LOW TRAFFIC FUTURE

Local Transport Plans

A guide for councillors and campaigners

Local Action for a Low Traffic Future

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It's time to talk about the future

INTRODUCTION

Why we need a Low Traffic Future

A low traffic future is one in which children can play in the streets, where neighbours can socialise, and young and old alike can get out and about easily, without needing to drive everywhere. It is a world with cleaner air, safer streets, excellent public transport networks, and great provision for walking, cycling and disabled road users. It would be good for our health and that of our streets and communities, our economy and our environment.

Compare this with the costs of the UK's current 'High Traffic Present':

- *Congestion:* This is estimated to cost the UK economy £11 billion a year.
- *Air pollution:* Pollution is estimated to hasten around 30,000 deaths annually in the UK, at an economic cost of £27bn or more. The previous UK Government lost three court cases over its failure to keep pollution within legal limits.
- *Noise pollution:* The estimated health, societal, amenity and lost productivity costs of noise in England add up to around £14-20bn annually.
- *Road danger:* The cost of road deaths and injuries in 2024 was estimated to be £54.8bn.
- *Physical inactivity:* Inactivity-related ill health costs the UK around £7.4bn annually.
- *Greenhouse gas emissions.* Transport is now the largest emitting sector of the UK economy, with CO_2 emissions from road transport in 2024 being only 9% below 1990 levels. Increases in road traffic (particularly vans) and in vehicle size ('car-spreading') have offset the benefits of more fuel-efficient engines, while also increasing congestion, road safety and road maintenance costs.

Solutions: an overview

There is no single 'silver bullet' for achieving a low traffic future. However, at the local level, it will involve investing in high-quality provision for walking, cycling and safe streets - including measures such as 20mph schemes, school streets and low traffic neighbourhoods - as well as by working to improve public, shared and community transport (i.e. not only rail, 'metro', bus and coach services, but also car-pooling, ride-sharing, public cycle and scooter hire schemes. dial-a-ride and similar schemes). It will also involve managing travel demand by ensuring that new housing and other developments are located and designed to make it easy to travel to and from them without depending on private cars.

Sustainable transport improvements can be funded partly by rebalancing transport spending away from new road schemes that won't be needed in a low traffic future, and partly from some form of road user charging. Charging schemes should aim not only to reduce road traffic demand directly, but also indirectly by funding sustainable transport improvements that reduce our dependence on cars, vans and lorries. Public support for the principle of road user charging has grown markedly since 2007, though it remains important to ensure that charging schemes are fair and seen to be fair.

As for freight transport, the primary goal should be to enable as much long-distance freight as possible to be shifted onto freight trains. This should be combined with a range of solutions to improve urban logistics (i.e. delivering goods to and within town and city centres), including trans-shipment facilities and increased use of cargo-bikes.

POLICY AND LEGAL CONTEXT

Guidance on Local Transport Plans and quantifying carbon

Sections 108 and 109 of the Local Transport Act 2000 require English local transport authorities (LTAs) outside London to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP), and to keep it under review, altering it as they see fit. The LTP must set out the LTA's "policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area", and to implement those policies. Those policies must be prepared taking account of Government policy and specifically with regard to any statutory guidance on LTPs which it issues under subsection 108(2ZB).

The Department for Transport (DfT) issued long-awaited new statutory guidance on LTPs in April 2026, replacing the previous (long-outdated) LTP guidance from 2009. In the intervening years, the LTP process had largely fallen into neglect, due to changes made to the LTP process in 2010-11: LTPs no longer had to be written in fixed time-periods, and the quality of a LTA's LTP ceased to be the main factor affecting how much local transport funding it received from central Government. Many LTAs began work on their LTPs after DfT announced the revival of the LTP process in 2022 - with several then being completed before the new guidance eventually appeared.

Eight months earlier (in August 2025), DfT had published new (non-statutory) Quantifiable Carbon Guidance (QCG), to accompany the new LTP guidance. This advises LTAs on how to quantify the carbon impacts of local transport in their area, both from users and from transport infrastructure.

It is welcome that this is one of the indicators in the local transport outcomes framework (see below) that DfT will use to hold LTAs to account for local transport performance. Yet it is disappointing that DfT dropped the original intention to call it 'Quantifiable Carbon Reduction' guidance.

Wider transport policy and legislation

DfT's 'Better Connected' strategy for integrated transport, published on the same day as the LTP guidance, sets out the Government's transport strategy at the national level. It has three principles:

- *Place:* using transport to create better connected places;
- *People:* putting people at the heart of everything we do; and
- *Partnership:* working in partnership with local leaders and experts.

It sets out 41 actions, grouped under 8 priorities, namely: (a) Simplifying payments and information; (b) Providing safe and dependable journeys; (c) Making travel accessible and affordable; (d) Creating healthier communities; (e) Aligning transport and development; (f) Championing data and technology; (g) Empowering local leaders; and (h) Optimising decision-making and appraisal.

Most of the individual actions are sensible in themselves. However the strategy lacks an analysis of the challenges facing UK transport, e.g. the Government's own predictions of continued traffic growth and the associated economic, environmental and other challenges associated with this, or any quantifiable objectives for tackling these. In short, whilst the strategy claims to be 'vision-led', the vision itself is not clear and neither is the funding.

Three months earlier, DfT had published a Road Safety Strategy, setting out a range of actions on (a) improving road user safety; (b) making greater use of information, technology and innovation to improve safety and collision investigation; (c) creating safer road environments and (d) strengthening road traffic law and its enforcement. The actions in (a) and (c) are those most relevant to LTAs.

The Government passed railways legislation in 2024 which allowed train operations to be brought under public control as contracts expired. Meanwhile the Bus Services Act 2025 now gives LTAs greater control over local bus services, including the option to run them directly. A further Railways Bill, likely to be passed by early 2027, will allow for the setting-up of Great British Railways as the body with overall responsibility for the rail network and services, though with 'established mayoral strategic authorities' (see below) being able to seek to run rail services in their region.

Policy and legislation on devolution, planning and land-use

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 creates new powers and duties for 'strategic authorities' (SAs), including all existing combined authorities. The Government is creating three levels of strategic authority, with the highest level ('established mayoral strategic authorities' or EMSAs) having greater powers and financial freedoms than the two lower tiers ('mayoral strategic authorities' or MSAs, and 'foundation strategic authorities' or FSAs). In addition to their existing powers and duties as local transport authorities (e.g. duties to write a Local Transport Plan and to coordinate public transport information), the responsibilities of SAs now include:

Transport, highway and traffic authority powers and duties:

- A power to raise a transport levy to deliver transport services, which must be collected by the lower-tier authorities in their area;
- Powers to enforce pavement parking - and, where there are unitary authorities (UAs) in their area, to take over responsibility for enforcing moving traffic offences, subject to agreement with those authorities.
- Powers to regulate 'micromobility services' (e.g. shared cycle or scooter schemes) in their area.
- MSAs and EMSAs will additionally have a duty to designate a 'key route network' (KRN) of major roads in their area - they can then direct any unitary authority in their area on how its powers / duties as the highway or traffic authority should be used in managing those roads. They will also be under a duty to consider setting targets to reduce traffic on their KRN.

Wider powers and duties:

- A duty to write a local growth strategy, containing policies for economic growth in their area.
- A duty to write a spatial development strategy (SDS),[1] setting out strategic (but not site-specific) planning policies for their area.
- SAs will have a general power of competence and the ability to perform functions in several "areas of competence", including: transport and local infrastructure; housing and strategic planning; the environment and net zero; health, wellbeing and public service reform.
- MSAs and EMSAs will have powers to designate mayoral development areas (MDAs) and set up mayoral development corporations (MDCs) to help deliver complex development and regeneration projects.
- MSAs and EMSAs with an adopted SDS will also be able to set a Community Infrastructure Levy.

For more on devolution and planning, see this Low Traffic Future briefing.

[1] Strictly speaking, the duty to write a Spatial Development Strategy, introduced by the Planning and Infrastructure Act, applies to 'strategic planning authorities'. This term does not include the Greater London Authority, though the GLA is required to write an equivalent spatial strategy under different legislation.

Other relevant policies

Climate: The Government's Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan (published in October 2025) highlights the importance not only of shifting to electric vehicles but also the government's commitment "to give people more choice about how they travel, including public transport that is more accessible, frequent and reliable and more opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling."

Air quality: The two main pollutants associated with road transport are nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (both PM_{10} and the smaller, more dangerous $PM_{2.5}$ particles). Exhaust pipe emissions of both these pollutants have fallen sharply in recent years, due to cleaner engines and the shift towards electric vehicles. However particulate pollution from non-exhaust emissions (NEE), i.e. from tyre and brake dust and from road abrasion, has been increasing, and is if anything worsened by switching to EVs, as they are typically heavier than the equivalent petrol vehicle.

A December 2025 update to the Government's statutory Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) included two new targets for PM2.5s, both to be achieved by December 2030:

- An annual mean concentration target of 10 micrograms per cubic metre; and
- A population exposure reduction target of 30% compared to 2018.

As this Government-commissioned report notes, "The most effective mitigation strategies for NEE are to reduce the overall volume of traffic, lower the speed where traffic is free-flowing (e.g. trunk roads and motorways), and promote driving behaviour that reduces braking and higher-speed cornering."

Health: The Government's 10 Year Health Plan references policies on sustainable transport, particularly active travel, in the section on 'cleaning up our air'. Yet, despite its strong emphasis on moving "from sickness to prevention", it fails to recognise the value of active travel in preventing (as well as treating) a wide range of physical and mental health conditions relating to physical inactivity.

'Vision-led' transport and land-use planning

The Government has consulted on proposed revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the statutory document which steers local (including strategic) planning authorities in drafting local planning policies and making planning decisions. In terms of transport, the current version of NPPF adopted the idea of 'vision-led planning'. This is supposed to be an alternative to the 'predict and provide' approach that has dominated transport and land-use planning for decades, i.e. predicting future levels of motor traffic and providing sufficient road capacity, rather than seeking to meet people's travel needs primarily through healthier and more sustainable transport options.

Unfortunately, the 'vision' in the current NPPF is not clearly defined. Low Traffic Future believes it needs to be clear that the vision guiding new developments should be a future in which we are less dependent on motor vehicles. There also needs to be a recognised way of testing whether a proposed development location or actual development accords with this vision.

More promisingly, DfT has developed a 'Connectivity Tool' and 'connectivity metrics', which can be used to show the accessibility (or otherwise) from any given location to various key destination-types (schools, key shops, healthcare facilities etc) by different transport modes. DfT is keen to see these used to support 'vision-led' planning, and has included connectivity in the LTP guidance as one of the indicators it will use to assess the effectiveness of LTPs (see 'Outcome frameworks' below) -

something that Low Traffic Future strongly supports. Further improvements will be needed to the Connectivity Tool, as DfT openly acknowledges. However the immediate priority must be for MHCLG to provide much greater clarity, when the NPPF is finalised, on how the Tool should now be used, both to inform the prioritisation of sites (when drawing up spatial development strategies or local plans), and when making decisions on specific planning proposals.

Outcome frameworks

As part of the English devolution process, the Government has adopted various 'outcome frameworks' which it will use to assess the performance of local authorities.

For established mayoral strategic authorities (EMSAs - e.g. the authorities for Greater London, Greater Manchester and West Midlands), the Government has agreed integrated settlement outcome frameworks, which set out the outcomes that these authorities are expected to achieve with their devolved funding allocations (i.e. the 'integrated settlements'). These outcomes cover the full range of their responsibilities, i.e. including but not limited to transport.

For other strategic authorities (SAs, including county and unitary authorities), the Government has published a local outcomes framework, setting various metrics across 16 national priority outcomes, of which 'transport and infrastructure' is one. However the LTP guidance expands more fully on the transport indicators that DfT specifically will use to assess the performance of local authorities' LTPs.

Unfortunately the Government has made no suggestion that these indicators should be adopted as targets, let alone giving any indication of the scale of the changes they expect SAs to achieve.

Low Traffic Future nonetheless encourage SAs to follow the lead set by the 'high ambition authorities' in our Transport Choices Challenge initiative:

- West Midlands: aiming for a 35% reduction in car distance travelled by 2030;
- Oxfordshire: aiming for a 25% reduction in car-trips by 2030 and a 33% reduction by 2040;
- Reading: aiming to reduce car use as a proportion of trips made to, from and through Reading town centre from 25.4% to 10% by 2040, with the proportions made by public transport and by active travel rising to 50% and 40% respectively; and
- York: aiming for a 20% reduction in car-mileage by 2030.

We suggest that other targets should relate to:

- Reductions in overall road casualties, and particularly serious or fatal casualties;
- Reductions in the risk (per mile or per trip) of injury (or of serious or fatal injury) while walking or cycling - n.b. risk-based targets or indicators are essential here, as targets simply to reduce pedestrian or cycle casualty numbers can create a perverse incentive to reduce walking and cycling. Conversely, a risk-based indicator also reflects changes in the levels of walking and cycling. So for instance, if cycle mileage increases by 50%, a 25% increase in cyclist casualties still amounts to a 17% reduction in the risk of a cycling casualty per mile travelled.
- Reductions in pollutant emissions from road transport, and/or compliance with air quality standards at road-side monitoring sites.

Consultation and engagement

Section 109 of the Transport Act 2000 sets out statutory requirements for public consultation. In summary, when preparing or reviewing an LTP, local transport authorities must consult:

- The Secretary of State
- Other relevant local highway or traffic authorities and district councils
- Public transport operators and service providers
- Organisations representing users of those services; and
- Anyone else they consider appropriate.

It is crucial to seek to engage with people from demographic groups who are less likely to respond to conventional consultations but who may be particularly impacted by transport (including both poor transport provision and adverse impacts of pollution, unsafe roads etc). That includes people who are young, disabled, women and those from ethnic minorities.

It is worth bearing in mind Arnstein's Ladder of Engagement, a framework for understanding the different levels of public engagement in decision-making (from non-participation to genuine citizen control). Reaching the higher rungs of the ladder is harder and more resource-intensive, but can produce much better feedback and greater public buy-in to the resulting strategy.

Appraisal

Local authorities are required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment of their LTPs. This will include identifying climate and air pollution impacts, as well as on landscapes, biodiversity, habitats and human health (see guidance). Legally, it must be used either to validate the LTP's proposed strategy or to consider whether to adopt other policy options to reduce adverse environmental and health impacts, i.e. It should never be simply a tick-box exercise.

Monitoring

The setting of targets or outcome indicators clearly needs to go hand-in-hand with considering how they will be monitored, including what data is already available, what additional data may be needed in order that meaningful targets and (K)PIs can be set, and what resources are needed to gather and analyse these data. Data sources can include:

- Manual, automatic or video counts of vehicles or people, e.g. crossing cordons or screenlines - this will reveal levels of transport activity at the locations in question (and hence changes over time in this activity), but not the demographics of the people travelling, nor the start or end-points of those journeys or the reasons why they are being made;
- Surveys - which can reveal more information about where people are travelling from, why, and the demographics of those travellers. However, comprehensive travel surveys are clearly more expensive. More limited surveys e.g. 'hands up' school travel surveys) can be a cost-effective way to reveal data on specific trip-types and/or to specific locations of interest.
- Nationally-collected data, such as the census.

In the absence of more formal guidance on cost-effective monitoring strategies, we recommend the guidance on sustainable transport monitoring strategies, produced by the Distillate project.

ACTIVE TRAVEL AND SAFE STREETS

A key measure for creating a low traffic future is to redesign our roads, streets and junctions to be people-friendly. These are places where children can play, neighbours can socialise, people of all ages and abilities can get around safely and easily by walking, wheeling and cycling, and where high-streets can thrive without being choked by motor traffic and exhaust fumes.
[N.B. 'Wheeling' is using any mobility aid that can legally be used on the footway, i.e. the pavement].

Besides creating high-quality facilities specifically for active travel, councils need to look at ways to reduce through traffic and/or the speed of traffic, whether in urban centres, residential neighbourhoods or rural lanes. Taken together, these measures should create comprehensive networks of routes for walking and cycling that should be set out in each local authority's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs - see the Department for Transport's guidance on LCWIPs), and incorporated into their Local Transport Plans.

Councils also need to consider the importance of good road and path maintenance, and the positive promotion of walking and cycling, particularly among the groups who could most benefit from the physical activity but who are least likely to take up active travel without encouragement and support.

Walking and wheeling

Walking networks in towns need to connect people safely and conveniently from their homes to nearby schools, shops and other key facilities – for more, see local cycling and walking network plans.

Pavements need to be wide enough, well-maintained and clear of clutter. Local transport authorities (LTAs) should make use of the powers they will soon have (following the passing of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026) to prevent parking on footways and verges.

Features such as waymarking, seats, street trees, planters and tactile paving are essential for enabling people to navigate, for older people to rest, to reduce pollution and create safe and attractive places where people want to spend time. However street furniture needs to be placed where it will not obstruct or endanger wheelchair users or visually impaired people.

Road crossings need to be located and designed to maximise the convenience of using them. Crossing-points across more minor side-roads should be designed to visually reinforce the new Highway Code rules which give priority to pedestrians and cycle users going straight ahead over vehicles turning into and out of those side roads. This could be done for instance using 'side-road zebras' - the UK Government is expected to pass regulations allowing these as a standard solution, following successful trials in Manchester and Westminster, while the Welsh Government has already issued guidance formally allowing this. Signalised pedestrian crossings need to provide sufficient crossing time for older and disabled people to use them without danger or stress. For the fastest and/or busiest roads, bridges or tunnels are needed. These should be step-free and with gradients and diversions minimised, to make it as easy as possible for disabled people to use them. Where tunnels are provided, they should be wide and straight to provide natural light and good visibility right through the tunnel wherever possible.

Further information

Official guidance: DfT has yet to produce a guide to designing infrastructure for walking, to complement its Cycling Infrastructure Design guidance (see below). In its absence, the most useful sources of guidance for England are the two volumes of the Manual for Streets guidance (see volume 1 - n.b. volume 2 is not available online, and both volumes are expected to be replaced soon by an updated version). DfT's guidance on developing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs covers cycling and walking network planning, as distinct from setting infrastructure design standards. Other useful sources include the Welsh Government's Active Travel Act guidance and any locally applicable guidance (such as Transport for London's Planning for Walking Toolkit).

Unofficial guidance: See Living Streets's online briefing on inclusive pedestrian design.

Cycling

Cycling networks, like walking networks, need to be safe, direct, coherent, comfortable and attractive – see local cycling and walking network plans – with good signing and waymarking.

Cycle facilities along fast or busy main roads should be physically protected from motor traffic: the faster and busier the traffic, the greater the level of protection that is needed (but see also the section on safe streets and lanes for solutions where protection is not needed). Cycles should also be kept separate from pedestrians, unless there is plenty of space and/or usage is light (e.g. on a path next to an inter-urban road), allowing both groups to mix safely and without stress.

Safe and secure cycle parking should be provided in new residential developments and at key destinations such as schools, shops, workplaces, public transport stations and interchanges, and other public facilities. Good cycle access to and from stations and interchanges is needed, together with suitable arrangements for carrying cycles on public transport services, including reservation systems. See also the shared transport section for more on the important role of cycle hire schemes.

Transport authorities should support the use of non-standard pedal cycles, such as child trailers and cargo-bikes (whether for households or businesses), trikes and hand-cycles (these can be crucial mobility aids for many people who find walking difficult but who can cycle), and electrically assisted pedal cycles (or 'e-bikes'). Dutch evidence shows that the average trip distance on an e-bike is about 60% longer than on a conventional bicycle. E-bikes can therefore substantially increase cycling's ability to replace car-use, including for longer or hillier journeys in rural areas. They also enable older, less healthy or disabled people to take up cycling who might otherwise find it difficult or impossible.

Further information

Official guidance: For planning cycle and walking networks in England, the relevant guidance is the Department for Transport's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) guidance. For planning specific cycle routes or other infrastructure features (e.g. cycle parking), the key reference in England and in Northern Ireland is the Department for Transport's Cycling Infrastructure Design guidance (Local Transport Note LTN 1/20). Other applicable guidance includes National Highways' Designing for Cycle Traffic (which applies to England's trunk roads and motorways, including their junctions and crossings), the Welsh Government's Active Travel Act guidance, (n.b. this also covers network planning), the Scottish Government's Cycling by Design guidance, and any relevant local guidance (such as Transport for London's London Cycling Infrastructure Design Guidance).

Unofficial guidance: See Cycling UK's Space for Cycling guide and the Guide to Inclusive Cycling from Wheels for Wellbeing.

Safe urban streets and rural lanes

The majority of roads and streets in built-up areas should be subject to 20mph speed limits, with similar reductions (e.g. to no more than 40mph) for quieter rural lanes. Exceptions can be made for faster and busier main roads, though these should be provided with separate cycle facilities. There is a mistaken view that 20mph limits should be concentrated around school gates, ignoring the fact that children also need to be safe near their homes and wherever they might walk or cycle, whether to schools, parks, shops, to visit friends or for other trips. For more, see the 20sPlentyForUs website.

The Welsh Government made 20mph the 'default' speed limit for built-up streets in 2023 – allowing exceptions as above - following a Public Health Wales evidence review, a Task Force Report and extensive consultation. This led to a 23.8% fall in casualties on 20mph and 30mph roads over the next 18 months. This compares with a 5.2% fall on equivalent roads in England and a 5.1% rise in Scotland, or with a 4.1% increase on higher-speed roads in Wales. Scotland has since adopted a similar policy.

Other solutions can involve vehicle restrictions in town or city centres or residential neighbourhoods. Town or city centre schemes typically involve creating pedestrianised or pedestrian-priority areas, often with access for cycling, buses, taxis and/or deliveries, possibly only at certain times of day.

In residential areas though, the approach normally involves introducing traffic-filters which cut off rat-runs, while maintaining pedestrian and cycle access. This type of scheme has come to be known as a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN), though it is not a new technique. Overall, LTNs have been shown to improve road safety, increase walking and cycling and reduce car use for local journeys. They have generally attracted high public support, despite the efforts of vocal minorities to oppose them. However they need careful design and good consultation to ensure local community support, and wider measures may also be needed to ensure they reduce traffic overall.

School Streets are another option for reducing local traffic pressures and creating more child-friendly streets, particularly around primary schools. These schemes prohibit driving at arrival and drop-off times on streets close to a school. Exemptions can be made for local residents and businesses. School Streets tend to cover very minor roads and a more limited area than LTNs, though the two types of measures can be combined. School Streets are generally easier to implement and are more popular initially than LTNs. Monitoring has shown these schemes also reduce traffic.

Traffic calming features (such as road humps and speed cushions) and/or zonal speed camera systems can reduce speeds and improve safety (see review of evidence), and may be useful where the layout of a street (or a street network) does not naturally keep most drivers' speeds down to around 20mph. Still, it is generally preferable to design streets to feel like safe, people-friendly places, with attractive surfacing and street furniture (e.g. seating and planters) which enable and welcome people of all ages and abilities to walk, cycle and wheel safely and easily.

A pilot programme of lowering the speed limits on a network of rural lanes in Surrey, from 60mph to 30mph or in some cases 20mph. This approach could be combined with design features used by the Quiet Lanes schemes in Norfolk and Kent and/or with the use of average speed cameras.

Further information

Official guidance: See DfT's statutory guidance on reallocating roadspace to support active travel and its statutory guidance on Setting local speed limits (n.b. both documents are due to be revised). The Welsh Government has published several documents relating to its plans to make 20mph the'default' speed limit for built-up areas in Wales.

Unofficial guidance: See the guides to creating Low Traffic Neighbourhoods from the charities Possible, the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, and from Living Streets and the London Cycling Campaign. CPRE produces a guide to Quiet Lanes; the School Streets Initiative has various useful resources on creating School Streets; while 20sPlentyForUs provides information and advice on 20mph limits.

Local cycling and walking network plans

The UK Government has encouraged local authorities in England (outside London) to draw up Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), while Welsh authorities are legally required to adopt Active Travel Network Maps (ATNMs), in accordance with the Welsh Government's Active Travel Act design guidance. However the principles, and the steps needed to create a LCWIP or an ATNM, are similar:

- Define the geographical area to be covered (including any cross-boundary issues).
- Identify the most important start and end-points of journeys (e.g. residential areas, schools and colleges, employment locations, shopping areas, healthcare, public transport and other facilities) that need to be connected by safe, convenient and direct walking and cycling routes.
- Prioritise the corridors with the greatest potential to unlock increased cycling and walking if provision is improved – the Propensity to Cycle Tool can assist with this.
- Identify the actual route alignments where walking and/or cycling conditions can be improved most cost-effectively to maximise the increases in walking and/or cycling.
- Consult and seek support for the route proposals (including from neighbouring authorities etc where cross-boundary issues arise, as well as from the wider public), adapting them as required in the light of feedback received.

However councils need to do more to integrate the planning and funding of LCWIPs (or ATNMs in Wales) and Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs). LCWIPs and ATNMs are widely seen as being mainly for day-to-day walking and cycling in urban areas, while rights of way are often seen as being mostly for recreational use (primarily walking) in rural areas. Yet this distinction is unhelpful. Instead, by joining up the planning and funding of these networks, it could make it easier, for instance, for children to walk or cycle from outlying villages to schools in nearby towns, or for families in those towns to get out for recreational walks or bike rides without feeling the need to jump in the car.

Further information

Official guidance: The key sources for planning walking and cycling networks (as distinct from specific routes or other infrastructure features) are DfT's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) guidance and its statutory guidance on reallocating roadspace to support active travel - or the Active Travel Act guidance in Wales. N.B. The DfT-backed Propensity to Cycle Tool is a very useful resource for prioritising the links in a proposed local cycle network in England or Wales. Finally, there is Government guidance on preparing Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWiPs).

Unofficial guidance: See also the rights of way and RoWIP guides from the Ramblers and Cycling UK.

'E-scooters and other 'micro-mobility vehicles'

Electrically-assisted scooters (or 'e-scooters') have become popular in recent years. However at present, the only e-scooters that may be ridden on UK roads are publicly hired e-scooters, as part of a UK Government trial to assess whether to legalise them and, if so, how. Privately-owned scooters may only legally be ridden on private land with the landowner's permission.

The UK Government plans to create a new category of 'micro-mobility vehicles', that would include e-scooters and other light motor-vehicles, whose power and weight limits will be low enough to permit them to be ridden under similar laws to those applying to pedal cycles. These vehicles should be regulated in a way that seeks to maximise their potential benefits for reducing car traffic, while minimising the safety risks to their riders and other people - and especially to more vulnerable pedestrians - and to the health benefits of walking and cycling.

Further information:

Official guidance: DfT's guidance on e-scooter trials applies in England, Scotland and Wales.

Road and path maintenance

Poorly-maintained roads are the bane of drivers' lives. But good maintenance is far more critical for the safety of walking, cycling and people with disabilities. Potholes, obstructions and trip-hazards can cause serious and even fatal injuries, while poor winter maintenance can trap older and disabled people indoors, unable to get to the shops for fear of a dangerous fall.

Yet road maintenance budgets are increasingly skewed towards motorways, trunk roads and other A-roads. That is despite evidence that funding cuts to minor road maintenance have significantly higher economic costs than those affecting trunk road maintenance. This is probably because walking and cycling account for a greater proportion of the traffic on minor roads, while pedestrians and cyclists' maintenance claims are much more likely to involve serious injuries, not just property damage. The average maintenance-related legal claim made by cyclists is 13 times higher than those made by drivers.

Councils therefore need to give greater priority to inspecting and maintaining minor-roads and off-road paths, including winter maintenance and vegetation clearance. From a cycling perspective, they also need to focus more on the area of the road nearest the kerb, on potholes which run parallel to (rather than across) the line of cyclists' travel, on hills (where they will be travelling at higher speeds) and on junctions (where cyclists will be turning and watching out for other vehicles' movements rather than the road surface).

Further information:

Official guidance: Well Managed Highway Infrastructure, produced by the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG), applies throughout the UK.

Unofficial guidance: For a cycling perspective, see Cycling UK's briefing on Highway maintenance.

Inclusive access

In all aspects of road and street planning and design, it is vital to consider the needs of children, older people and people with mobility, sensory or cognitive difficulties, for whom it is difficult or dangerous to walk or cycle independently. This principle is recognised in official walking and cycling infrastructure guidance, but is often overlooked in practice.

In general, infrastructure designed for wheelchair access will also be suitable for users of other non-motorised vehicles, e.g. buggies, strollers and all forms of pedal cycle, including those used as

mobility aids. However, there is a tension between the preference of these users for level surfaces and those of visually-impaired people for kerbs to provide protection and aid navigation. It is therefore vital that schemes are well designed and that tactile surfacing is correctly installed.

Further information:

Official guidance: See DfT's Inclusive mobility guide.

Unofficial guidance: See Living Streets's online briefing on inclusive pedestrian design and Wheels for Wellbeing's Guide to Inclusive Cycling.

Behaviour change programmes to boost walking and cycling

Besides creating a safe and attractive environment for walking, wheeling and cycling, councils should also provide opportunities to try out 'active travel', so as to remove the non-physical 'barriers' which prevent people from doing so. This is particularly important for groups such as women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, health patients, older or disabled people. They are particularly prone to thinking that "cycling and walking aren't for people like me", yet they are exactly the people whose health, wealth and well-being has most to gain from discovering the joys of walking and cycling.

The Government-backed Bikeability cycle training programme has been designed for adults and teenagers as well as younger children, taking people from learning basic balance and control skills (level 1) through to being able to handle busy roads and junctions (level 3).

Cycle training and other 'behaviour change' opportunities should be made available not just in primary schools but also in secondary schools and colleges, cycle-friendly workplaces and in a range of community settings. Women, health patients, people with disabilities, and people from ethnic minority groups (especially women and teenage girls) are much more likely to take up cycling if they do so among peers. This has been well demonstrated by Cycling UK's Big Bike Revival, Cycling for Health and other social prescribing or community cycling projects. These programmes have all attracted significant participation from these under-represented groups. Living Streets's programmes for diverse communities and older people, and the Ramblers' Wellbeing Walks programmes have similarly impressive results in terms of boosting walking among less active groups.

Further information:

Official guidance: See DfT's webpage on behaviour change projects.

Unofficial guidance: Living Streets runs various programmes to promote walking, notably its WOW programme to promote walking to school, as well as its workplace and communities programmes. Cycling UK provides briefings on the case for and benefits of behaviour change projects generally and cycle training specifically, while the Bikeability Trust provides a range of resources on delivering cycle training for people of different ages and abilities. Sustrans' behaviour change programmes mainly focus on promoting cycling to school, while Modeshift Stars also runs programmes to promote active and sustainable travel for schools and colleges, workplaces and local communities. Campaign for Better Transport's flagship Better Transport Week is an annual celebration of all sustainable transport modes and offers many free resources for local authorities and partners.

PUBLIC, SHARED & COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

To maximise the benefits of public, shared and community transport, local authorities should aim to:

- Support the expansion of rail and 'metro' networks (e.g. underground, light rail and tram systems) and new or upgraded stations.
- Similarly, support more frequent and reliable bus and coach services, e.g. by improving bus priority in urban areas and by boosting the coverage and frequency of rural services. Rural buses are a lifeline for rural communities: without them, anyone unable to drive (including many young, older or disabled people and those who simply cannot afford to run a car) face social and economic isolation. This leaves them reliant on others for lifts or having to pay for expensive taxis.
- Improve public transport within National Parks and other protected landscapes, as well as for travelling to them. People will feel much more inclined to leave the car at home when going on weekend breaks or holidays if they feel they can get around without a car when they get there.
- Support community transport services - many of them volunteer-run - such as school or hospital transport schemes, dial-a-ride schemes and similar services, including those aimed primarily at older and/or disabled people.
- Positively promote shared transport, e.g. car clubs in residential areas or ride-sharing for people travelling the same workplaces or business parks.
- Support the growth of public cycle and scooter hire schemes, as well as targeted opportunities for people to try cargo-bikes and non-standard pedal cycles, including those with electric assistance.
- Promote better integration of all of the above, including coordinated timetabling and ticketing, online 'mobility as a service' (MaaS) platforms, 'mobility hubs' and active travel.

By 2027, all rail services will be under national control (following the passing of rail legislation in 2024), while the setting-up of Great British Rail following the expected passing of the Railways Bill in late 2026 or early 2027) will provide further opportunities to improve the planning, integration and cost-effectiveness of the railways. Meanwhile the Bus Services Act 2025 and the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 are set to strengthen the ability of local transport authorities (LTAs) to manage bus and other local transport services. The latter will also give mayoral authorities a stronger role in planning or delivering regional rail services. Their Local Transport Plans (LTPs) need to seize these opportunities.

Rail and 'metro' services

The ongoing restructuring of Britain's railways presents opportunities to tackle a raft of long-standing problems, including:

- High and overly-complex fares, and inflexible season ticket rules that do not reflect that, for many people, the regular commute is now a thing of the past.
- Overcrowding, particularly at peak times – meaning that the passengers paying the highest fares often get the worst service.
- Poor integration (including with bus and other services), e.g. due to un-coordinated timetables.
- Old, uncomfortable and dirty trains on some routes (particularly on non-electrified lines).
- Cancellations and delays – often due to failures of the rail infrastructure itself (e.g. maintenance, signalling or power failures).
- Poor customer service, e.g. a lack of staff at stations, or of information when things go wrong.
- Insufficient provision for cycle users and disabled people – although wheelchair spaces on trains are now standard, many stations lack step-free access and tactile paving, and it can be hard to access mobility support, especially if problems arise (e.g. if a connecting train is delayed).

Pedestrian and cycle access to stations is often poor, while cycle parking and cycle spaces on trains are often inadequate and/or poorly designed.

In particular, the English devolution reforms mean mayoral authorities can now make proposals to run rail services in their region, giving them greater control of fares, services, service standards and integration with other local transport services. This could enable them to significantly boost their regions' economic performance, by improving the efficiency of public transport connections into and within their major urban centres. The LTP guidance encourages mayoral authorities to include a local rail strategy in their LTP.

Regardless of whether they have these powers (or choose to use them), all LTAs can play a role in promoting local and regional rail or 'metro' services by:

- Supporting the opening of new or revived rail lines and stations;
- Supporting access and accessibility improvements to stations (e.g. for walking, wheeling, or shared transport) and station accessibility (for disabled people, whatever their mode of transport);
- Promoting integration with other public and shared transport modes, e.g. by creating mobility hubs, improving the coordination of timetables and ticketing arrangements, and integrating rail travel with local bike and scooter share schemes;
- Aligning their proposals for new housing or other developments with the development of public transport networks, ensuring that they are mutually supporting (see ?).

Urban 'metro' systems can carry significant numbers of passengers at peak times, on fixed routes which can therefore be remembered easily. Light rail systems can make use of suburban rail lines, increasing the frequency of services by connecting them to routes which run on-street through the hearts of the cities they serve. They are very space-efficient and offer excellent disabled access, while the permanence of tram systems can give businesses confidence to invest in a city. For more, see this report from the Urban Transport Group.

However, trams and light rail systems have high installation costs, can be disruptive when they fail, their routes cannot be varied or extended easily and, if not designed carefully, the tram-rails themselves can create safety hazards for cycle users. Other options that may therefore merit consideration include guided bus systems, including those where the bus is guided by white lines or magnetic wiring rather than by a separate kerb.

Further information:

Official guidance: DfT has issued guidance to LTAs on applying for rail devolution.

Unofficial guidance: Rail Partners (a rail industry body) has issued a briefing setting out different ways regional rail devolution could work in practice, as has the Urban Transport Group (representing local transport authorities for Britain's larger cities). The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) has issued several publications on Station Travel Plans, to facilitate access to and from stations primarily by non-car means. Active Travel England has published an updated Cycle Rail Toolkit.

Buses and coaches

Buses are an essential lifeline for many rural communities especially for people who cannot or do not drive, whether because they are too young, have a disability or simply cannot afford to run a car. Yet many people have lost bus services which they depended on to reach schools or colleges, employment or training, hospitals, shops and other key facilities. Many villages have a bus service that only runs on certain days of the week, or no bus service at all.

Campaign for Better Transport and CPRE, the countryside charity, have published research on 'transport deserts', finding that 56% of small rural towns now fit their definition of a 'transport desert' or are at risk of doing so. CPRE has additionally called for England to follow the Swiss model of providing at least an hourly bus service from 6am till midnight, for every village over a certain population size (e.g. 300 inhabitants in the Zurich and Bern regions). CPRE estimates that this would cost £2.7bn annually but would provide huge benefits in terms of boosting education, training and employment opportunities, saving parents from having to drive or hire taxis to get their children to and from school etc, while also reducing the congestion, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions associated with car travel.

The publication of DfT's LTP guidance was accompanied by a statement of their 'vision for buses'. In short: they want buses to provide the connections people need; to be fast, reliable, affordable and safe (particularly for women and girls); to be well integrated with other public transport services; and backed by clear and accurate information that is accessible to all, particularly when things go wrong. The 'vision' document also outlines how DfT expects local transport authorities (LTAs) to improve local bus services, including the use of their new duties and powers under the Bus Services Act 2025. It highlights the requirements for them to set out their proposals in a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and a bus network accessibility plan.

In order to secure bus funding, a BSIP must state whether the LTA intends to use the powers to franchise bus services or to set up (or maintain) enhanced partnership arrangements. In outline:

- *Franchising* gives the LTA the opportunity to specify routes, service standards and fares, and then to contract with one or more local bus operators (who are selected competitively) to provide those services. It allows the LTA greater control - including the ability to integrate timetables, information, ticketing and branding, and to cross-subsidise between more and less profitable routes providing greater benefits. However it requires the LTA to accept the revenue risk, i.e. to carry the costs if the bus service underperforms economically. Some authorities (particularly those in more rural areas) feel this is too great a risk, particularly if they lack bus planning and financial expertise (as is often the case).
- *Enhanced partnerships* (EPs) are agreements between the LTA and local bus operators, where the LTA and local bus operators agree to collaborate on improvements, e.g. bus priority measures, improvements to bus stops, bus accessibility and environmental performance (e.g. electric buses), as well as service standards, fares and information. EPs typically yield lower benefits than franchising, but are less risky financially for LTAs.

Other measures available to LTAs for improving bus services include:

- Setting up their own bus companies (this option is now available again thanks to the Bus Services Act 2025 s22);
- Subsidising 'socially necessary' bus services - n.b. BSIPs must now identify which services the LTA believes are socially necessary, giving these services protection against short-notice cancellation;
- Introducing demand responsive transport (DRT), i.e. services whose route and timetables can vary in response to passenger requests. Software improvements are making this an increasingly viable option, particularly for more rural services.
- Action to improve safety for bus passengers, particularly women and girls - the Bus Services Act has provided LTAs with new powers to tackle violence or antisocial behaviour on buses.

There is also significant potential to improve the quality of coach services, by creating coachway interchanges at edge-of-town sites (typically next to the motorway network), where intercity coaches can connect with rapid public transport (preferably rail-based) connections into city centres.

Further information:

Official guidance: In addition to its 'vision for buses', DfT has published guidance on bus service improvements plans (BSIPs - this will be updated in 2026), setting up a bus franchising scheme (plus a 'bus franchising manual'), 'enhanced partnerships' and demand responsible transport (DRT). Further guidance on setting up local authority bus companies is also expected later in 2026.

Unofficial guidance: See the countryside charity CPRE's Every Village Every Hour report, and Campaign for Better Transport's report Funding local bus services in England.

Community transport services

Community transport schemes encompass a wide range of services, run on a not-for-profit basis, with many of them provided by volunteers. They can include school or hospital transport, and dial-a-ride and similar services aimed particularly at meeting the needs of older and/or disabled people. They are often vital for people to stay independent, participate in their local communities or access public services, education or employment. Most are demand-responsive but some operate on fixed routes, filling in gaps in conventional public transport services. For more, see the Community Transport Association's website.

As well as supporting these services, local authorities need to play a role in improving the coordination of conventional public transport, school transport and community transport services. This is not straightforward, as school buses and community transport services are often supported by a separate local authority department from that which supports conventional public transport.

Further information:

Unofficial guidance: The Community Transport Association (CTA-UK) produces a range of resources on funding, setting-up, funding and managing community transport schemes.

Car clubs, peer-to-peer car sharing and ride sharing

Car clubs, peer-to-peer car sharing and ride sharing schemes are all ways in which people can have use of a car when required, without needing to own one.

Traditional car sharing schemes are similar to straightforward car rental, though the cars are usually available from parking bays in residential areas rather than from a car rental depot. Still, the car normally needs to be returned 'back to base', i.e. to the place where it was picked up.

Variants of this model are emerging, with larger car club operators now offering one-way journeys, though so far this is more common in Germany than the UK. Another option is peer-to-peer lending, where individuals offer to rent out their cars to other individuals, rather like an AirBnB for cars.

Ride-sharing is another form of peer-to-peer collaboration, but involves individuals giving lifts to other individuals, brokered by sites such as Getaround, Hiyacar and Turo. It differs from ride-hailing apps like Uber, in that the drivers are not seeking to make a living from providing this service, they are simply offering a lift while making a journey for which they would be driving anyway. Another ride-sharing company, Liftshare also sets up ride-sharing schemes based on workplaces or business parks, e.g. at engineering firm Arup's business campus in the West Midlands.

Further information:

Unofficial guidance: Shared transport charity CoMoUK's Community Carshare Handbook provides advice on setting up car sharing clubs. CoMoUK also provides a listing of accredited car club operators, peer-to-peer car sharing platforms and local or regional car clubs.

Shared 'micromobility' (e.g. 'bikeshare' and e-scooter hire)

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act includes provisions which allow local transport authorities (LTAs) to licence the providers of 'micromobility' vehicles. This includes setting the number of vehicles, locations where they may or may not be left or hired from, and standards for safety, accessibility and environmental performance. To prevent breaches, LTAs will be able to impose fines, or to suspend, revoke or transfer licences.

Initially, the only 'micromobility' vehicles that can legally be hired under these provisions will be pedal cycles (including e-bikes). However they may in future be extended to include other vehicles with low-powered motors that the Secretary of State authorises for use without the normal requirements for 'motor vehicles' (i.e. for the driver / rider and vehicle to be licenced, insured etc).

This is because the Government has not yet taken steps to permit the use of electrically-assisted scooters on highways or other public places, except as part of a Government-backed trial. This trial began in 2020 and has since been extended five times, to 2028.

Cycle hire (or 'bikeshare') can take the following distinct forms:

- Cycle hire based on designated hire and drop-off locations, in which cycles can be unlocked either at docking stations or from marked areas (where users can park their bike without additional charge or penalty at the end of a ride).
- Free-floating (or 'dockless') cycle hire, where the bikeshare operator allows cycles to be picked up and dropped off at any location within their operating zone.
- Hub-based cycle hire, where bikes are hired from and returned to staffed locations, e.g. at train stations or at recreational destinations. Cycles usually have to be returned to the place where they were collected, though some operators have multiple hire-points, allowing cycles to be hired at one location and dropped off at another (similar to larger car-hire schemes).
- Workplace-based pool bikes.
- Cycle loan schemes, often run by social enterprises and/or based at community locations, where cycles can be loaned out on a 'try before you buy' basis.

Meanwhile, it remains the case that it is illegal to use privately-owned e-scooters anywhere other than on private land with the land-owner's permission - even though in practice their use on public roads is widespread. So too is the use of electrically-powered 'bikes' that do not conform to the legal definition of an e-bike (i.e. one whose motor only works while the pedals are being turned, with a maximum power of 250W and which cuts out at speeds above 15.5mph).

Evidence from Britain, the USA, Australia and elsewhere shows the potential for bikeshare schemes to act as catalysts for creating a local cycling culture, with successful schemes attracting 6 or more rides per bike per day. A 2024 survey by the shared transport charity CoMoUK shows that 47% of bikeshare users said they had not previously cycled for at least a year, with some having never cycled before. The survey also has positive findings about the role of both bike-share and e-scooters in boosting active travel (including e-scooter users reporting increased cycle use), and reducing car use. CoMoUK also publishes a list and map of bikeshare schemes and operators active in the UK.

LTAs should use their new licencing powers to support well-managed bikeshare schemes (and other shared micromobility schemes when permitted), maximising the health, environmental and other benefits of cycling, while ensuring that they operate safely, without endangering or inconveniencing pedestrians and/or people with impaired vision or mobility.

Further information:

Unofficial guidance: CoMoUK provides various advice notes for councils and others on bikeshare schemes, as well as a map and listing of existing bikeshare schemes and operators in the UK. The Institute for Transport and Development Policy has a substantial Bikeshare Planning Guide.

Integration: coordinated timetabling, through ticketing, 'Mobility as a Service', mobility hubs and active travel

Integration is a key theme of the Government's 'Better Connected' transport strategy. There is a clear expectation on local (and particularly mayoral) authorities to support this aim, using the powers and duties in the Buses and English Devolution Acts, to improve the coordination of bus, rail, metro and shared transport services, including fares and payment systems. The Urban Transport Group (UTG) and EU have produced evidence showing that integrated ticketing can substantially increase public transport patronage, as well as increasing revenues, improving passenger satisfaction, speeding up boarding times, reducing fraud and operational costs and, crucially, reducing car use.

Where LTAs do not directly control ticketing (e.g. where they opt to coordinate buses through 'enhanced partnerships'), it may be worth setting up an authority-backed Mobility as a Service (MaaS) platform, such as the Ride app in the East Midlands. MaaS is effectively a digital platform which enables users to see the full range of options for their intended journey, and then make a single on-demand payment for their chosen option. This can include public or shared transport (including cycle hire) as well as taxis and ride-hailing options. It can help users find sustainable transport options in real time.

Mobility hubs are locations where sustainable and/or shared transport services can be accessed in close physical proximity, e.g. where people can interchange between public transport (including park and ride), shared cars, cycle parking and bikeshare services - see evidence of their benefits.

Finally, it is vital to improve the integration of public transport with walking and cycling, and its accessibility for disabled people. This involves not only providing step-free pedestrian and cycle access to, from and within stations, but also providing better facilities and customer service for those wishing to use public transport via these methods (bearing in mind that, for some disabled people, a pedal cycle can be a mobility aid). Hence there is a need to improve cycle parking and hire facilities at stations, to provide well-designed cycle and wheelchair spaces on trains and other public transport, to put in place user-friendly ticketing and cycle reservation systems, and to provide useful practical information (e.g. on step-free access or where to board a train with a pedal cycle).

Further information:

Official guidance: DfT has issued a Code of Practice for Mobility as a Service platforms.

Unofficial guidance: See the Urban Mobility Partnership's Practical guide to Mobility as a Service and CoMoUK's Mobility hubs guidance. The Rail Delivery Group provides guidance on Station Travel Plans (which seek to improve the integration of rail and other services) and a Cycle-Rail Toolkit.

MANAGING TRAVEL DEMAND

Besides making good provision for non-car alternatives (i.e. public, shared and community transport, and active travel), there are two other main ways to manage travel demand. The first is reducing the need to travel, e.g. through planning policies and/or investing in digital connectivity. The second is to reduce demand for private motorised travel, through some form of pricing mechanism.

Planning policies and urban design

The need to travel (especially by car, van or lorry) can be reduced through planning policies which:

- Locate housing and other developments in locations where public transport can meet a significant proportion of the travel demand generated by the development;
- Ensure that there is good provision for walking, wheeling and cycling (including cycle parking), and for public, shared and community transport within the development, and connecting it with other important destinations in the surrounding area; and
- Seek to achieve high residential densities, concentrating residential and other developments in urban areas, while limiting the amount of land given over to road-space and car-parking. An oversupply of car parking and road-space not only creates soulless places (e.g. limiting the amount of space for social encounters, for play and for nature) but also by increasing the distances that have to be walked and cycled and the safety and attractiveness of travel by these modes. Conversely, high density development makes it easier for people to walk and cycle, while also enhancing the viability (and hence the pricing, frequency etc) of public transport services.

Yet, as shown by research from Transport for New Homes, the last several decades have seen too many residential and other developments being permitted on green-field sites rather than in urban areas, with little or no public transport and with very poor provision for walking, wheeling or cycling.

Developments should:

- Be focussed in locations with good public transport provision, or where this can easily be secured.
- Be located and designed to support active travel, with safe and attractive walking and cycling provision both within the development and connecting it to other destinations in the surrounding area. Roads and streets should either have a design speed of no more than 20mph or should include high-quality protected cycle provision.
- Aim to ensure that key destinations (e.g. schools, healthcare and public transport provision) and green open spaces are reachable within a short walk or cycle ride from people's homes.
- Limit the amount of provision for car parking, while incorporating ample quantities of secure, well-designed and conveniently-located cycle parking;
- Incorporate provision for shared mobility, including spaces for mobility hubs, car-sharing cars and bikeshare schemes.

We have previously noted the positive development of DfT's Connectivity Tool. This can be used to assess how accessible a proposed development (or site) would be to key destinations (e.g. schools, key shops, healthcare) by different transport modes, and hence whether that development (or site) is likely to support the use of public transport and active travel, or to entrench car-dependence. Using the Connectivity Tool will enable LTAs to set ambitious connectivity indicators to ensure that new developments in their area achieve high levels of sustainable transport connectivity, both individually and cumulatively.

The Tool can also be used to inform negotiations with developers over the planning conditions or financial contributions towards any sustainable transport provision needed to achieve these aims. Ultimately though, local planning authorities should be given a clear mandate to reject development proposals that are likely to become car-dependent.

Digital accessibility

A combination of technological advances and the experience of covid has increased our reliance on digital connectivity and our ability to fulfil many aspects of our lives without needing to travel. However the benefits of digital connectivity are not evenly distributed, with some of the most car-dependent locations also being those with the poorest digital connectivity. Improving digital connectivity, particularly in more remote rural areas, may help reduce the need for some longer-distance car, van and rail journeys. See discussion of the impacts of digital accessibility.

Vehicle scrappage schemes

Local authorities seeking to reduce pollution from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles - e.g. through Clean Air Zones and similar schemes - should also incentivise vehicle owners to scrap older or dirtier vehicles and replace them with cleaner alternatives. However, rather than simply offering cash to buy new vehicles, these schemes should offer 'mobility credits', which can be used for public or shared transport (e.g. to buy a season ticket or a subscription to a car-share or bike-share scheme) and/or to purchase pedal cycles (including electrically-assisted cargo-bikes or other non-standard machines), following the examples of the French Government and Transport for the West Midlands.

Pricing for using roads or parking space

There is a complementary 'chicken-and-egg' relationship between improving public, shared and community transport and active travel, while deterring the use of private cars through some form of pricing. At the local level, pricing can relate to the use of road-space (either in general or at busy times and places) or parking space - with fuel duty being another option at the national level.

These types of pricing mechanisms can provide much of the funding needed to improve public transport and active travel. Yet they are also needed to deter unnecessary driving, so as to make space available for those walking, cycling and public transport improvements. Still, using the funding from these pricing schemes to improve the alternatives is vital if the pricing schemes themselves are to be seen as fair.

There is also the option of parking charges which specifically target 'car-spreading', i.e. the trend towards cars that are wider, longer, heavier and/or with higher bonnet-heights. These factors exacerbate the problems of congestion, loss of parking space, increased emissions, road danger and highway maintenance costs. Cardiff City Council has introduced higher parking charges for heavier cars, following similar schemes in Paris and Zurich.

Polling by Ipsos found that public support for pricing for urban road-space has gone up from 33% in 2007 to 62% in 2020. It is higher among captains of industry, and rises higher still if the revenues are used to improve public transport, to tackle air pollution or greenhouse gas emissions, and if the taxes are higher on more polluting vehicles. Conversely, support falls if the revenues are returned to drivers in the form of reduced road taxes. Research by Campaign for Better Transport found a clear

majority supported road pricing more generally (49% in favour compared with 19% against), echoing earlier findings from the Social Marketing Foundation. Both reports reinforce the point that road pricing schemes need to be fair.

There is a good case for government to introduce road pricing nationally, not least to tackle road transport's climate impacts. Meanwhile local authorities can develop more localised schemes to tackle the (predominantly urban) impacts of congestion and pollution, using the proceeds to fund local transport improvements (e.g. walking and cycling provision, as well as improving local bus and metro services).

RURAL TRANSPORT

The solutions advocated in previous sections of this guide all apply to both urban and rural areas. However there is a common misperception that they only really work in urban areas.

It is of course true that some solutions are harder to apply in rural areas. Rural journeys are typically longer (making it less likely that they can be walked or cycled), while the lower levels of travel demand make it more challenging to provide public, shared and community transport services that are both convenient and cost-effective. It is therefore harder for rural residents to get by without a car. However the lack of alternatives obviously creates real problems for children and young people in rural areas, as well as those on low incomes and those (especially older people) who are prevented from driving by health conditions or disabilities.

Yet it is particularly important to reduce car use for longer journeys, given that around 30% of greenhouse emissions from cars arise from just 3% of car trips[2]. Moreover, successful schemes do exist, as was demonstrated in a series of roundtable discussions held by the University of Hertfordshire's Smart Mobility Unit in 2020. The report of these roundtables identified a number of solutions, and examples of good practice, for tackling car-dependence in the 'peri-urban' areas around smaller towns, as well as in more remote rural areas, not least those which are popular as recreational and holiday destinations:

- Integration of public transport: the 'One Public Transport System for Cornwall', run by Cornwall Council, was cited as an example of good practice, as was the Intalink partnership in Hertfordshire;
- 'Total transport': ensuring better coordination of transport services commissioned by different public bodies (e.g. public transport, school transport, patient transport and community transport schemes);
- Demand-responsive transport (DRT): where public transport services can operate on flexible routes, allowing users to summon a bus by altering its route (within reason) to pick them up or drop them off at a convenient location. Examples include the HertsLynx service in Hertfordshire, the Flexibus in East Sussex and the Robin service in Gloucestershire.

Meanwhile the charity CoMoUK's website cites several case-studies of car-sharing schemes operating in small towns or rural areas.

[2] Adeel, M, Wadud Z and Anable J 2020. *An exploratory analysis of long distance travel by English residents within Great Britain*, presented at the 99th Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, January, Washington DC (not available online).

There is a particularly strong case for improving public transport provision in National Parks and other protected landscapes. If visitors to these areas feel they can get around within these areas without needing a car, they are also likely to use public transport for the (probably much longer) journey to get there in the first place. In doing so, they are helping to reduce the congestion, pollution and visual intrusion that reduces the quality of the environment they are there to enjoy. For instance, prohibiting on-road car parking on the Llanberis Pass in Snowdonia while providing park-and-ride buses to get there has created a much better visitor experience.

In terms of promoting walking and (particularly) cycling, it is worth reiterating our earlier point about the need for better integration between the planning and funding for Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs). LCWIPs are generally perceived to be about 'purposeful' walking and cycling in urban areas, with RoWIPs being about recreational walking, cycling and horse-riding in rural areas.

Yet this distinction should not be hard and fast. If walking and cycling networks are to enable people to make the switch from driving into smaller towns - e.g. for children in outlying villages to walk or cycle to school in nearby towns - those networks need to overcome people's fears of walking and cycling on fast and busy rural roads. This will either involve providing segregated cycle tracks alongside those roads, or providing an alternative route using the rights of way network and quieter lanes. A route alignment that is separate from the road network may well be safer and pleasanter, but it needs to be sufficiently direct, well surfaced and lit for use in all weathers at all times of year.

It therefore makes sense for councils to ensure that their LCWIP and RoWIP networks are well integrated, and to seek opportunities to use LCWIP funding to improve the surfacing and lighting of those sections of the Rights of Way network which also have potential for 'purposeful' walking and cycling journeys (n.b. these will generally be the sections closer to towns).

FREIGHT

A concern often raised about plans to reduce traffic in towns and cities is the question "what about goods deliveries"?

Freight transport is obviously vital for delivering goods to shops, homes and businesses. Yet our over-reliance on heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) for freight transport is seriously harmful:

- Safety: In the 5 years pre-Covid, HGVs accounted for only 3.5% of motor-vehicle mileage on Britain's road network (excluding motorways), yet they were involved in 13% of pedestrian fatalities and 17% of cyclist fatalities. The injuries resulting from being hit by a lorry are much more likely to be fatal than those involving other vehicles.
- Road maintenance: the damage caused by a vehicle increases exponentially with its weight, meaning that a 44-tonne lorry does 136,000 times more damage to a road than a typical small car. Lorries are also much more likely to over-run kerbs and pavements, and to damage verges on rural roads and lanes.
- Emissions: lorries are responsible for 17% of greenhouse gas emissions from road transport and 21% of nitrogen dioxide emissions, even though they account for just 5% of road traffic mileage (including motorways).

In recent years, a decline in the GB population's annual average car mileage has been offset by an increase in van mileage, with the result that road traffic overall continues to grow. This is to a large extent driven by the growth in home deliveries, a trend which accelerated during the pandemic.

So how can we reduce these problems while still delivering the goods?

Inter-urban freight

Part of the answer is to get more of our goods delivered by rail. Rail is obviously well suited to carrying heavy or bulky goods and could take a lot of lorries off our motorways.

Improved collaboration and data-sharing within the logistics industry could also help to reduce the c30% of GB HGV mileage where the lorry runs empty.

In time, the use of self-driving lorries on motorways may contribute to reductions in the costs and the environmental and safety impacts of road freight for journeys that cannot be made by rail.

Urban logistics, including cargo bikes

Meanwhile, local authorities can support the transfer of freight to rail by supporting the creation of new railfreight terminals, both at the origin and destination ends of potential railfreight journeys. They should also look into supporting urban logistics hubs, where large lorries can transfer their loads onto smaller urban delivery vehicles, including cargo bikes, for delivery to shops and other destinations within urban areas. This would reduce the safety risks of large lorries in urban areas, not to mention the road maintenance damage and their requirements for wide-cornered junctions, which impede efforts to slow motor vehicles and the ability of pedestrians to cross at junctions.

The EU-funded Cycle Logistics project found that 51% of urban freight journeys could be undertaken by cargo bike. More recent research by the Active Travel Academy, commissioned by the charity Possible, found that cargo bikes made urban deliveries around 60% faster than vans (delivering 10 parcels per hour, compared with 6 per hour for vans), as well as reducing congestion, road danger, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The electronic version of this guide, and a leaflet summarising it, can be downloaded from https://lowtrafficfuture.org.uk/portfolio-items/local-transport-plans/