

Rural Transport Learning Network Roundtables 2024

Roundtable 1 Rural transport, net zero and a just transition September 17, 2024

For some years now the University of Hertfordshire been running a set of Roundtables, looking at transport outside cities and rural transport on the basis that this does not get discussed as much as urban and interurban transport.

Presenters:

Kris Beuret, Sociologist and Independent Researcher
Maya Singer Hobbs, Institute for Public Policy Research
Callum Reddington, Transport for the North
Alistair Kirkbride, Low Carbon Destinations;
Brian Caulfield, Trinity College Dublin

Participants:

Katie Lamb – Transport for the Southeast
Conor O' Donovan – National Transport Authority
Blathin McElligott – National Transport Authority
Peter Ramsey - WSP
Renee van Baar – Midlands Connect
Trevor Brennan – England's Economic Heartland
Hugo Fulford – Department for Transport
Brad Taylor - Council for the Preservation of Rural England
Ali Clabburn – Mobilityways
Ian Philips – University of Leeds
Jools Townsend – Community Rail Network
Lee Robinson – Transport for Wales
Hannah Shrimpton – Peninsula Transport
Susan Ross – Edge Innovation
Melanie Watson – Independent Consultant
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The following abbreviations indicate the sector making comments:

ACAD Academic
NGO Non-governmental organisation
CONS Consultant
CC County council or unitary authority
REGG Regional transport body
GOV National government.
INNOV Innovation sector
OP Transport operator
SNTB Sub-national Transport Body

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/study/schools-of-study/life-and-medical-sciences/business-support-and-consultancy/smart-mobility-unit/Roundtable-research>
<https://www.transporteast.gov.uk/rural-networking-partnership/>

- **Introduction:** Welcome everybody to the latest of the round tables that the University of Hertfordshire Smart Mobility Unit have been running with Transport East, which is the lead sub national transport body on rural transport. We've been running a series of round tables for a few years now exploring rural transport, or transport outside cities, as we've been calling it because we've been taking in edge of cities as well, looking at aspects of rural transport in those areas on the basis that this hasn't been much researched up to now - and what we've discovered is there's lots of really interesting practice in this area, and we've wanted to bring that out.



Presentation 1

Presentation 1: Kris Beuret: Insights from Transport Related Social Exclusion Research

- Hello everyone. I'm beginning with a presentation about transport related problems in rural areas based on recent and ongoing research. Mainly on residents, but also incoming needs, delivery services and visitors. I think access to the countryside from cities is important for well-being and cohesion, and funnily enough, at the moment, Parliament is talking about a right to roam bill, but unfortunately, most people drive when they visit the countryside, so that is certainly an under researched area and I wanted to flag it up at the beginning.
- A major piece of research recently carried out was for Transport for the North, and it included discussions and interviews in rural areas, particularly Northumberland, Cumbria and Gateshead. And I'm pleased that this has led to major policy debates from this piece of research, including an app which has been developed, which can be used all over the country to look at accessibility in rural areas.
- The results of this research showed that one in five people experience a high level of TRSE and that was particularly high in rural areas, so that evidence, the website, is available for all sorts of people to use in analysing accessibility in rural areas.
- The results of this Transport for the North work showed reducing public transport in rural areas. People's perception of what transport used to be like compared to now is a little bit colourful, they tend to imagine it was better than it used to be. You look at old timetables, they're not that good, but certainly there have been reductions and also, poor coordination with social and voluntary transport. And one thing we forget, I think, is that we analyse it all by households and we don't realise how that constrains the choice of everybody else in the household, who don't have access to the car in the day and at other times.
- Another thing is, we found a lot of lower income groups in rural areas had older cars requiring higher maintenance and running costs, and they're often off the road, and they were sometimes being driven illegally without insurance because people couldn't afford to keep them running, and that lifts were very important, but inflexible and socially awkward. In a mixed village where you've got quite posh people in rich houses, poorer people weren't too comfortable accepting lifts from those people, and I'll say a bit more about that later.
- And finally, we've found that disruption was disproportionate in rural areas because there weren't many alternatives. So the picture there is in a mining village, a very poor village, and I was there. The research involved actually going on journeys with people and living their lives. I was there. The bus didn't turn up to take kids home after school. The next one was not expected for an hour. It was raining. It was cold. None of those people had access to any information about what was going wrong, and I think that it's an issue that we don't think about enough, in terms of disruption, particularly in rural areas. It's all very well to look at what transport is available, but often drivers don't turn up, all sorts of things happen and the consequences are dire.
- So I'm going through just a few particular issues that came out of this research and other research in rural areas which are often, I think, under realised and under researched. The first one is about taxis, which are a really important method of transport in rural areas, but

taxis are often unavailable, due often to local authority contracts for education and social services, so at the very time lots of people need a taxi, they just aren't available. I think there are some very good solutions there, but generally local rural taxis aren't very well supported and in previous seminars in this series, we have had some good ideas about how to overcome that. Particularly I remember hearing from Andy Ambrose of Arrow Taxis in Essex who is combining freight deliveries with passenger deliveries. So taxis were a big problem, even when on paper they existed.

- The next problem was about walking and cycling in rural areas. One of the pictures there is, you know, a typical example without any pavements and the other picture is actually an example of an off road pedestrian route running alongside the main road, and that one is in Aviemore, in Scotland. Now in one of the areas we actually spoke to people, in Rennington in Northumberland, where they had designed a similar route to the one shown at Aviemore here, off road in a situation like the picture where you couldn't walk or cycle and they got as far as actually planning the whole route and a really good route to Alnwick where they did their shopping about 3 miles away. But what happened was the land belonged to a local landowner, and he would not give them permission. He was the freeholder. And I said, well, why didn't you challenge it? And they said, well, he owns the freehold of all of our houses in the village too. So there were a lot of issues about walking and cycling in rural areas, as much as people might have liked to do it.
- Another problem we came across which I think is under researched is the constraint on educational choice for people in rural areas due to transport issues. For instance, in Gateshead, some people would have liked to go to school in Durham, but you couldn't get across the border - many public transport maps in rural areas don't show beyond county boundaries, so that research which was in Leicestershire, in rural areas, showed a lack of choice of evening classes and A level classes, which had a knock on effect to university entrance and all sorts of things. There was also a lot of confusion about child independence and active travel, and some people I'm sad to say in some villages had actually been shamed by others for allowing their children to walk to school along rural roads.
- Just two more issues. First of all, driving and the ageing society. So many people we spoke to in rural areas had a car, but it was in the garage and it belonged to a widow whose husband had always done the driving. Other people had developed poor eyesight, and said to us, look, we really shouldn't be driving, but we've got no choice. I can remember at one particular village hall discussion group, I asked one elderly couple, where have you moved from to here in your 60s? They were now in their 80s, and they said we used to live in Peckham, and I sat there thinking, why did you move away from all of your neighbours and lovely public transport?
- The last issue I want to raise is about digital exclusion, and the point I wanted to make here is that this is not just an issue for the elderly. I did a lot of work with elderly people who couldn't manipulate smartphones and so on, but it's both infrastructure and skills based. Some rural areas had very poor connectivity, but there are also a lot of people that really couldn't do it very well, but they weren't all old. You know, there's a picture there of some people with disabilities that I worked with who were trying to learn how to use the public transport system online.
- Finally I just want to say that it's important that net zero policies don't increase social exclusion, and I'm in the middle of doing some research for the Independent Transport Commission at the moment which is looking at the equity impacts of decarbonisation in transport. That's ongoing research, so look out for that, and I'm certainly going to make sure that includes rural issues. I think the good news, as a sociologist, I can say this, is that when I've done this work about helping people without cars and in rural areas, or with poor transport options, there's always been this kind of social class issue of the rich people and the poor people and the poor people thinking, it's like Lady Muck telling us what to do. But now, everybody realises that we've got to reduce emissions and work towards net zero, so that's a cohesive thing and that is getting all sorts of people, all sorts of income groups, car owners and non-car owners. We all get together without feeling that it's them and us. So I think that's the good news and I just want to finally finish with

that picture, that engagement is absolutely essential. That's my final message. If we're going to tackle this net zero challenge, engagement is absolutely essential. Thank you.

- **Chair:** Thank you very much, Kris. A good one for getting us started and we'll come back to the issues you raised. I should also mention that we've asked Brian Caulfield from Trinity College Dublin, to say a few words about the research that he's doing, so we'll bring him in a bit later on. Right, can I ask Maya Singer Hobbs from the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) to talk about the work a range of pieces of work actually that IPPR have been doing on transport climate and just transition?



Presentation 2

Presentation 2: Maya Singer Hobbs, IPPR: A Just Transition for Rural Transport

- Our work echoes a lot of what was said in the previous presentation. I am going to gallop through three different programmes of work that we've got going on at IPPR at the moment and I'm going to do quite a light touch overview of them, but I'm happy to share the reports with people afterwards if they would be interested in reading them all in a bit more detail, and I'm going to talk about some modelling we've done, a bit of polling that we did earlier this year, and then some more in depth public engagement work that we did, specifically looking at transport in rural Scotland.
- I'm going to start with the polling to set the scene, and I think the key thing to note here, and I don't think that any of this is going to be a surprise to anyone on this call, is that transport isn't working for people, and we asked people, what do you think about the current transport system, and who do you think gets a good or a bad deal? And on this graph, the top right, the pale green bars are people who get a good deal and the usual suspects up there are people with high incomes, people who live in cities, and people who walk regularly interestingly, and then way down at the bottom, the people who are perceived as having the worst deal from the transport system are people who live on low incomes and people who live in rural areas. And this is a sort of perception, but it's interesting that this polling was sort of a representative sample and so clearly people who live in cities are also thinking that people who live rurally get a bad deal on their transport systems.
- When we then asked about, what does a just transition mean and how do people value transport? We asked of the following items, what are perceived to be a necessity for people living in the UK today. And public transport to and from work - over 50% of people thought that that was a necessity. And public transport and the value of public transport came up again and again in this polling, and it's very easy to get sucked into the war on the motorist type narrative, but actually people really, really like public transport and they want to see investment in it. So when we asked people what are some of the ways that the government could reduce transport costs? And how effective would you consider some of these interventions? People want to see fare caps, people want to see better public transport networks, and that's across both car owners and non-car owners. So transport isn't working for people, particularly people living rurally, but better public transport has lots of support and might be one of the ways to address this. And I think what you were saying, Kris, about how people perceive themselves, what we've really found is that the war on the motorist really wasn't a compelling narrative. People aren't usually a driver or not a driver. People usually drive, and then they might walk, and sometimes they take the bus, and it's not useful to think about transport modes in isolation. So that's it on the polling briefly.
- Again, I think everyone will know this, but there is an urgent need for action. Transport emissions and have been pretty static over the past thirty years or so, and you can see that the right hand side of this graph are the emissions trajectories - the emissions reductions that need to happen between now and 2050, and they are urgent and rapid. But the key thing here is that we need to make sure these reductions are done fairly, and

there's a big link here to inequality and part of that is related to social exclusion, and I'll come back to that in a minute.

- It's also worth repeating that the public mandate for action is really high on action to tackle the climate crisis. Public concern about climate cuts across demographics. We did some polling earlier this year that showed that every constituency in the country shares the view that we should be moving faster on climate. Apart from two constituencies that didn't. And there is a sort of manufacturing of the net zero backlash, and I think there is an opportunity for this government to move away from this, particularly the narrative around car users (hopefully).
- I talked about inequality. There is a massive disparity in emissions from transport according to income, and again I would imagine that this isn't a surprise to most people. It sort of feels intuitive, but our polling and our modelling showed that the highest 0.1% of earners in Great Britain, those in that bar on the right hand side of this graph, emit at least 12 times more than the average person in Great Britain and 22 times more than the lowest earners. So when we're thinking about interventions to reduce transport emissions, we probably want to be thinking about the top 0.1% or the top 1%, or even the top 10% of both earners and emitters, rather than thinking about applying policies across the board. How do we address the highest polluters there?. So we used this modelling and we came up with a series of profiles, and we grouped these profiles according to how they travelled. We used the National Travel Survey and the Scottish Household Survey data, and we weighted it to include Wales, but it doesn't include Northern Ireland, and I would imagine that this is a fairly discerning audience, so I've got a few other quick caveats about the modelling that we did. These are broadly representative, so we wanted it so that you could see the differences between how these people travel, but not so many profiles that they became entirely meaningless. And so as a result, we did artificially group some of these. We did want some no flying groups and I'm not actually going to go into it here because it's less relevant to the conversation about rural transport, but aviation emissions are a massive contributor into those disparities. We also used a measure of income rather than wealth, so there will probably be some people who have low income but high wealth that might skew the data a little bit and the very highest earners and lowest earners are probably not included. I'm not imagining that many of Britain's billionaires are filling in the National Travel Survey, but the key thing is that the lack of inclusion of these people into the data actually doesn't change our policy recommendations that significantly.
- So you can see, I'll just briefly touch on some of these. In the top left, those are our frequent flyers, and the figure on the top left are highly affluent, unrestricted mobility, they are the highest earners, they are highest emitters, and they have the biggest amount of travel. And then way down on the bottom right-hand side, we have people who are less mobile, so those might be people who don't have a car, they might be people who have mobility issues or limited mobility, and they are generally the lowest earners as well. And we can see when we look at the distance travelled by each group, there's massive differences in both flying and surface transport behaviours. And when we're looking at which of those tend to live rurally, it's these four, so actually, people who live rurally according to the modelling that we've done, and there will obviously be nuances here, tend to have quite high travel. The yellow bar on the graph, that's surface transport, so that is driving, trains, buses etc., and we can see that these people tend to be highly mobile, so let's look at those four in a little bit more detail. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the group that has the highest number of people who live rurally is this car reliant group, so they have high surface transport emissions, they're sort of median level earners, so they're not super high earners, but they're definitely not in the low-income bracket. Then we have the high car use group, that sort of purple one, high car use, high flying and again we see the high car use emerging as a trait amongst these groups that live rurally. Then there are the third one, the highly affluent with unrestricted mobility and we tend to think of this group specifically as a sort of suburban Home Counties type group, and perhaps again this doesn't come as a surprise when we think about the modelling.
- So when we were thinking about high level policy interventions for these profiles and how we might reduce emissions, we put people into three groups. So we've got the fly less

group, we've got the more public transport and active travel and intervention, which actually applies to everyone, and then the shift to an electric vehicle.

- Three of our four rural profiles, we put into the electric vehicle group, so I think there's an interesting question about how do we support electric vehicle adoption in rural communities and we see that generally roll out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure tends to be more highly concentrated in cities. So how do we make sure that we're supporting people who live rurally to make a transfer?
- This is all well and good when we're doing it at a high level, but how does any of this actually translate when you talk to people? So I'm going to talk briefly about some work that we did in Scotland, and we were specifically looking at car reduction in rural Scotland and I was speaking to people who are living in rural communities in Scotland and living on low incomes. It was specifically about their understanding of both climate change and Scotland's target to reduce its car miles by 20%. So let's start with a little bit of context again. There are surprising numbers of people who live rurally, and particularly in remote rural areas of Scotland. Almost 10% of people who live in remote rural Scotland don't have access to a car, and I think that is a point that's quite often missed when we talk about rural transport. Also again, this is probably not surprising, but people who live on the lowest incomes are the least likely to have access to a car, and the intersection of people living rurally and on low incomes is a group of people that we don't often talk to, and certainly what came across quite strongly in the work that we did, is that we don't often think about the transport interventions for those groups specifically. So what were people saying? I've got a couple of quotes there and then I'll summarise some of the overarching findings, but this really echoes what Kris was saying earlier. One of the people that I spoke to lived in and lived on one of the Scottish islands and she was saying, my son got offered a job, but he had to turn it down because he doesn't have a car, he can't afford a car, partly because of insurance costs, and she wasn't able to give him a lift because it didn't work with her own working hours, and there wasn't a bus, so he had to turn the job down. It's really hard, we know that this is probably happening more widely than this, but it's very hard to capture the numbers of people who don't get jobs or who are shut out of the job market as a result of this. We also talked to two women who were carers and this links to the work that Stephen shared from Possible about the electric vehicles for carers¹, which was a really great piece of work by Hirra and colleagues at Possible and this piece of work that we did really supported that which was that there were carers, and particularly if they're caring for people rurally, who were saying you know, I'd like not to use my car as much, it's very expensive having to drive between places, or I'd rather be on my bike. But actually, I don't have the time to get between my patients if I don't drive, there's no way to do that on public transport and it would cost a fortune on public transport because you'd have to buy a bus ticket between each visit. Then I spoke to one person who described themselves as living in a transport crisis because everything had gone up and there were no ways to make any savings, couldn't afford a car really, but also couldn't afford the bus, and this person also talked about the fact that her child's school bus would get there 40 minutes before the start of the school day and would leave 5 minutes after the end of the school day, which meant that if you were delayed getting out of your class, maybe you would miss the bus, and then the next bus again might not be for another hour or an hour and a half, so what's the kid going to do in in that hour and a half? And so those were some quotes that sort of highlight it.
- I think what was interesting is despite all of this, there was a real sense that people understood the need to act on climate change. People were very clear. There was a real sense of frustration about the lack of options, and again, this links a little bit to what Kris was saying about the planning piece. People were saying, you know, they're building a new development down the road. There's no bus and there was a train track that was closed down and so obviously everyone's going to drive into the nearest city about a 40-minute drive away because how else are they going to get to work? And so there was a frustration that it wasn't easy to make green choices, and in general on public transport,

¹ <https://www.wearepossible.org/our-reports/clean-cars-for-carers>

despite Scotland having concessionary fares for people up to 22 and for older people, people were saying, well, you know, it's all well and good having a free bus pass, but there isn't a bus. It's completely pointless, and again one of the other young people that I spoke to said, well, I could drive to the next village over to go to my football practice and that would take 15-20 minutes, or to get there on public transport I have to take the bus into the next nearest town and then back out again, which makes it an hour round trip. So the bus is free, but it doesn't actually get me to where I need to go. Then similarly on the active travel point again, I spoke to parents who were saying, well, I wouldn't let my child cycle because it's not safe or I can't even walk with my toddler to the bus stop because there isn't a pavement and so this isn't rocket science, but there just aren't the options for people. There was a real sense that if the government wanted a reduction in car miles, there was going to have to be something offered first. People really felt like it wasn't fair to ask them to change their behaviours without providing an alternative.

- We grouped the recommendations according to three categories. There was one piece on getting around in rural Scotland, and we grouped this into driving for work and thinking about, are there opportunities for businesses to be supporting people to switch to EVs? So that might be the sort of electric vehicles for carers type work. We looked at buses and public transport and thinking about anchor towns and hubs and this sort of links again to the piece about getting to doctors' appointments. An elderly couple that I spoke to said 'we have to get a taxi to the GP Practice because neither of us can drive and there isn't a bus service to get there', and that feels like a real gap and also there might be opportunities there for community transport options. But again, if they don't already exist, it can be hard to set those up. And then there was a piece about active travel.
- Then there was a piece about meeting people where they are, and the rural premium came up a lot; that it is much more expensive to live rurally on lots of fronts, including transport. We talked about the mental load of living rurally and again, this is what Kris was saying about disruptions being so much more disruptive. Lots of people spoke to the fact that they have to be prepared for snow and to be snowed in, and that's definitely not something that we have to think about in London, and how do you make sure that you're addressing those needs for people?
- Then I think there was an interesting point about how people feel about car reduction initiatives, and I think one of the stories that I come to again and again when I'm thinking about rural transport is a woman that I spoke to who said, 'I just think it's completely ridiculous, there's no way I'd be able to reduce my car use' and then later on in the conversation was talking about how great her local park and ride is, and she was saying, 'If I have to go into the nearest city, I'd drive to the park and ride and I take the bus into the city because it saves me on parking costs. It's cheaper, the bus drops me right in the centre of town, whereas I'd be parking on the outskirts', and actually that is a reduction in car use, but she chooses it because it was a better option for her and it feels like thinking creatively about how we might change behaviours, and actually make transport systems work better for people is probably the way that we want to be it going.
- We came up with a set of principles for action and I'm not going to dwell on this because I'm conscious of time and again, I can share these later. I actually have a bit of a slightly cheeky ask, which is another piece of work we're doing is thinking about buses and how can we make buses work for people, and I would be really curious to hear people's insights on a couple of the policy ideas that we're thinking about, one of which might be a sort of national bus company which might help local authorities derisk franchising decisions. We were thinking about a total transport authority which might consolidate some of the local transport authorities, and particularly thinking about transport between jurisdictions. So how can you make sure you can get a bus between Newcastle and Durham? say, just lifting those decisions to a slightly higher level so you can have a slightly more strategic approach, and then thinking about network safeguards, and socially and economically necessary services. How do we think about defining those? I'd be really curious to hear people's thoughts on that. I galloped through that really fast. I'm going to stop there.
- **Chair:** Thank you very much Maya, and that list of questions at the end, I think we'll come back to because there's been some really good stuff in the chat, particularly from

Susan Ross. I was really struck by your figure, Susan, that in East Cleveland and Teesside, 4000 eligible people for working with ALDI could not accept the position due to not owning a car and the lack of public transport access. That's really big, and this feeds nicely into Callum Redington's presentation. Thank you.



TfN travel choices.pdf

Presentation 3: Callum Reddington, Transport for the North: Travel Choices Research – Key Findings

Chair: So, Callum, you work for Transport for the North and this is new work that the organisation has just done.

- We set up Travel Choices Research and we worked with Systra earlier this year, and the overarching objective was to provide our members and partners tools to help to vocalise the cost of travel and understand different benefits between costs and travel across different modes.
- In terms of what we've done to date, when you're looking at costs and benefits of travel, there are obviously different assumptions that you can take, and lots of different ways that you can actually define what goes into which sort of cost or benefit bucket as it were. We're not saying this is the best way to compare and contrast costs, but ultimately it's something that's consistent and gives us the best view of the scale of differences in costs and benefits of different modes of travel, and ultimately it's used to help vocalise the relative differences in these costs and benefits, and it's going to be really important for Transport for the North as underlying evidence, to help spell out the narrative of inclusive decarbonisation. So taking a lot of what's been discussed already today as part of our decarbonisation strategy stock take, in which we'll really tease out that theme of inclusive decarbonisation.
- So moving on then, in terms of this work, we recognise that the way we travel doesn't affect us all as individuals, but also impacts those around us too (i.e. society), and whilst we all may see the cost of filling up a car, or paying for a bus or train ticket, the wider impact on society is much harder for us to see from different travel modes.
- So, what our evidence looks to do is to identify and quantify these costs and benefits of the different modes of travel, and to do this we've identified, we think, some of the following in terms of: what does travel by car, public transport and active travel cost to users? but then also, how does this cost and benefit match up to the costs and benefits for society?, so thinking of excess air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, public health impacts, and ultimately for our local transport partners, the outputs of this work can provide that framework for justifying transport policy and planning decisions and also inform future pricing mechanisms for various travel modes as well.
- For Transport for the North as well, building on the inclusive decarbonisation, this work can inform future work streams and advocate that change to government, so thinking of fares reform, digital connector mobility, rail reform, travel pricing and obviously public transport affordability, recognising this as a central theme within our strategic transport plan, which was published in March of this year, around how public transport can be more affordable.
- In terms of the methodology the study examines the costs and benefits of cars (both combustion engines and electric vehicles), buses, rail, walking and cycling, and this was done across cities, other urban areas and rural areas across the north. For this study, only personal travel was of interest. In terms of cities we classified these as the major conurbations around Manchester, Liverpool, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and the Northeast. Other urban areas represent urban populations between three thousand and two hundred and fifty thousand, and then rural areas include everything else, so all the remaining below three thousand, which in terms of area across the north is quite significant. This methodology was in part selected to correspond with the National Travel Survey analysis and the small scale of geography which is suitable for the sample size that exists for doing this sort of work.

- The final output was that we were able to provide valuations in pounds, per person, per kilometre for each of these travel modes across the different place typologies. Then a quality scoring of all sources were undertaken to determine that final list of costs and benefits that we had used in the study, both for direct and indirect costs and benefits. Ultimately the costs and benefits that we did use in our study were those that were significant in scale and where there was sufficient availability and quality of data existing to actually quantify these and include within the study. Both tables on the slide show the literature review scoring in terms of what was available from Systra's literature review and how we ultimately ranked this for inclusion within this work. The next slide shows these costs and benefits in more detail, both direct costs and indirect costs and benefits, and ultimately the direct costs and benefits to those associated with the user and the indirect costs and benefits of those associated with wider society, and the aim of the study was to identify the real cost valuations rather than perceived costs and as such, every effort was taken to exclude purely perceived costs.
- However, we do caveat that with these costs and benefits that have been included, some do have an element of perception about them. Then following the research stage, we had an internal workshop amongst the project team. This helped us to finesse the cost and benefits and some costs and benefits did move between pots, for example if they were in the wrong pot originally, so a direct cost that we see more as an indirect cost, or where there was some duplication where valuations may have been represented elsewhere. So for example, if they represented a cost of one mode but were of benefit to another, so potentially impacts of subsidies to public transport or "well to tank" carbon for example.
- At this point we did add further costs and benefits further to the literature review, where we did find values and then themes would emerge, subsequently we found the values through the research. For example, this includes absenteeism and benefits for public transport and walking and cycling, the pain of parking, the land value of parking, and also that value of public realm taking up, so there where there's cost and benefit, how you are supposed to smooth that out within the process was considered, e.g. subsidies to book transport, transport maintenance costs and "well to tank" carbon.
- For the cost of air pollution, we split this out for nitrogen oxides and particulate matter, so this helped us to differentiate the costs for EVs against combustion engine cars, recognising that the impacts of air, NOx and PM are slightly different in terms of the particulates that come from tyres and brakes, as well as the exhaust and how this differentiates between combustion engines and electric vehicles.
- This is the summary of the results we arrived at. We found that the disparities created when trips are made in the city context with the impacts of extra noise and air pollution from car travel are the greatest. We found that when comparing costs to users vs. the cost to society, with car travel and public transport there are significant inequalities. When comparing the impact on society, car use is considerably underpriced, whereas bus use is significantly overpriced.
- Looking in more detail, we found that for petrol and diesel cars, the costs to society are £0.35 per kilometre higher than the costs to users. Similarly for EV cars, that was £0.20 per kilometre higher for the cost to society than for users, and this flips then for public transport, so considering bus use, the cost to users was £0.23 per kilometre higher than the cost to society and rail was more suitably priced but it was still 4 pence per kilometre higher on the user than society, so it was having a higher cost on the user than on society compared to car. It is worth mentioning as well that our figures do not consider the £2 fare cap for bus as it's a temporary measure that's expected to end at the end of the year.
- We also recognise that in terms of the social impact of car use in the north, this is also likely to increase between now and 2050, despite that increasing share of EVs in the fleet, so we will be expecting decarbonisation costs and benefits to emerge over this period. The impact of the car will still exist, quite predominantly due to the actual total number of car trips increasing over this period, and this is again, despite that relative percentage share of ICEs in the fleet decreasing quite dramatically over this period. We also recognise that in terms of the initial purchase of the car, this has not been taken into account, because we're looking more at the the cost of that car being on the road, so the

journey rather than the cost to exist. We do see that car purchase price varies quite widely and it's also a user preference, so this primarily is up to the user in terms of how much they pay for that car rather than a necessary cost.

- However, we do anticipate that there are some users that are forced into car dependency, as colleagues have discussed already on the call. In these cases, particularly in rural areas for example, where people are very dependent on cars, there is a justification to consider that cost of the car in addition to the cost of the journey. We calculate that this is equivalent to £0.08 per kilometre for an ICE car and £0.05 per kilometre for an EV car. The slight differentiations in these costs are related to the cost of maintenance between EVs and ICE cars, and also it's worth noting that this does differ slightly to the £0.45 pence per mileage expenses account when you book to do travel for work for example. This looks at more cost of ownership, and depreciation of fuel costs. Whereas our work with TFN is slightly different, it looks at the cost of making that journey and not necessarily the cost of ownership.
- Also finally just to touch upon walking and cycling, this had quite significant positive impacts on both the user and society given the physical benefits, the cost to the NHS that's reduced, the air quality benefits as well, and physical benefits, and that can be shown in terms of the cost to walking and cycling have a large net benefit to society, so £0.59 per kilometre net benefit on cycling and £1.21 per kilometre net benefit on walking.
- So just to conclude, we recognise that this work is to help ease the understanding and vocalise that there are differences in costs and benefits of different modes of travel, also considering across different place typologies, and this also accounts for a series of assumptions that have been considered. I think the key consideration is that it gives us something to compare, it's quite consistent, and it also accounts for different scales of costs and benefits. We recognise that whilst the assumptions may change and there may be arguments to change the different costs or benefits and the modelling could change and pot allocations could change, and this may change the scale of findings as well, but ultimately some of these findings wouldn't change, such as that car users do face significant lower costs compared to public transport users, and that the benefits of society are born more from car users compared to public transport users, and that really significant net benefit of walking the cycling was also really pronounced. We're obviously very happy to send across more detailed information on this project and this report has been published on the Transport for the North website and in the chat, and a more summarised insights piece is also available. Thank you.
- Chair: Thank you. There's lots of great stuff going on in the chat, and thanks for all of the comments and exchanges there.



Presentation 4

Presentation 4: Alastair Kirkbride: Just Transition and Rural Transport – The Zero Carbon Cumbria Programme.

- Chair: Straight on then with Alistair Kirkbride, who in this case is talking about the Zero Carbon Cumbria programme, and the work that he and others were involved in, so Alistair, take it away.
- Excellent. I'll talk a little bit about the Zero Carbon Cumbria programme and then I really want to explore and reflect on whether and how we included the idea of just transition within that programme. Cumbria then, just to start off is very rural, so these are the Defra classifications. It's predominantly a deeply rural county with a few what we call urban centres. But most of the places in the country would see them as towns in terms of their scale. But they're very widely distributed as well, so we're in a predominantly rural county. Now if I was doing another presentation, in my day job I suppose, I would say, oh, and there's a National Park in the middle of it, and another one to the east as well, but that's not for today.

- The Zero Carbon Cumbria programme has done all sorts of things, one of which is to create a carbon budget for the county as well, and you'll notice on the right the Big Blue swathe is travel. It's predominantly rural, and travel is a big slice of the carbon budget for the whole county.
- These slides are from John Forbes, the project manager of the Zero Carbon Cumbria Project, so I'm just acknowledging that at the moment. It's a roughly two and a half million-pound climate action fund programme over about four years, and I'll talk a little bit about it and then how and whether just transition fits in.
- It's a very broad programme, deliberately, and I'll talk a little bit more about this, it's got the key public sector organisations, the Councils, park authorities, it's got the private sector, united utilities and a lot of community sector in there as well, and to a certain extent, these are given equal voices in terms of engagement and how things develop.
- It partly responds to and partly triggered climate juries, and so the outputs of those climate juries have been included within the programme too. Climate juries are balanced profiles of local communities being challenged to consider how certain issues relating to climate need to be dealt with locally.
- So just transition. There's nothing in the Zero Carbon Cumbria Programme that says that just transition is at the centre of it, but it has been set up with outcomes in mind from the outset. It's not just about how to reduce carbon, it's whether carbon can be reduced to a sufficient scale in ways that develop outcomes that fit within the county and align with other policies and such like. So these are just parts that I've taken from the programme itself to illustrate that the thinking has always been from the outset about other outcomes of carbon reduction.
- It's managed and run by Cumbria Action for Sustainability, who've had a long history of doing a lot of climate projects, so "cold to cosy homes" for instance, which is focused specifically on people on low incomes and benefits to reduce bills by improving insulation and the like. What does it do? It deliberately works with local authorities and youth, it tries to build in reporting, community led action and the like, and lot of training of skills going on through a lot of the tourism businesses at the moment. I'm going to talk mainly for the rest of this about the upper part, the emissions sector, groups of which there are four - transport, farming, consumption and buildings. What these groups have is an open invitation is who can get involved with these groups. There were about twenty or so organisations on the Transport and Mobility group. It was very open and that was sometimes extremely frustrating in terms of what that group was trying to achieve, but they were all tasked with developing an emissions reduction action plan. Ours led to four strategic priorities. No new infrastructure that will increase emissions, reducing the need to travel, travelling better and make travel cleaner. We worked on what that actually means, and again there was real focus on outcomes at all times. It's not just about carbon reduction, it's about the outcomes of that carbon reduction and how that fits in Cumbria itself, you know with all of the complexities we've been hearing about in the other presentations, different places are different as well as being similar. This is all available online, so I have put links through the presentation.
- Just to illustrate then, so strategic priority one, we identified lots of tasks within them. For instance, avoiding new emissions from new highways capacity, how would we do that? What are the challenges for doing that? Prospective partners I think for the purposes of this call is the euphemism for who should take a lead on that, and the state that the programme is in at the moment is working with these partners, who are the obvious lead partners. So for instance, we had some great discussions about if Zero Carbon Cumbria is looking to 2037, so should the transport authorities be referring to the Zero Carbon Cumbria priorities, or should Zero Carbon Cumbria be trying to align to the transport authorities, for instance, who have shorter timeframes, and these questions go round and round, as you can probably imagine.
- I've just pulled out a few to illustrate where we got to. For instance, we identified twenty-nine actions in total, and these actions are identified to a level of specificity so that they make sense relative to the agent body that might want to take them on. For instance, T1.3 location of new developments to be approved based on sustainable transport accessibility and reduced car dependency. So that not only has an obvious home in

terms of who would take responsibility for that, but it also illustrates, I think, that fairness and the sense of fairness is implicit within these sorts of actions. Re-localised services improve access. The third one there, there are two that that led to a really interesting debate when we got to one of the engagement stages. Enable home and flexible working sounds great from a carbon perspective, but the discussion was that's fine, but a lot of people can't do that. The part in the brackets can look quite trivial, but I think it illustrates that the engagement led to a lot of these nuances being brought in for those organisations for which it's appropriate. There's another one about communal post boxes at the bottom of lanes, so that we can start reducing longer trips by delivery vehicles. There's a lot of debate saying that's fine, but for some people they can't get to those post boxes, so you know, it is great from a carbon perspective, but not necessarily from a rural isolation perspective. I've added some actions in there to illustrate that most of our considerations were discussing fairness while we were putting the emissions reduction action plan ideas together, but I don't think ever it was extracted as a specific thing that that we then went through and filtered everything about the work through.

- To sum up, this has been going on for about three years now. We've had more than two dozen meetings of just the transport mobility working group, so there's been a lot of discussion about this, and I've just covered the surface. It's a key starting point in Zero Carbon, Cumbria, and it's woven through everything that it's been thinking about. The four sector groups have considered it when writing the emission reduction action plans, but those emission reduction action plans then went through engagement to hone that even further. I think the question of whether emission reduction action plans will lead to just transition is an interesting one. The Zero Carbon Cumbria programme doesn't do stuff on the ground in this respect. What it does is lead to things that other organisations who are the delivery agents would then take on, and so if it's successful, it will only be determined by whether and how the delivery bodies embed and act on the actions.
- So that's an absolute skate through the programme and where we've taken it with mobility and transport. I look at it thinking if we do half of the things in the emission reduction action plans, then we're doing incredibly well, but success will only be measured by whether the delivery bodies are brave enough to take on some of those things. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much, that's really good, and again, there's various people who have put some good things in the chat. Now a couple of quick responses or presentations from people here. Firstly, Ali Clabburn, I think you said you've done some work that was relevant to this?

- **Ali Clabburn:** Yes, morning everyone. I'm Ali Clabburn from Mobilityways, formerly Liftshare. We are doing a project with Norfolk County Council and Queen Elizabeth Hospital, looking specifically at overcoming rural challenges for commuting staff coming to the hospital. They've got a big challenge there of trying to build a new hospital because it's falling down, and they need to build on the car parks, so they've got an urgent action to cut traffic. So, we're doing some detailed analysis of how all these people can get into work and it's been really fascinating, going very deep, not just into travel surveys, but also using a tool we've got called commute IQ, which shows the potential for shifting modes.
- We mapped all the members of staff there, so it's basically 5000 people come in, and you can see they're coming from pretty rural areas. The first thing we do is we say if all those people were driving, what would the emissions be, because we're not only trying to reduce the traffic, we're trying to reduce emissions coming in, and what's really interesting with this site, as well as many other sites is that most people live within really short distances. Most staff live very close, in fact the median commute distance is just 3.7 miles, but the emissions come from the longer journeys. So it's the journey's that are 10 to 50 miles, but also there's a chunk between 80 and 120 miles where you may only have one or two people doing each distance, but actually you've got quite a lot of emissions coming from there, so if you can focus on encouraging working from home or maybe those people to share cars or come in by train, you can actually make big impacts on emissions and for all of these journeys, these journeys are typically journeys that can't be

done by public transport and they can't be walked or cycled because they're too far, so it's really important to think about how to overcome those emissions from those journeys.

- But what we then do is we say, OK, how many people can come in by public transport? The green dots are people who have good public transport and this is into a key local hospital, so you imagine hospitals have pretty good transport networks, and it does as long as you're on a certain corridors, but the red dots are people who have buses, but they take more than twice as long to get in as it does by car, which is why not that many people, as you'll see in a minute, come in by bus. We then look at the same map for car sharing. If you look at the green areas, say around Swaffham and then shift across here, the green dots are people who have at least 10 people that they can share a car with. In fact, some people have over 500 people they can share a car with, within walking distance of their house. So huge potential for carpooling, but also to improve the buses.
- What we then do is we say if everyone travels by each mode, what is the potential for reducing emissions? So, if all 30% of staff who could walk or cycle within half an hour do, then we can save 56 tonnes of CO₂. If all 60-61% of people who live within half an hour of cycling do, we can save 270 tonnes. For bus, only 21% of staff have a good bus option, which is surprising. If all of them do, we could save 400 tonnes, and if all the 91 staff who could car share do, we could save 700 tonnes. So we're not only looking at the modes available but the emission savings from doing those distances.
- In summary, what's really key from the early analysis of this is only 10% of staff currently walk or cycle, but 30% could within half an hour. 7% of staff cycle, 51% could. 6% of staff car share or are dropped off and 91% could. 4% come by bus and 25% could. So there's blatant potential with all of these modes for that hospital to improve, and if they can start making the shifts towards these modes then clearly they can start freeing up parking spaces and they can start building their new hospital. We then go very deep to work out why people do or don't use these modes, and it's interesting to see that for overall why people choose the quickest option, is the primary one is that they want convenience. The most interesting one is probably this one. What would encourage you to use public transport? Quite a lot of things actually. More direct services, and more frequent services obviously, but also better information, cheaper discount fares, and more reliable services. Again, we do the same for walking and cycling. What would encourage you to car share? Again quite a lot of things. 46% of people said nothing, but that means 54% of people would be interested in something that encouraged them to car share and then we can target those people through it. What's really interesting with the hospital is they have been one of the first companies to enable all the staff to be analysed with the post codes and e-mail addresses. They've asked all staff that they have to be part of this so we can target every person who can walk or cycle and say this is what you can do. We can target all the people who can come by bus and target them directly by emailing them with discounts and things from the bus operators, so it's a really exciting project. It's just kicking off now, goes on for the next six months and I would love to update you at the end, to see how we've got on.²
- **Chair:** Thank you very much, a really interesting case study with lots of stuff in there. I don't suppose that presentation is shareable at the moment is it?
- **Ali:** It will be, it will be probably in about two months.
- **Chair:** Great, OK, fantastic.

Presentation 5: Brian Caulfield, Trinity College Dublin

- **Chair:** Then finally, Brian Caulfield from Trinity College Dublin. Brian, you've been doing a project called Conundrum. Do you want to say a bit about that?
- Sure, perfect, good morning everybody, and again, thank you for the invite to present this morning. This is very much a work in progress this project, and it's funded by Science Foundation Ireland. I think the equivalent would be in the UK, EPSRC, and it's a challenge fund. So we have we've set ourselves a very daunting challenge to try and decarbonise transport in a town in Ireland called Enniscorthy.

² <https://cp.catapult.org.uk/article/thousands-of-miles-saved-with-kings-lynn-hospital-staff-carpooling/> ; https://www.transporteast.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/Ali-Claburn_IVORA-Trial-Summary.pdf

- I'll just give you some background and some context to what's happening here in Ireland and a lot of what I've heard this morning from Wales and Scotland and England is very similar to what we're facing here in Ireland. So the Conundrum project³, it's multidisciplinary, so I'm a professor in the School of Engineering in Trinity College, and one of my co-collaborators is a geographer, Professor Niamh Moore-Cherry in University College Dublin, so it's a multidisciplinary team, and what we're doing I suppose is the reverse of what I would teach students to do in terms of the engineering approach to try and solve these transport issues, and we're very much going at it from a community approach and looking at co-creation of solutions. This is a map of the southeast of Ireland and Enniscorthy has a population of about 12,000 people. Enniscorthy is probably mirrored by at least another 10 or 15 towns of a similar size in Ireland that have very similar issues when it comes to mobility with very high levels of car ownership and poor public transport, the kind of issues that I've been hearing all morning. Again, just to give you some context about Ireland and our population distribution, we have a very sparsely populated country. You can see almost 1/4 of people live in Dublin, where I'm based, in and around the city and the suburbs, and then it's kind of spread out across the rest of the island, and then as you can see at the bottom there almost 30% of people live in very, very sparsely populated areas, so one of our big issues when it comes to decarbonising the transport sector is how do we do that? Then the equal big issue is how do we do it in a just and fair way, and I've been doing a lot of work on that recently, and we should have been using Scotland as an example here in Ireland to try and set policy around EV adoption in rural areas. How we're doing it here in Ireland is we're using a three pillar approach, "avoid", "shift", "improve", so "avoid" being better transport and land use planning, "shift" is to push towards public transport and active travel, and then "improve" is electric vehicles essentially and better vehicle technology. The percentages at the bottom there were if the emissions reduction was 100%, this is where our policies are being aimed at, and speaking a lot about the national policy, because I don't have too much to say on Conundrum as it is very much a live project and it's one that we're kind of right in the middle of at the moment.
- So how are we to do this? Very similar to what I've heard already. So by 2030 we have a legally binding target to reduce our emissions in Ireland by 50% in transport, similar targets in agriculture and energy, and the built environment. The first one is to reduce our emissions, our vehicle kilometres by 20%, reduce fuel consumption by 50, increase our active travel trips by 50%, there to be a 130% increase in public transport trips and then sell one million electric vehicles. Of those, we're doing quite well at the moment on public transport trips, we've just had a record number of trips in Ireland, so last year there was 303 million public transport trips. The population of the island is about 5.5 million. The other thing that we've done is we've, I think tripled the amount of rural bus trips through a programme called Connecting Ireland and I'll put a link to that in the chat⁴. It's been revolutionary when it comes to rural bus services. The million electric vehicles target, we've got two targets, one to get 125,000 electric vehicles by next year and then the million by 2030 and it's very, very sceptical as to whether or not that will happen.
- So what Conundrum is doing, it's very much a community-based project down in Enniscorthy. We have done, I think, now nearly 100 stakeholder interviews, we've been talking to people from different backgrounds, from different abilities, from different parts of the town, to co-create solutions. A lot of the things are some of the things that have already been spoken about, but they are kind of things that are being missed by the engineers when they go to any of these towns to try and co-create solutions. So this is an example of one of the many workshops that we've had down in Enniscorthy. We're still in the process of doing these workshops. To give you an example, we're using the workshops and then we're also using the data that we have from the census as well, obviously to look at car ownership levels, public transport usage, where the schools are, where the businesses are, and to get a good understanding of the DNA of the town and where it is and how people move around. There is one railway station in the town that

³ <https://www.ucd.ie/socscilaw/research/casestudies2025/conundrumco-creatingsustainablemobility/>

⁴ <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/connecting-ireland/>

connects Wexford Town, which would be the county town in Wexford and that straddles the coast north towards Dublin. The usage of that is really only to get to Wexford or to Dublin city and there is a local bus service as well again, which is poorly used. So this is the type of thing that we're knee deep in at the moment.

- So with the interviews and with the focus groups, the first map on the left is the walking map, and we've asked residents and we've asked people in the stakeholder groups to give us indications of where things are positive, and where things are negative throughout the town, and then we're also then going back to see what interventions can be done. Then equally on the map to my right, you can see where we're looking at the positive and negative aspects of walking, cycling, public transport and private car usage throughout the town, and we're feeding that back then into a master plan that we're doing.
- So, the final plan that we are hoping to submit, and we've got the support of Wexford County Council, is a cocreation approach to look at some novel solutions to try and decarbonise the mobility in the town. At the moment a lot of the solutions we're coming up with are fairly traditional ones, but there are some other ones that we're looking at around, perhaps using AI, perhaps using smartphone apps, and those types of things. The key message that we're getting back from anyone we speak to is a lack of information and that people want more information about the alternatives, so that's been the key thing that we've found. Hopefully maybe the next time you're doing one of these roundtables I can come back and show you what we found and hopefully to see that it is being implemented. But thank you very much for the chance to talk about our project.
- **Chair:** Thank you very much, Brian. That's really interesting, particularly the co-created thing. I can see people like Alistair and Susan being really interested in that kind of stuff, because it's the kind of stuff that you guys are already working on. Can I just ask a quick question? Have you got car sharing in there? because you just heard from Ali from Mobilityways just how important that could be, particularly for journeys to work.
- Yeah, car sharing is one of the options that we're looking at, and bike share as well. Those are two of the solutions that we are focusing in on. There isn't a massive big employer in the the town itself. As I said, there's 12,000 people, but it is one of the solutions that we're looking at.
- **Chair:** Interesting. Thank you very much. Thank you to all the presenters.

- **Chair:** We've now got some time for comments and questions. I put some questions in here when we sent this out, some of which have been answered by some of the speakers, or at least they've started to answer them, which is, how moves towards net zero might impact on rural transport and social exclusion, and how people in rural areas and low income groups can be supported towards net zero. So, I'd be interested in comments. Trevor, can you introduce yourself?

- Trevor Brennan: I'm Trevor Brennan from England's Economic Heartland, and I work with Sharon and Transport East in terms of the wider rural agenda. I suppose it's a question for Maya, really, and it's an interesting one. The DfT have gone out to consultation on their new franchising guidance in terms of metropolitan areas and all this sort of stuff, and certainly in our region we've got some real challenges, and the evidence that we've gathered is that bus services work relatively well in urban areas, but there is a lack of consistency in services in rural areas, and I suppose it's a general question and you've posed that yourself, what would better franchising for rural communities look like if it was ever going to happen? It's a very good point, Maya, and I don't know what the answer is, and as I say, we've looked at it, but it's quite difficult to calculate. That's a general comment and statement really.

- **Chair:** Maya, do you want to come in?

- Maya Singer Hobbs: I mean, maybe Trevor, you and I should have a chat after the call. My colleague Marcus Johns from IPPR north is leading our big piece of work and it's

been an evolving project that was conceived this time last year, and then the election happening when it did means that we actually have a bit of a clearer idea about what the government mean when they're talking about franchising, but we're really trying to dig into what would make franchising a success. One of the things is, franchising is not going to suddenly unlock better bus services. We're going to have to think about the funding of that and I think that's why we've been thinking about this concept of total transport authorities, because, like you said, in urban areas, it's much easier to run economically viable bus services, and the rural ones are the challenge, so you really want to think about some sort of cost subsidy between those in an ideal world. Because it's not fair that, arguably, those rural services, and you know, rural communities are the ones that would benefit the most from having better bus services, because things aren't walking distance away, and I think that's also why we've been thinking about the sort of network safeguards. Some people call them the minimum service standards, and we've been talking to a combination of bus operators and other stakeholders. Please get in touch if anyone has any thoughts on this about how you might think about defining those and definitely thinking about that tension between there probably needing to be a level of standard setting nationally whilst giving local areas, who know the areas and the communities best, the ability to define what those minimum services or network safeguards look like. I think we are still grappling with how do you get that accountability whilst also making sure that local areas are able to design services that best suit their local communities. I don't whether that answered your question, Trevor.

- **Trevor Brennan:** It's fine, you're absolutely right and I'm more than happy to catch up outside the bounds of this meeting. I think for many regions there is a struggle with that basically because, certainly on the commercial operators who are obviously running in areas where there's a commercial advantage and they're making money, which is great, but it's that challenge over, well, actually we don't necessarily want to run services in rural areas, and I'm not even talking like super rural there. I mean Bedfordshire is not a particularly rural community, but even with their local services, operators say we can't make money out of rural services, we're withdrawing services, so it's not, you know, the Outer Hebrides, but that's what I think people consider what rural bus services are, but they're not necessarily. I'll catch up with you Maya and I think it'll be a really interesting conversation. Thank you.
- **Chair:** This idea of minimum service standards has popped up in other work. I think it appeared in Alistair's Zero Carbon Cumbria work as well. Could you set up minimum standards? Brad from CPRE did some work on what they call every village every hour, a year or two back, which is a sort of guarantee to villages of an hourly or better bus service. I think from the stuff we've done in the past hearing from Cornwall, a key thing is proper integration, which Cornwall have been doing a lot of. You know, the buses do meet the trains. There are bus stations outside railway stations. You know there is, I believe, even a sort of through ticketing option being talked about, in a very rural county, so I think that's a really interesting area. Hannah might come on to come in on this. Can we have Vanessa first, please? Because Vanessa, you've been commenting in the chat. You better introduce yourself as well.
- **Vanessa Cutler:** Hi, I'm Vanessa. I'm from Connected Places Catapult and I'm the strategist behind the rural transport accelerator, which the DfT asked us to launch, and I know it was very tight deadlines but we responded to the ask of DfT. What I was thinking about with what we've been discussing, because I know that a number of regions are looking at bus franchising and they've gone back to the local authorities and combined authorities to kind of allow that exchange into franchises, and I'm wondering whether it's about looking also at the bus agreements and the subsidies that are given to the contracts that are happening and the procurement, you know the idea, the subsidy to people and the timings. I think that needs to be unpacked more because I think it's putting us on the wrong foot to start with. I don't know enough, but I know from conversations that I've had with NCPA and the various modelling we've done across you

know around demand responsive transport and other things, that was one thing that comes up is about the contractual arrangements, and again about the subsidies that are offered and also how the numbers are worked out. I'm wondering if that also is something that needs to be explored so that you're starting with a kind of playing field that's sort of like starting again and coming through, but that's just a just a comment. I'd be interested to see people's views on that and if anybody has looked into that.

- **Chair:** Thank you. Hannah next, because I know you wanted to come in and you had better introduce yourself, but I already mentioned Cornwall, so I thought you might want to come in on that. We've had presentations at previous roundtables, including from Melanie Watson who was working for Cornwall on this, and I just wonder whether you've got things you wanted to say on that.
- **Hannah:** I'm Hannah Shrimpton, programme director at Peninsula Transport, so we're the subnational transport body that covers Cornwall as well as Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay. So as Stephen said, Cornwall have done some brilliant work in sort of establishing transport for Cornwall in their region, and we are at the moment trying to look at a way to replicate that across the wider peninsula area, not necessarily the whole of Transport for Cornwall in terms of the branding and one public transport system necessarily, but aspects of it, particularly around interoperable ticketing and getting all the operators on side to accept each other's tickets, but also to offer a better sort of routing and interconnected services across borders. There's a series of enhanced partnerships across our region, so we're not, we're not suggesting reworking any of those, but we're looking specifically around a ticketing option very much focused on making it easier to travel in rural parts of our region, in a more straightforward and easier way. Just on Vanessa's point around contracting, I mean, this isn't something we're necessarily looking at Peninsula wide, but I know one of the reasons why Transport for Cornwall worked or got going was because Cornwall Council offered much longer-term contracts to the operators. They were sort of seven or eight year contracts, and I mean they're commercial operators, they want to have profits to make, and so if they've got an eight year contract they are willing to invest in the vehicles and maintain the routes that they know are profitable, you know it just starts off the network in a much more positive way I think because Cornwall were committing to a longer term proposal and it meant the operators then invested in a huge number of brand new buses around Cornwall. So, the quality of the service was immediately there for passengers and once when Transport for Cornwall started and that helped to gain to get the momentum of increased passenger numbers. That's not to say there's not ongoing challenges around maintaining that network in Cornwall in terms of the level of subsidy required both locally and from central government, but certainly looking at sort of contracting with the big operators was definitely something that got them on side; not franchising, although franchising was used as sort of threat more than an actual approach because no one necessarily wants to go down that route in our in our region. So that's all.
- **Chair:** Hannah, when we sent this round, I asked a question about where you thought subnational bodies could add value on this, and I just wondered whether you have got a comment to make from you know Peninsula transport's point of view. I know you did a rural transport strategy with WSP, but I just wonder whether there are, you know, we had a late apology from Midlands Connect, but we've got several STBs on this call and they're all doing different things in terms of adding value to what local authorities are doing. I just wonder whether you've got a sense of that.
- **Hannah:** I mean obviously Sharon does a fantastic job of coordinating what all the STBs are doing, and I think what's particularly good is that we try not to replicate what the other STBs are doing, so we work as a sort of a network of specialists and share knowledge and experience across all seven STBs rather than trying to replicate. I mean in terms of Peninsula, following up from our strategy, we're looking at publishing a pilot prospectus again with WSP support, and in partnership with Western Gateway STB to try and test

some of the potential pilots that were identified in our rural mobility strategy. So that's the next step. So in terms of what STBs can do, we don't have a huge amount of funding, but we're putting a small amount into that pilot proposal, and I mean there's obviously lots of overlap with some of our other technical work streams for example the public transport and the interoperable ticketing that we're trying to you know, we advocate and galvanise stakeholders to try and push them in the direction that we want them to go. I mean we are not, other than Transport for the North, statutory bodies, so we are more influencers than sort of forcing things to happen in our region I suppose, but certainly rural mobility is an area where I think there's lots that we can do because it's an area where as you said earlier, there's much more limited research and sort of knowledge about how best to address issues.

- **Chair:** Thank you. Susan, you'd better introduce yourself, you've been very active in the chat, so you might want to say something there.
- **Susan Ross:** Thanks, Stephen. Hi everybody, I'm Susan Ross. I guess I've got a bit of a double role, so I work for Edge Innovation, which is a design-based thinking consultancy up in the Northeast, and we work internationally on different programmes, and we focus very much on using design led thinking to try and help businesses, including voluntary sector businesses, to develop better products, services and processes. We do a lot in the transport area, so we've been through the TRIG programme ourselves, where we did a car club in a box programme with the other side of my work. We're also supporting on the rural transport accelerator and helping some of the consortiums there, including Mobilityways and Ali who is on the call. So we do quite a mixed bag. We also do a lot of work in Quayside particularly, so there's some real challenges there. And again I know that Ali's been involved with some of that with Redcar Council as well and some discussions around access and transport and jobs and things in that area.
- The other side of my work is that I was a cofounder of an electric vehicle community car club in a rural part of Gateshead in County Durham over 10 years ago, which we still actively deliver and work on currently. Within that we run a voluntary driver scheme for people that can't get out and about. We've got eight vehicles now across a really wide range of the area, including into parts of Weardale and supporting into Keswick, and part of that is coming through a rural energy resilience programme that we're running on a consortium with Innovate UK funding as well. So a real mix of different things.
- But what I wanted to come in a little bit on is around Vanessa's question around some of that transport and public transport particularly, and I think one of the things that keeps coming back to us, particularly related to demand responsive travel is making sure that we're actually using vehicles with the right type of capacity, because very often we're putting on very large vehicles or minibuses that are running around with one in two people on and I know that then gives a whole range of different issues in terms of affordability, of running those services et cetera, but that demand versus usage, and quite often having ones where we're doing so many different pickups, that it means that actually people don't end up using them because the time that it takes them to access where they want to go is too long. Therefore, they stick with using their cars and things because it's more convenient.
- I know in the community that I live in, which is right on the border of three different counties, which gives us a whole range of transport challenges, not long ago, our previous MP decided that he wanted to put a new train service down what was an old railway track that disappeared in the Beeching cuts, but he wanted to recreate that service. The difficulty there was 1) it's very well used route for active travel, and 2) there were also a whole range of houses now built on parts of that route, so it was a bit of a no brainer to be honest in terms of it actually happening, but as a result of that, one thing that came out really clearly was although that would get people into Newcastle a bit quicker, we're talking sort of 10-15 minutes quicker and actually, are there better ways that we could actually just rework the bus services that they actually do less stops in different places and have more routes. That economically would be much more of a sensible option compared to the billions that would have needed to go into the rail service

being put into place. But again, it's about having those, and working out where the communities are, and where people are trying to go, and pulling those together where you use better, more sensible sized vehicles to do that, which is a better option and makes it more affordable.

- **Chair:** Thank you. That's potentially really interesting. Vanessa, do you want to come back on that?
- Vanessa Cutler: It is really interesting because it reminds me, and I've got loads of alarm bells going in my head going I need to do that. But I was also thinking about, it was earlier in the conversation, we talked about companies where 4000 applicants couldn't work there because they didn't have a car. What are the incentives for the companies also to get them to do the uptake to be proactive in trying to ask for public transport. I'm just wondering how we're also getting companies also to get engaged in the conversation, so it feels like we're trying to find solutions, but also there could be a work related solution, in terms of the businesses themselves coming up with solutions that could be beneficial, not only to them but also with the communities in which they operate, especially with supermarkets. You know, I always have crazy ideas in my head about, you know, mass supermarkets being able to offer instead of doing like, the Tesco delivery, why can't they do people delivery with their product, you know that kind of idea where you can bring them in from the areas to a place and then they've got that sense of community and well-being. I think that's the big thing for me is the picking up of the well-being element and the DfT with the rural transport accelerator. What's been important with that delivery is it's twofold, it's not just about how we get people there but also the impact on people's lives in terms from a well-being point of view, and that's why hence Susan, the Rural Design Centre and others have been heavily involved in helping those businesses understand the stakeholders and their needs. But the question I have in my head is how we incentivise businesses to maybe offer that uptake and to bring them in on the conversation.
- **Chair:** Well, I'm going to bring Ali in on that because I think you have been doing lots of that. Did you want to respond to that? How do you get businesses engaged in this? I thought was very much your territory actually.
- Ali Clabburn: Yes it's something that I've been working on for about 26 years, trying to get businesses involved. You have to work with multiple different people and come up with many different reasons why they want to work with you. So, the accountants want to do it to save money. But the key thing we're finding is, is management teams want to get problems off their desk. The problem used to be traffic congestion in their car parks, and that disappeared after COVID, but it's coming back now. But more often than not, now, it's about recruitment and retention of staff, so if you can show how better transport improves recruitment and retention of staff, they are willing to listen, because staff recruitment and retention costs them a lot of money. So, if you can make the business case of how improving transport is going to help them retain happy staff, they are very interested, but you have to make a really clear compelling argument on that front.
- **Chair:** Thank you. I think Vanessa, if you're interested in following that up, I think you probably need a separate dialogue with Ali and his colleagues because they're doing lots of work in this area.
- Vanessa Cutler: Oh, Ali and I have talked, so we'll follow up again. Also with the rural transport.
- **Chair:** Good. Sharon, do you want to come in and introduce yourself? though you've been copied in to all of the emails so people know who you are, I think.

- **Sharon Payne:** Morning everyone. I'm Sharon from Transport East, I'm the regional rural mobility manager, so we have a Centre of Excellence that focuses on rural mobility involved with lots of people on this call in various ways this morning. I was just going to respond to Vanessa's points and the ones that have come up in the chat earlier about access to employment. So just some experience that we've been hearing about from one of our local authorities is, the challenge of ageing populations, which is obviously common across the country and their problems around recruitment and retention in the adult social care sector. So, they've seen now that this is, you know, a significant impact on that. They're not direct employers, they're working with a lot of agencies, a lot of SMEs in particular, they work in this sector and provide care services, and you know they're suddenly realising that they can't rely on people driving. If they've got people who are driving, there's a cost, and lots of people working in this sector are on relatively low pay as well. So it's good to see that this is happening, but probably from working with people like Ali over the years, you think, gosh, you know, we've been working on this for so long and so yeah, it's just interesting to see how many different sectors it affects, but that local authorities are suddenly realising how much impacts on their ability to have a good service to their clients.
- **Chair:** Thank you. Susan and Kris both wanted to come in. Susan, do you want to come in first?
- Susan Ross: I was just going to briefly mention that in some of the areas that we've been working in, particularly in Teesside, that kind of is happening, but on a company by company basis where particularly in the Tees work site, they're spending an absolute fortune, with million pound contracts to bus people in and out. But obviously that's a very distinct site, and even within the site, they've got multiple different companies doing that, so even that isn't coordinated and that's a relatively confined area that they're doing that from. So I think that's one of the key issues is the coordination. You mentioned that before in terms of voluntary sector transport services, but it is also definitely a challenge around the private sector as well, where they are putting on those transport routes. That could connect far more in, but they're not, they're just doing it on a case by case individual basis to solve their challenge and not the wider ones.
- **Chair:** Thank you, and Kris, you wanted to come in, I think?
- Kris Beuret: Yes, just a couple of things about the employers. There is now legislation which insists on building in social values, and I know local authorities are now taking that as a rating for who they give contracts to, so I think social value is an opportunity which is often not seized in the transport area. The things I see are all about training and use of materials, but there is a lot of gain in social value to be had from transport. The second thing I just wanted to say is, are we failing to tackle some of the really difficult issues here? I mean, I raised in my presentation the issue of children walking, and at what age they should be allowed to walk. Anyone from road safety involved in that? No, they just jam up when you ask them that question. But also, is it a point where organisations and local authorities should actually advise elderly people not to move to rural areas? There were a lot of gains to be had there, which we've had a bit of chat about in the chat, and certainly Transport for New Homes is looking at where you build new developments, but what about existing developments? You know, back to my elderly people stuck in a stone village in Northumberland, should they have moved there in the first place and are we tough enough about some of these hard decisions if we're really going to create net zero?
- **Chair:** Yes on the children's independent mobility, we should probably not ask Kirsty Allsopp what she thinks about that, if you followed the argument about her letting her fifteen year old son travel around Europe on an inter rail and the huge backlash that she got from that, that was international travel, not local travel, but it is an issue. It's worth

saying that the way in which Chris Boardman and co went about designing the active travel Bee Network in Manchester was something that you would feel comfortable letting an eleven or twelve year old go independently on. That was the sort of design parameter that they used, which is an interesting way of doing it I think. How that would work in rural areas heaven knows. But anyway, Ian wanted to come in, and I did want to just pick up in the last few minutes a discussion that's been going on in the chat about disincentives, car restraint, et cetera, and whether that excludes people on low incomes. Ian, you might want to comment on that actually because you've been joining in on that.

- Ian Philips: Yeah all of the things that that Kris said, and other people I've worked with, you know, make this point very clearly that with stick policies especially, you've got to be really careful about the negative social consequences of a decarbonisation policy. I think there's a lot of people who know how to think about this, so involve them in policy design and so on. I was going to actually ask a question. Maya, in your presentation, the one question where there was a big gap between drivers and non-drivers, was where the drivers said we really want cuts in taxes and so on, and generally that's pretty regressive pricing. Especially when we saw the presentation on what's the actual cost to society of driving et cetera. So we know all this, I'm singing to the choir. Then Stephen, you mentioned backlash in regards children's independent mobility, and an awful lot of the things that we're talking about here, I could hazard a guess that you know the answers, but it's between how important is communication and getting people on board and so on? And are there other strategies in a rural area that perhaps differ from doing things in an urban area?
- **Chair:** That's a really interesting question. Vanessa, are you going to respond to that directly?
- Vanessa Cutler: I was just thinking some of it's about, with Brian Caulfield, and Ireland, it's about codesign and cocreation and everything else. How do we get those disaffected communities or those who are disassociated? You know, because we can work with communities and groups and we can get those who are really engaged and actually can come up with some great ideas, but there's always people who are on the outside. Also, you know for me, some of it is, you know, we want to affect policy change for 2030, but those who are going to be affected are the ones that we don't often include, which is younger audiences. We don't bring them into play and they're the ones who are going to follow it through. A bit like young people, they are the ones who are using public transport and then they get a car, you know, start to learn to drive, and suddenly that is going out the window. However, you're seeing in cities, there's some people are deciding not to learn to drive because they've got the links, but as soon as you go outside in that peri urban and that rural area that just disappears, and so it makes it even more difficult. I think a lot of this is this kind of barrier of people's choice. The argument of, we've been given the option, you know, international travel, it's cheap, easy, you can go anywhere, do anything, but there's restrictions. You know, and now we're trying to get people to come in and think about active travel, be more local, be more within a particular area. But for so long, everything has been saying fly everywhere, do this, go there, you know, go and see the world and have a broader perspective. The question is how do we get that thinking to switch to think about being more local or being more present within the communities that are around us, and I think that relates back to transport. I think it relates back to Kris with what you're mentioning, I grew up in a rural village, my bus came from Norfolk, I was in Suffolk. I had to pay fees because I wasn't in Norfolk and it was a Suffolk bus, et cetera, you know. I walked a mile to get my bus and I thought nothing of it, but nowadays there's a lot more things around transport safety, and around, the discussion about violence against women and girls, you know, that whole kind of prevalence, but also I think there's another thing about digital connectivity. You know the incentives and disincentives of, you know, we've still got a huge population who aren't digitally connected. So everything links into one another, energy, transport decision making, it's all interlinked, but we're all looking at it in pockets.

- **Chair:** Thank you, yes relating to that, Brian, you wanted to come in and I imagine you might have a response to that and previous comments.
- **Brian Caulfield:** Yes, sure, I think Vanessa you made some very, very useful comments there and it's one of the things that we're experiencing here when we're trying to engage with the people that are disaffected, I think there's an element of, you've asked us this question too many times before and nothing has happened. At least here in Ireland. You promised us this, that and the other, and again, nothing has happened. Again from our perspective, and obviously, we know over here that you've had a big general election there recently, and we're about to have one the same in Ireland. A coalition is the norm, and at the moment, the Green Party are in coalition. One of the things that we're finding over here is that there's a massive urban rural divide, and while the population has been told about transport, they've also been told to put solar panels on their houses, to insulate their houses, and they're also being told to not eat meat, and they've been told this, that and the other, and there's very much an urban rural divide starting to happen here, and there is an awful lot of backlash against the Green Party. Because they're the party that brought in most of these measures, and that's at the detriment of climate, because they see them as the ones that are bringing in all of this, and yes, there are heaps of things that we need to do by 2030, but something I think that the profession needs to get around is this urban rural divide and it's very blatant here in Ireland and I'm not sure if it's the same across the UK as well but it's a real problem. But also as I said, you've asked us this before and nothing has happened, is the big issue too.
- **Chair:** Just quickly because I'm conscious of time, before we bring in Maya, just to say, Alastair, you've been doing rural engagement at a valley level in the Lake District, and I just wondered, relating to a comment that various people have made about long distance travel, particularly long distance tourist travel, I just wondered whether you, and you raised the question of should we talk about traffic restraint? And I know you've been raising that in the context of leisure travel, Ian mentioned that that was an outcome from some of his work that you fed into. Alistair do you want to say something about that?
- **Alistair Kirkbride:** Well, yes, it is about visitor travel and it is in the Lake District primarily, but in the Ullswater Valley SITU (Sustainable and Integrated Transport), if you stick it into Google, are a collection of local visitor businesses that have got together with the parish council of the resident communities to try to crack access and transport from the bottom up, and so are in the process of constituting a bit more formally, but over the last two years have been putting money from visitor businesses into new local bus services, primarily focused on visitors, but which also provide access for workers into visitor businesses, which is, you know, what drives a lot of these economies locally in such a place. But it's also just on the margins of long distance travel into local travel. You can now get a train to Keswick even though it's not been on the rail network since Beeching, because it's now a virtual station on the National Rail network. A lot of that has all bubbled up from the bottom. Primarily business led rather than resident community led, but I think if they were on the call, they would say there's a distinct blurring of boundaries between what's a business and what's a resident community here as well. It's really in reaction to the, I don't want this to sound negative and I genuinely don't think this is where they're coming from, but there's no point waiting for perfect bus services to emerge from top down, so they might as well get on from bottom up to work out where the markets are and start making sure there are incentives in those that want them to work really. So yes, a SITU, I'll stick the link in the in the chat, but they're bubbling it from bottom up as well⁵.
- **Chair:** There's some very interesting questions about using public transport post seventeen, and again, there are some solutions to that. That's part of the reason for the

⁵ <https://situcumbria.org.uk/>

idea of the young people's pass in Scotland going up to 22, partly for that reason. So there are some options there. Just to start to finish off any final comments and questions, because we've had I think a very rich discussion here with lots of really interesting links, which we'll write up. I think the final thing to say is that there is, I think more interest now from government. We've had, I noticed a number of people from the Department of Transport lurking on this webinar and I think that is probably because there is renewed interest in this. You'd have to really be a LinkedIn spotter to spot this, but Danny Williams, who up to now has been running Active Travel England, just posted on LinkedIn that he's been recruited into the Department for Transport to run a national integrated transport strategy, and I think from the comments he's made, this is about people focused. I think the way in which they're proposing to play this to avoid the backlash that Brian and others have been describing, is to say this is about people, and if it happens to have some good carbon benefits, that's great. But this is about how do you get, if you're going to build labs between Oxford and Cambridge, how are the people who clean those going to get there? So I think there's some interesting stuff going on, and there's going to be some new stuff coming out of government on this. In terms of the restraint point, it seems to me that there's two strands to this. One is Ali's point, which comes from Ian and others' comments, that a small number of long distance journeys are accounting for lots of carbon, particularly for journeys to work, Alastair's "journey to leisure" travel, but journeys to places like the Lake District and things you can do about that. But we do have, I think what we've heard from today is lots of really interesting stuff. Lots of really interesting projects. I've noticed people in the chat giving each other the links. Hopefully we can keep up on this. We will write this up and put it on both the University of Hertfordshire and the Transport East sites, so that people can follow these up. I should have said from my own colleagues that all this feeds into the work that the university does, we've got a master's in transport planning, and increasingly research projects coming out of that, and we will use these things for the teaching and work that we do, and I hope people have found this useful. Thank you all very much for attending.

- Sharon: Thank you it's been really interesting.