But DfT has a system of setting national priorities for rail. If rail powers were devolved locally we could do some innovative things.

JT [CHAT]: I think there's also an important point we haven't really covered around building links and opening up dialogue between communities and transport operators. Sometimes there is scope for operators to make improvements, direct efforts or even invest funding in the changes needed to open up sustainable access to tourism and leisure attractions, which benefits them commercially too and supports recovery from the pandemic. (like 1)

JT: Adding to Roger's piece, we also experience the trials and tribulations of engaging government at different levels and making sure to empower local people and organisations. But we must not overlook the fact that opportunity is there to link with the community directly with transport operators. Community Rail Partnerships advise rail operators on how to address local issues, create new leisure access and we even help operators find funding for local projects which inspire communities. Communities can help operators better collaborate with each other too, bringing together rail, bus, community transport and ferry operators. Especially for leisure travel. We even achieved combined ticketing in Southampton. Though the rail sector is currently in limbo with rail reform and transformation on hold, political change is on the way. There will be a general election so there will be changes to the rail industry and opportunities to bring the rail industry closer to communities and increase partnership working and local engagement. If the community is allowed to lead then great things can happen. We need to see community engagement as empowerment not as "doing to" but "doing with".

INTEGRATED BUS SERVICES

DMO1: I am a member of Visit the Broads which is a destination marketing organisation which works closely with the Broads Authority. The Broads span parts of Norfolk and Suffolk which presents a problem for bus services which need to cross county boundaries. Many of our villages are not well-served by buses. I agree that the projects in the Alps are great but we couldn't directly apply these to the Broads.

AFFORDABILITY

NGO9 [CHAT]: We haven't said much about affordability of public transport as opposed to availability. £2 bus fare has been good for addressing this and we need to ensure it's retained. (like 1)

DMO1 [CHAT]: If it could include rail too it would be amazing.

NT [CHAT]: £5 day bus ticket in Cornwall is a game-changer

NGO11 [CHAT]: In Scotland young people have free bus passes - game changer for access for young people to art, culture and nature as well as education, jobs and health

JT [CHAT]: And surely with the political change we will see and therefore reform of rail, it should open up these kinds of opportunities around affordability, joined up ticketing and better integration generally.

RC [CHAT]: We're hoping to host a visit from Louise Haigh, Labour shadow transport spokesperson and a Sheffield MP.

JT [CHAT]: Labour have such a strong focus on empowering communities - I think there's scope to link that agenda up better with transport & travel. (like 2)

ACCESS TO WORK & RECRUITMENT IN LEISURE SECTOR

AK [CHAT]: Stubai Valley, Austria - buses from 6am to midnight, partly so that people can get to & from work, esp in hospitality. Funding part public, but also visitor & business levies. Free for young adults.

DMO1 [CHAT]: Recruitment within our 100+ member businesses at Visit The Broads has been a huge issue over the past 12 months. On a personal level, public transport from our village stops at 6pm each day - so getting workers to their employment is also a big issue. (like 2)

NGO11 [CHAT]: Second this - recruitment in our properties in Norfolk particularly is difficult because of geography and lack of public transport.

CC6: Echo the chat. I chaired a call for evidence for Transport East in Summer 2023 with travel and tourism in East of England. Access to work came up as a big issue. The hospitality sector suffers recruitment problems because there is a lack of transport for young people without access to a car. Young people face barriers of vehicle availability, insurance and the cost of driving lessons.

NT [CHAT]: Nice example of Roger's preference for public transport which works for both visitors and staff - Le Manor Hotel in Oxfordshire is subsidising a round the clock bus service from Oxford to their village.

CC6 [CHAT]: I believe this is part of their planning permission, so a good example of how planning regulation can work for both staff and visitors. If anyone has other examples of planning regs being used please let me know. (like 1)

RC [CHAT]: The tourism input to transport planning is important, but it needs to be integrated with travel by local people. (like 1)

TRANSPORT PLANNING AND LEISURE SECTOR

CC6: Travel for tourism is not properly recognised in Local Transport Plans, whereas access to education, training, employment and health is. We need to lobby DfT to address this gap because leisure travel behaviour is changing with more domestic tourism.

ACAD1: Agree travel for leisure is marginalised in transport planning.

ACAD1: Cornwall is a very positive case study for other rural areas with a major hospitality and leisure sector. The county council made a strong enough case for economic development based around tourism and leisure transport that the local enterprise partnership funded 'tap on / tap off' ticketing technology for all buses in Cornwall. The £5 day bus fare for countywide travel is a game changer and it would be great to extend this to rail. Cornwall has seen a 26% increase in bus use recently and can also show the benefits of providing high quality transport interchanges. This learning is easily transferable. Cornwall is a good example to make the case to persuade politicians and the public to back innovation and change in rural local transport.

Scotland's free bus travel for young people is also a very good initiative.

DEMAND MANAGEMENT

AK [CHAT]: Can I float the standing item carrot & stick question? i.e. the role for parking and traffic restrictions for meaningful behaviour shifts? (like 1)

ACAD1 [CHAT]: Maybe say more on Eryri/Snowdonia?

STAT2 [CHAT]: The Snowdonia example probably had the advantage that the people the Local Highways Authority were aggressively ticketing are not the same people who elect the councillors to that authority. (like 1)

NGO12 [CHAT]: STAT2 interestingly (and confidentially) there was less ticketing and enforcement than you might think - just a lot of promotion of it! (like 2)

STAT2 [CHAT]: Interesting !

NGO12 [CHAT]: I was just pondering the very same Alistair, from what I've seen you need both. Only a small number will take the more sustainable option if there is no stick. And making the 'carrot' super convenient!

NGO12:The big success in Snowdon was the combination of carrot and stick. People will use services if they are made convenient. Generation Z and Millennials place a high value on convenience and any new transport systems must respond to this. But we need enforcement too. Governance is key to success in Wales.

WALES – A MODEL FOR SUCCESS?

ACAD1: Discussion in the chat suggested that UK politics makes it impossible to manage car use. However, in Wales and Scotland more is going on. For example the final report of the North Wales Transport Commission25 has some very encouraging proposals.

The report recommends four trains an hour plus an express on the North Wales main line to the gateways to the Eryri National Park, particularly at Bangor. In this way the commission has started to address the challenge of travel to the visitor destination as well as within it.

It's clear that new of parking enforcement has made a big difference around the National Park. The park and ride Sherpa'r Wyddfa shuttle buses26 have seen a phenomenal growth in use. They are not profitable but they are close to breaking even. The Welsh Government has also upgraded and introduced new Traws Cymru long distance buses into the National Park.

A governance recommendation includes a partnership for the National Park to address transport across the piece to integrate transport into the visitor experience: "We recommend the creation of a partnership where Sherpa'r Wyddfa and other public transport services can be supported by innovative sources of funding including parking revenues if available and appropriate" (p51).

ACAD1: It is very important to appreciate the progress in Wales and Scotland. The Welsh Government is planning to introduce bus franchising and the North Wales Transport Commission says there are things we can do before franchising is in place. Safe active travel is included in the implementation.

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[25] https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-north-wales-transport-commission-final-reports
https://www.gov.wales/north-wales-transport-commission-final-report
[26] https://www.sherparwyddfa.wales/

ACAD1 [CHAT]: https://www.gov.wales/north-wales-transport-commission-interim-report-june-2023 (like 2)

NGO9 [CHAT]: Does the North Wales Transport Commission report include any recommendations to improve the Cambrian Coast line which is really important part of rail access to Eryri?

ACAD1 [CHAT]: Yes, refers to the Scotland work on this

NGO9 [CHAT]: Thanks, Stephen.

ACAD3 [CHAT]: Thanks Stephen Joseph for sharing the Wales and Scottish work. A reminder that all is not lost.

NGO12:The North Wales Transport Commission sounds very exciting and it was a very interesting experience working on transport and travel in North Wales and taking part on the Roads Review Panel for Wales. It was clear that very different approaches are needed for rural and city-based travel. Solving rural transport problems require very different skills and knowledge due to the different level of demand and very large seasonal fluctuations.

NGO12:It is essential to have strong political support for transformational change in transport. It is easy for political opponents to weaponise initiatives like the Welsh 20mph policy[27] yet people are individually supportive. Deputy First Minister Lee Waters has led the way and taken a lot of political flak for this.

NGO12 [CHAT]: Personal reflection from Wales - it's very lovely cycling in a 20mph zone because you're going at a similar speed as the rest of the traffic so feels much safer (like 1)

ACAD3:What does the Welsh and Scottish experience tell us about transport in England? In Cambridge recently, transport changes have been negative and fraught with political wranglings. However, living in Norfolk I can see how to apply a lot of the ideas from today's speakers to support rural communities. For example how to address the first and last mile challenge and allow people in rural areas to access services.

POSITIVE NATIONAL CHANGES
NEW DUTIES UNDER THE LEVELLING UP ACT
NGO9: On STAT2's points about the combined transport authority focus, it's not a silver bullet to create loads of funding, but there are new statutory requirements in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 which impose stronger duties on local authorities to "seek to further the purposes of the national parks". So there is a stronger requirement on all public bodies to help people access and enjoy AONBs, the Broads and other National Parks. This should help get more emphasis on addressing some of the transport barriers that prevent people enjoying these places at the moment. This is a good development but people are generally unaware of it.

CC6 [CHAT]: NGO9 could you share a link to the relevant section of the act please?

NGO9 [CHAT]: New legislative requirements relating to Protected Landscapes in Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55/enacted (like 2)

CC7 [CHAT]: Guidance on LITs is due early next year (like 1)

LOCAL INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SETTLEMENTS
ACAD1: Another recent change is that as a consequence of dropping HS2 north of Birmingham, for the first time there is funding for non-metropolitan authorities in the Midlands and North of

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[27] https://www.gov.wales/introducing-default-20mph-speed-limits

England. These are called Local Integrated Transport Settlements[28] (LITS). The goal is to roll these out across England in future. The idea came from earlier Rural Transport roundtables, to provide long term funding for non-metropolitan transport. From April 2025 there will therefore be long term capital funding for transport outside metropolitan authorities in the North and Midlands. There is no revenue support available at this stage, although this is still under discussion. This will make a big difference and could provide funding for visitor travel. Guidance on LITs is due early 2025.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ACAD1: Engagement is emerging as a major theme. Hope Valley Climate Action used Commonplace App for community involvement. Any thoughts on this?

RC: Community engagement with HVCA is a long haul. We got good support from the two MPs, both Conservative and the leader of Derbyshire County Council. We have worked hard to get sign up and political buy-in. The phrase 'climate action' frightened politicians at first but we won them round eventually. After all climate change demands action. Translating political support into action given the way that the local authority works has been difficult. To be honest Derbyshire County Council perhaps hasn't been at the forefront on transport planning but it struggles with funding just to maintain the roads. It's hard to get to a more strategic view of how things could change. We have had good support from the sustainable transport team at the County Council who see us as their allies. It has been harder to influence the Bus Services Improvement Plan.

The public understand the problems but they are very busy, so they only want to engage when they can see a result from their actions. For example, tree planting always gets a good turn out because there is an immediate sense of achievement and it's sociable. By contrast, influencing transport policies is too hard, intangible and long term. We need a specific focus to attract community engagement. A good example of successful community engagement was channelling anger about poor bus services into a specific project lobbying for change.

A new project is developing an Active Travel Masterplan for the Hope Valley. This will generate a lot of interest but we may see a backlash from weaponizing the 'war on motorists' narrative. All interest is good. It's important to listen to people on the ground and latch onto current hot topics and interests to get engagement.

RC [CHAT]: We're working with the Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership and local organisations at Bamford station to plan and publicise a network of active travel routes to and from the station.

FUNDING CUTS

NGO7 [CHAT]: HOT OFF THE PRESS and unfolding during this call : to bring yet more challenges, Transport Scotland have today confirmed that they are no longer going to fund the programme Smarter Choices, Smarter Places from April 2024[29]. The fund supports active travel and sustainable transport, particularly in rural communities. This is going to have significant impact on many along with mental health challenges and further social exclusion. No funding now for rural communities. (cry 3 sad 1)

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[28] "Local Integrated Transport Settlements (LITS) – this is a new £4.7 billion fund for the 27 local transport authorities, outside city-regions, in the North and Midlands. It will run for 7 years from 2025/26; funding allocations will be announced in due course." From parliamentary written question:https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-13/1442

[29] https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/news/news-post/our-smarter-choices-smarter-places-programme-will-end-in-april-2024

TAXATION REFORM

ACAD1: A big lesson from Alistair's research and others is the importance of integrating travel into the visitor experience in an area-wide partnership.

CONS1 [CHAT]: However we need to be talking about VAT and decarbonisation.

CONS1: We have seen this in microcosm in a project for a bus link between Slimbridge WWT and the Cam and Dursley rail station which is a distance of about 3.5 miles. The station is covered by the Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership. The 'last mile' represented by this final leg of the journey is the problem as it's on 60mph rural roads. The CRP and the local community transport provider, Community Connexions, developed a pilot shuttle bus project[30]. This worked very well but there were governance issues. If you discount the bus ticket along with the entry for the attraction HMRC rules means that this attracts VAT at 20%. Combining the entry ticket with the bus fare loses the zero rate which penalises the attraction. On demand transport suffers tax disincentives in a similar way. This is a real problem because small businesses in rural areas operate on very small margins.

NGO8: The Slimbridge Shuttle bus was fantastic and thanks are due to everyone involved. The VAT implications of a combined ticket need to be balanced against the cost of providing land for car parking.

JT [CHAT]: CONS1, would be good to understand that policy/fiscal barrier to combined ticketing/discounts a bit better? Do you have a report/briefing on that? (like 1)

CONS1 [CHAT]: I will write something! (heart 1)

CONS1 [CHAT]: This is the learning from the Slimbridge shuttle, unfortunately not the VAT issue but I have notes that I'll put together. http://www.beatekubitz.com/blog-1/2023/9/21/building-a-better-bus-service

STAT1 [CHAT]: VAT only applies if it is one joint ticket for attraction and travel - in most cases a discount on the entry ticket is a much easier option to set up and arguably to use. Do we have any data as to what people want and what will create the biggest behaviour change?

CONS1 [CHAT]: Indeed it's the convenient joint ticket that is the issue. We were trying to work out a way to sell digital bus tickets at the same time as the attraction ticket but it was not possible in one transaction. From a customer experience point of view it's quite unsatisfactory.

CLOSING REMARKS FROM SPEAKERS
'FUN' IS AN EASY SELL
NT: We need to turn travel into a visitor experience. I worked in the New Forest National Park on rebranding a bus service as a "beach bus" using beautiful retro images on the vehicles to conjure up the glory days of the seaside holiday. We offered a free ice cream on arrival at the beach. People loved the idea and demand soared. Everyone loves a steam train outing or an open-top bus tour. A woodland walk from the bus to the front door of an attraction can be made into a fun experience. People will voluntarily leave their cars behind and jump on board if it's fun.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP
AK [CHAT]: Part of governance is leadership, and the risk of locality based good practice is patchiness. Who are the appropriate leaders (and bodies) at the different scales of governance - for visitor & leisure travel? (like 1)

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[30] https://www.gloucestershirecommunityrail.org/slimbridge-shuttle

AK: Good points in the chat about leadership and governance. Very rich discussion indeed. Engagement is so important, We need to look at this discussion through the lens of the European model. I can't see reasons why we can't do the same.

It's good to point to good practice but we risk patchy progress and need to understand what must underpin systemic changes. Governance and leadership must cascade upwards. There is a vacuum in management and leadership of the leisure sector. We need to know what a cascade of governance from local to regional to national level would look like in the UK. But let's concentrate on cracking local governance first. We need to translate all these ideas into practice.

COMMUNITIES

RC: We need to keep an eye on European models and a bottom up approach. Some things need to be specific to a location, others can be brought in from elsewhere. We need to do things bottom up. I think there is a willingness from people to embrace new ideas and create that sense of vision and new possibilities. Ask why can't we do things here which are done in countries not so different from ours.

JT: Very keen to see the focus today on community engagement. Communities have the skill and knowledge to innovate, generate ideas and solutions and inspire behavioural change. But it is a huge challenge to join up the governance at all levels. It is encouraging to see the focus on engagement and especially with young people and families which is key. We need to keep a focus on this.

NETWORKING & THANKS

The following thanks were noted. In addition, many participants used the CHAT function in ZOOM to request and give contact details for networking and collaboration after the meeting. This degree of interaction has not been observed in previous roundtables. It is possible that there is an unmet need for skills sharing to address transport challenges in the leisure and tourism sector.

DMO3 [CHAT]: Great presentations and comments. Eco-attractions www.ecoattractions.com is relatively new to the reviewing of and decarbonising of travel to our members sites and, listening to the presentations and looking at the comments, it seems that there is much we can learn from today's participants. Perhaps you would be OK if we contacted you for discussions? (like 1)

ACAD4 [CHAT]: Hi All, unfortunately I have to leave for another meeting. I enjoy this meeting enormously and I think all the contributions have been invaluable - I will enjoy reading the chat - enjoy the rest of the round table and have a lovely day! (like 1 heart 1)

DMO2 [CHAT]: Thank you for such a great meeting, with lots of really great ideas. Sadly I have to dart off to another meeting, but please do keep me in the loop with any related follow-ups. Thank you! (1f44b_wavinghand 1)

NGO12 [CHAT]: This as been such a fascinating and insightful discussion thanks all and Stephen Joseph for excellent chairing (like 3)

ACAD3 [CHAT]: Thanks everyone and I am really keen to connect and collaborate either from a Uni of Cambridge perspective or from a Norfolk Rural mobility perspective EMAIL

NGO7 [CHAT]: CONS8 do you have a copy of the report or a link? Thanks

CONS8 [CHAT]: Unfortunately I can't share the full report but I can share the overview slides and would be happy to talk through the research and findings in more detail. The research was part of a TRIG funded programme to look at the model for a community Car Club in a Box model but the research initially was focussed on existing transport offer and communities needs to understand

challenges before looking to solutions taking our design thinking approach:
230831_CCIAB_Feedback_Webinar.pptx

NGO7 [CHAT]: Thank you CONS8. if you could drop me an email on EMAIL we can discuss. Thanks (like 1)

STAT2 [CHAT]: Thanks everyone

CONS1 [CHAT]: Thank you, so much useful information and experience

NGO11 [CHAT]: Thank you for this conversation - inspiring! Please do keep me looped in.

CONS8 [CHAT]: Thank you everyone, great conversations and chat. Exciting times ahead! If anyone would like to follow up discussions my email is EMAIL

NGO9 [CHAT]: Thanks for a very interesting discussion.

CONS1 [CHAT]: I'm happy for my email to be shared too - EMAIL

ACAD3 [CHAT]: yes, very happy (to share email)

NGO9 [CHAT]: Happy to share my email EMAIL

CC7 [CHAT]: Thank you a really interesting meeting and discussion.

NGO8 [CHAT]: Thank you all

VIS1 [CHAT]: Thank you for a brilliant discussion today, there was a lot to take in. Lots to think about.

CONS1 [CHAT]: Is it possible to share the links from the chat afterwards? I don't think I have been able to keep up (like 1)

JT [CHAT]: Very pleased to have a follow up chat with you & any on the call about working together. My email = EMAIL. Our leisure promotion coordinator Alice Mannion is on EMAIL. We are happy to advise on participatory, empowering approaches to promoting public transport use as well as supporting links to existing community rail activity. (reply to query now in the thanks section)

RC [CHAT]: Thanks for all the positive comments. I'm at EMAIL Do get in touch!

DMO3 [CHAT]: Reply to JT Hi Jools - We hope to be doing a lot on this next year, depending on finance, so we'd love to be in touch.

ACAD3 [CHAT]: I am based in GM and would be really interested to connect with you DMO2 on how to manage access from a community perspective whilst enabling access to our countryside. (like 1)

DMO2 [CHAT]: reply to ACAD3 EMAIL (like 1)

NGO11 [CHAT]: ACAD3 would be great to connect with you re North Norfolk (like 1)

ACAD3 [CHAT]: my email EMAIL I will be pleased to connect. (like 1)

SD/2/1/24