

Future of Mobility in Counties

Introductory Roundtable 31 Jan 2020

Challenges and opportunities for transport in counties

The Urban Innovation Centre, One Sekforde Street, London EC1R 0BE, 1.30-5pm

This report documents the first of a series of roundtable discussions organised by the Smart Mobility Unit at the University of Hertfordshire and sponsored by Department for Transport.

1.0 Participants

There were 39 participants from the following sectors: national, sub-regional and local government, transport consultancy, property development, academic research, non-governmental organisations.

Stephen Joseph facilitated the discussion.

2.0 Aim

This roundtable sought to identify the mobility and transport problems in counties and the opportunities that might exist for addressing them. Further events in the series will examine the detailed issues and opportunities.

What are the problems we are trying to solve?

- rising carbon emissions
- social isolation and loneliness
- poor access to jobs, education and services
- car dependent new developments
- road congestion

What are the rural dimensions for these? How much do we know about them?

What are the opportunities and directions for policy and research to address these problems?

- Gathering and using data
- New technologies – for vehicles, transport services and road and rail infrastructure
- New business models, e.g. for shared transport or new housing developments
- New priorities and appraisal for transport management and spending
- New governance structures (e.g. sub-national transport bodies, integration of spatial and transport planning, further devolution).

Will these address the problems, and if not what else is needed?

3.0 Papers circulated in advance

Professor Jillian Anable, Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds. CREDS presentation on transport and carbon emissions to CIHT Young Professionals , November 2019

<https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/10574/jillian-anable.pdf>

Prof. Karen Lucas, Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds

Transport-related social exclusion, January 2020

Greg Yiangou, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Smart Travel.

Using data to support smart mobility.

Dr Kiron Chatterjee et al, University of West of England: Access to Transport and Life Opportunities

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831766/access_to_transport_report.pdf

4.0 Presentation by Karen Lucas

Prof Lucas gave a short presentation on the theme of her paper.

Carbon emissions and transport equity need to be tackled together otherwise 'we're sunk'. There are three main things that need to change

- stop focussing solely on rural problems and start to include the urban periphery and small towns
- reject models which use out of date thresholds to determine viability of new services or new infrastructure and prioritise journey time savings
- treat transport as in the service of social wellbeing as well as the economy.

24% of households do not have a car and for those with a car, not all members of that household have access to it all of the time. People are possibly not as car dependent as we think they are even in rural areas.

Although there is not a great deal of dedicated evidence available, there are tools to develop an evidence base such as MOT data and fine grained national travel survey data. There is plenty to work with.

A key source of data are the maps¹ of vulnerability to transport related social exclusion in England. These form part of the evidence base for the DfT Future of Mobility project and show that apart from a few major metropolitan centres, all of the UK has a transport problem. Low income households experience high levels of transport poverty because of their car dependence, which is directly due to the absence of public transport alternatives. Transport almost everywhere is inadequate from an equity perspective. The scale of the problem is hard to grasp. Especially vulnerable are single parent households, Just about managing households, the disabled and teenagers. People on low incomes are forced into car ownership which leads to economic stress, poverty and debt.

Rural transport problems are totally clear to the people affected. People who live in the countryside can't understand why anyone would need to gather more data. County councils know that the lack of bus services is destroying educational opportunities and choices for post 16s. The situation is so bad that any improvement would be welcomed enthusiastically.

5.0 Open Discussion by Roundtable Participants

Overview and summary of themes

The discussion has been summarised under the following headings.

1. Climate emergency and social inclusion
2. Political leadership
3. Power of persuasion, nudges and parking restraint
4. Research from local and regional government
5. Total Transport including collaboration with NHS
6. Locating development, density and the importance of retrofitting
7. Hubs
8. Economics of Buses
9. Regulation reform

5.1 Climate emergency and social inclusion

This was a major focus of the discussion. Several voices spoke to the severity of the climate crisis and the moral obligation to seek transformational change. There was much agreement with the assertion that equity must be addressed jointly with emissions. People referred to the consequences of failing to meet both

¹ p20 Lucas et al (2019) Inequalities in Mobility and Access in the UK Transport System published by Government Office for Science Evidence Review Foresight Future of Mobility project.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/784685/future_of_mobility_access.pdf

objectives in terms such as “we’re sunk” or “we’re stuffed”. No-one spelled out what they meant by this but it might be reasonable to interpret this as a reference to the UK fuel tax protests of 2000.

One person pointed out the stark reality that not everyone in the sector has seen the light on climate, nor are most transport professionals authorised to adopt an emergency approach. Another asked that policy makers not be berated for past mistakes.

Some of the counties and regions represented had declared a climate emergency and are in the process of working out the implications for action. There is a need for a recognised methodology to calculate carbon emissions at county and regional levels and work is underway with DfT.

5.2 Political leadership

A wide range of voices called for visionary leadership from elected members in local government. There was wide agreement that councillors need to be taught how transport interventions combine to benefit communities. All agreed there is a lack of tools showing leaders how to build political capital from bold transport initiatives. There were no elected members present.

5.3 Power of language, nudges and parking restraint

There was agreement that the transport profession needs to use language that sells a positive vision to the public. The TPS is working with Royal College of Art on an inspirational visual toolkit to communicate the need for transformational change. There was widespread comfort with a behavioural insights approach and a feeling that much more can be achieved. Government travel planning guidance from the 2000s is worth revisiting.

A minority voice expressed strong doubt that ‘nudges’ will deliver the scale of change needed. There was a suggestion from one participant that a roundtable with a top notch team of branding specialists from the auto industry would be good.

There was extensive discussion on parking restraint. There was strong agreement on the need to target single occupancy vehicle journeys and that only by including parking restraint alongside incentives can large and rapid shifts in travel behaviour be achieved. It was also widely accepted that parking restraint is seen as electoral poison. Regional bodies were aware that politicians signing up to demand management as an integral part of their transport strategies may disown the policy at implementation stage. This presents an opportunity for research and development to support politicians in the roll out of demand management policies.

5.4 Research from local and regional government

Regional transport bodies and counties have commissioned some good research on transport in rural communities and more is underway. This should be disseminated to all regions. In particular there are toolkits under development for individuals, businesses and local politicians in rural communities. Research has revealed a degree of car and van dependency in rural areas that indicates a level of care needs to be taken when making interventions.

5.5 Total Transport including NHS Collaboration

Several participants had in depth experience of the Total Transport pilot projects. There was consensus that asset sharing across public sector transport commissioning bodies makes financial and logical sense but all agreed that the potential has not been fully realised. There was agreement that obtaining collaboration from the NHS has proven almost impossible in practice and that pilots need to be longer to deliver transformational change.

5.6 Locating development, density and the importance of retrofitting

NGOs have highlighted the deficiencies in the design and accessibility of new housing development, much of which is in rural greenfield or edge of town settings. Counties vary substantially in density and no single approach will work everywhere. Two tier authorities present a major barrier to integrating local transport and land-use planning. There was a bold minority suggestion that a national target to increase population density in rural areas would make small settlements more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

There was support from several sectors for retrofitting existing settlements, for example to create safe walking routes to local amenities and services. The developer present explained their vision for standalone satellite settlements designed in sympathy with the rural setting but with sufficient density to attract viable services and amenities.

5.7 Hubs

Many voices advocated a rigorous review of what needs to move and whether services can be provided locally in hubs or elsewhere or supplied digitally.

Hubs can reduce the need to travel to urban centres, provide facilities in rural settings for flexible workspaces and visiting service providers (such as district nurses or business advisors) and enable access to car-clubs, cycle-hire and other mobility services. There was some feeling from the NGO sector that a network of rural hubs already exists in the form of village halls, village pubs and shops and there is no need to invest in new infrastructure. Another participant had experience of introducing amenities and services at Park and Rides on edge of market towns and urban fringes and recommended these as sites for successful hubs. One person warned that rural communities often demand community transport services in anticipation of imminent loss of community assets like the village pub or GP surgery, so addressing the underlying cause can avoid the need for a transport solution.

5.8 Economics of Buses

There was no extensive discussion on the economics of buses, but there were some heartfelt statements about the financial cost of providing bus services away from high volume corridors. An operator called for a complete overhaul of the commissioning process for subsidised services, which links back to the Total Transport approach. Others cited the major benefits produced by rural bus grant schemes in the UK, with budgets many orders of magnitude less than the road building budget.

5.9 Regulation reform

There was no extensive discussion of regulation. However one participant called for changes to the Competition and Bus Services Acts to enable new projects to emerge. Another cited research showing the appetite for regulation from technology companies to clarify data standards and assure interoperability in new markets.

6.0 Detailed notes

The following abbreviations indicate the sector making comments

ACAD Academic

BUSOP Bus operator

CC County council

CONS Consultant

DEV Property developer

GOV National government

INNOV Innovation

NGO Non-governmental organisation

REGG Regional transport body

6.1 Climate Emergency and Social Inclusion

Transport and Carbon is an overriding theme of the roundtables. UK transport emissions have not fallen and it is essential that the sector now plays its part. EVs alone are not the answer. The solution relies on traffic reduction, making more efficient use of the UK fleet of vehicles including through car sharing.

CIHT has launched a climate change pledge.²

England's Economic Heartland region (EEH) has a target to double or triple the economy but this must be done differently because of the carbon issue. We underachieve against carbon targets. We have a moral obligation to see a bigger picture, act now and not store up problems for the future. We must not get sucked into extrapolating from existing transport models. There's a need to be visionary, focus on the future we want for our grandchildren and work out how to get there. Projects like Transport for New Homes have been an inspiration.

Like Transport for the North, the EEH has signed up to a pathway to zero emissions in its regional transport strategy. But the regions don't know what this means in practice. There is no recognised methodology to measure carbon footprint of the region, so EEH is in discussion with DfT to determine how to modify the region's land-use and transport model to calculate emissions.

It is not enough to model the carbon impact of individual transport or housing schemes. Their impacts need to be assessed as part of a system, so the cumulative impacts of a network of developments are modelled. There is a need to forecast travel demand in a region as a whole, resulting from a number of interventions or developments.

The synergy between the economy and reducing carbon emissions is important and often overlooked. It is surprising how much innovation and productive economic activity is going on in rural locations. At the same time the cities have lots of people 'just about managing' who have very little choice about transport. So there are excluded transport communities even in wealthy regions.

NGO: Devon has declared a climate emergency and have a commission of enquiry with a citizens assembly to follow. It is concerning that in Devon there were no objections to using pricing to drive carbon emissions of out transport, despite the fact that this will worsen transport injustice. There was strong support for Prof. Lucas' point that equity and carbon must be dealt with together.

CC: Hertfordshire County Council has also declared a climate emergency and has decided to focus on the transport it can influence most easily, i.e. travel to school.

A participant invoked the Chatham house rule for the following:

As transport professionals we specialise in analysing competing objectives and deciding how best to satisfy them (eg population growth, access to jobs, economic growth). We are good at designing a glide path to an optimum solution to meet competing demands. Yet if you adopt the view that due to the climate emergency 'the house is on fire' (literally in Australia) and the sole overarching objective is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, then this requires a Dunkirk or D-Day landing like focus to "drop everything and get on with it". The problem is that although some academics and professionals have become convinced of the need for an emergency approach, most professionals have not. In addition, as professionals we must accept that we are not empowered to adopt an emergency response at present. It would require a massive change in operations and it is neither clear if we are in an emergency situation nor if the public wants an emergency response. We cannot assume that the agenda is to address the climate crisis as the single overriding objective.

By contrast a consultant in a major planning and transport firm said that their clients have shifted and they are now being asked to look at 10, 20 and 30 year horizons. The consultant said that it would be rash to underestimate this demand. The transport profession is better at planning than delivery and we need to drop our obsession with the former and move onto the latter. We shouldn't look for the perfect methodology instead develop a patchwork of tools.

² <https://www.ciht.org.uk/knowledge-resource-centre/resources/climate-change-pledge/>

A national government representative suggested looking forwards instead of dwelling on past failures. We should not berate ourselves for past failures as all past bad decisions were made for a reason.

A consultant suggested the following

- Ask what is it that needs to move, look at both ends of trips and decide if a digital solution could be substituted
- Set a benchmark. In the new world we would like to see, what would a good outcome look like? This should include carbon emissions, social and equity outcomes and economic outcomes.
- For pilot schemes to lead to a change in status quo, the business case has to stack up. It's important to understand the 'what's in it for me?' for public sector, landowners, developers, investors, technology providers.

Another participant added that there are other stakeholders to consider when looking at 'What's in it for me?' For example there are lots of potential wins on health, reducing missed NHS appointments, active travel leading to better health outcomes. Doing transport differently can deliver wins across many government departments and public sector expenditure begins to look small compared to the benefits.

6.2 Political leadership

CC: Local authority councillors follow what constituents want, i.e. more rather than less parking provision. It is rare that a local politician takes a courageous decision to back an unpopular scheme and they are often punished at the ballot box as a result. The example cited was Shona Johnstone and her successor in relation to the Cambridge Guided Busway.

Councillors need educating to understand the circle of cause and effect and how parking standards and planning policies affect traffic demand. They need to see the role of parking restraint in a vision for place making with attractive benefits for constituents.

ACAD: Unhelpful that hospital parking charges are being abandoned at the same time as we need parking restraint.

CONS: Low and car free developments do exist in the UK and all local authorities already have the planning powers to deliver more.

REGG: Transport Strategy for the South East includes demand management as a key mechanism which has been endorsed by sixteen local authority leaders.

CC: Agreed that political leaders need courage. A good role for research might be to find data and ways of presenting it which can help visionary leaders to defend good transport policies over an electoral cycle. There is a lack of tools for councillors to use to communicate the benefits of transformational projects. Whilst it's easy to get high level sign off for a local transport plan, the challenge is local delivery when councillors are concerned for re-election.

DEV: Planning authorities need to be more assertive and fulfil the role of thinking long term and being visionaries for their communities. The new report from the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission for MHCLG on Living with Beauty makes a similar point.

Solution: REGG: Midlands Connect New project for a toolkit to raise awareness and educate businesses and residents. It provides a grid of some simple examples of transport solutions with graphics to show the links between them. This will be available soon.

Solution: CONS: TPS and Royal College of Art's Intelligent Mobility Unit are collaborating to produce some visual toolkits to help the public and elected members understand why they need to make ambitious changes. The aim is to have a similar impact to the David Attenborough moment on public awareness of the problem of plastics.

6.3 Power of language, nudges and parking restraint

This discussion was focussed around solutions.

DEV: Behavioural insights approach can do more. Need to articulate a public vision of what is achievable using the right language and communications skills. For example a county council describing plans for a 'Mass Rapid Transit System' conjures visions of 'big', 'quick' and 'loud' which is off-putting. Whereas it means frequent fast bus services. Transport jargon is obscure and needs translating into language that works for councillors and the general public. We tell people the wrong things, using the wrong language.

Persuasive examples can be used from other countries. For example, a Belgian residential site identical to one in Hertfordshire included a massive roll out of segregated cycle lanes. The number of people cycling reached the maximum level possible in the population for that mode. People were routinely cycling 15km between towns because the routes were segregated and safe.

ACAD: Agrees there is a need to redefine terms and frame new ideas positively. Research shows that Climate Crisis overwhelms people and yet Climate Change does not engender a sense of urgency. Frame a new narrative to reclaim and redefine old words. Frugality can be redefined as quality of life. This can also help educate councillors.

Many people contributed on the theme of demand management. They cited case studies illustrating the powerful effects of parking restraint. Some favoured behavioural economics using modest incentives and disincentives, the applied science of the nudge. Both private and public sector participants had experience using behavioural change techniques.

The following points were made:

- Parking restraint was a main theme from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund projects. Travel plans worked well if there was a change in parking rights otherwise they were ineffective. Single occupancy vehicles must be targeted for restraint measures. It is not sufficient to only increase demand for alternatives.
- The developer favoured the 'behavioural insights' approach to incentivise new travel habits for people moving into new housing schemes.
- Following minimum residential parking standards will result in a housing estate full of cars. Need punitive escalating scale of fees for additional permits in a household (eg first is £50, next is £500).
- Must make it easier to make the better travel choices. Where possible default people into schemes. For example auto-enrol new residents into a car club when moving into a new housing estate.
- Behavioural scientists should be included in transport planning teams. Make sure that the right behaviour is more reliable and the wrong behaviour more 'painful' or costly.
- To reassure people using liftshare for journey to work, give people a guaranteed free ride home by taxi or access to a fleet car for emergencies. The classic scenario is when a sick child needs collecting from school. A major shire county employer joined with a car rental company to provide a car pool. Staff were gently incentivised to use public transport instead of driving to work. The pool cars were cleaner and newer plus in future more likely to be EVs. These design features date back to Workplace Travel Plan guidance from Department of Transport over 20 years ago. See reports list at end.
- Without withdrawing daily access to free private SOV parking at work, offering alternatives will not make people change their behaviour. For example the Nash project at Heathrow Airport failed because employees retained unlimited access to free parking, so bad weather triggered a return to old travel habits. Whereas a scheme where staff could no longer use the car park 5 days a week resulted in a major shift to car sharing.
- A major car manufacturer in a rural setting has provided a free commuter bus for staff from the nearest station, relieving traffic congestion in local villages.
- An Arup site in West Midlands offers a free taxi option as a backup in case of an emergency.

- One commissioning organisation obtained planning permission for offices on residential car-parking spaces in a new housing development, so that it would be easier to change the land-use for local employment in future.
- Any behavioural change project must take care to avoid perverse incentives and rebound effects (where environmental initiatives making people behave worse overall). On street parking charges may encourage people to pave gardens and other private land to create parking spaces to rent. Not only does this undermine the parking restraint but it exacerbates urban drainage problems.
- In many areas with poor public transport the car is a key part of people's identity which cannot be taken away instantly. However, sharing vehicles can be made an attractive proposition.

One participant suggested that it is delusional to think that a behavioural change approach alone can deliver the scale of change needed. The climate emergency is an opportunity to 'stop farting around', to learn to jump rather than shuffle along. The sustainable travel towns were useful pilots but behaviour change programmes will not deliver the carbon reductions of 40-60% which are needed. People have never been shown how a new system would work. No-one has ever tried to show people examples like Ghent or Switzerland. We need to find a way for society to jump in a constructive, positive and visionary way, else we are 'stuffed'. Applause followed.

6.4 Research from local and regional government

The chair noted there seems to be a feeling that we know what we need to do so we should 'Just Do It'. Do people agree? Do we have the data we need? Because people's perceptions and 'common sense' are often wrong. Studies show that traders grossly misjudge how people arrive by car to shop and people have erroneous beliefs about how much of the congestion they see is through traffic.

Lots of participants felt that there is lots of good data available already.

CONS: A Local Sustainable Transport Fund project in the Lake District showed that there is a need for data to help craft solutions, not to define or identify problems. Data collection should be solutions focussed. In Cumbria the need is for trip origin and destination data and a simple and easy way to collect this is via village hall meetings and to ask people in person.

ACAD: Don't forget about suppressed demand – those trips people would like to take but can't now. This is missed entirely by existing transport appraisal models. Better Buses Manchester captured this with interviewing.

REGG: Use the classic marketing approach of segmenting populations to focus on those who are ready to change. EEH is using the Experian Mosaic tool to identify different social groups' transport needs, propensity to change and the best methods to influence them.

ACAD: Don't over focus on commute data because leisure travel is overtaking travel to work.

NGO: In rural areas, people often present with what they describe as transport problems when something else lies beneath. It's important to probe to reveal the underlying issues. Communities will ask for a new minibus service but the reason is that the village shop is about to close or the local GP is retiring. People can see their self sufficiency is under-threat and in anticipation of having to travel to access services are asking for help. This presents a choice for policy makers: patch the problem with a transport intervention or address the root problem of evaporation of rural services. Only local knowledge can help a researcher avoid getting drawn into framing a problem as a transport issue.

REGG: Midlands Connect - group of rural local authorities and a local enterprise partnership contracted researchers at University of Lincolnshire to produce a toolkit for addressing rural problems. This small project ran from Summer to Autumn 2019. Interviews took place in workshops, by phone with businesses, communities, students, Chambers of Commerce, public transport operators and other stakeholders to identify rural mobility issues in the region. This looked at businesses' and residents' needs as a priority with a secondary focus on technology. It identified problems accessing GPs, hospitals and secondary schools and

revealed a high reliance on cars and vans. A mix of solutions emerged, not all technology based. 10-11% of population in Lincolnshire have never been on the internet compared to 8-9% in the UK as a whole. Therefore publishing bus timetables exclusively online excludes 10% of Lincolnshire's population. Service providers need to think about people who won't, can't or struggle to use the internet. Bus stops in the countryside are often unmarked, not even a post in the ground. So even supplying a printed timetable at the stop sometimes isn't an option.

ACAD: Regional Government's suggestion to access services for care homes differently is important. Transport planning needs to be humble. A transport solution isn't always needed. Instead may be need to be able to access services differently, such as a skype consultation with a GP or nurse.

6.5 Total Transport including NHS collaboration

CONS: Total Transport is a model that has not been exploited properly yet.

INNOV: There is no need for new vehicles; solutions should be all about how existing vehicles are used.

INNOV: Working to identify barriers and change regulation where necessary.

INNOV: Collaboration from NHS will make a big difference.

CONS: In the Total Transport Pilots, NHS sometimes signed up as in support but in no cases actually was it able to collaborate/participate.

NGO: Supports the principle but experience of Total Transport project in shire counties was not good:

- Competitive tendering procurement process tends to exclude community transport and volunteer transport sector. Indeed it tends to kill these services off. Very little resource ever reached the very rural areas where solutions are typically small community transport services.
- Most of the resources went into feasibility studies and consultancy fees and not into delivery actual projects
- None of the projects ever got the NHS to engage meaningfully. This is a key barrier to overcome. There is no focus in NHS on non-emergency transport.
- Social Prescribing projects also worked on combining budgets. Often find there are a range of different providers delivering different solutions to the same client groups separately under their own initiative. One might choose to deliver a service on the local bus, another paying people to deliver ancillary care from urban centres. A better solution would be to get multi-skilled practitioners funded from multiple budgets to travel to the client groups.
- Need to incentivise commissioners to collaborate on creative solutions, e.g. social prescribing³.

CONS: Supports the idea. However the insights from assessing Total Transport Pilots with DfT were as follows:

- 2 years was too short for the pilot schemes.
- Money was announced very late and was in fact just reallocation of an underspend.
- LAs took 6 months to mobilise and had therefore only 18 months of operation.
- NHS collaboration was sought because DfT required it. Many letters of support were included in the LA applications but by the time of the pilots the relevant NHS staff had often moved on or had no commitment to deliver. Hard to access the management teams with the authority to sign off. People are resistant to sharing their assets.
- NHS is utterly different organisationally and culturally to local government and it is very hard to get alongside NHS commissioners. Meetings were sensitive and non-disclosure agreements were required to attend in some cases.

³ ~~<https://www.grcc.org.uk/individuals-and-families/community-wellbeing-service> and <https://www.painswicksurgery.nhs.uk/info.aspx?p=14>~~

- NHS England said it would conduct a review of non-emergency transport but this seems to have sunk without trace.
- Transport is a minute area of NHS expenditure.
- NHS is commissioning ever more specialist vehicles (eg darkened glass for privacy, specialist technology on board for patients of different kinds). This trend makes asset sharing in Total Transport impossible.
- NHS collaboration in Total Transport would probably require ministerial involvement and cross departmental input. Cabinet level priority would be required. Even with quarterly meetings between a Total Transport Pilot project and the DfT with DoH representative, it was fruitless. A letter was sent from DfT to DoH but DoH determined that the project fell under the scope of authority delegated to NHS England which is a delivery agency. [There were mutterings in the room at this point that NHS England is as unaccountable as Highways England.]
- ACAD – concurred that similar problems were faced by the Social Exclusion Unit in the early 2000s finding departments highly defensive of their budgets and vehicles.
- ACAD: There were lots of practical problems. Volunteer drivers don't deem some trips worthy – eg taking people to the pub rather than to the GP.
- ACAD: Sceptical of asset sharing projects as there have been endless pilots none of which have succeeded.
- CONS: Counter-argument is that people are inherently resistant to any behaviour outside their routine. Pilots should be longer to build trust and establish new habits. 6-10-mths is not long enough. Also most people pay for parking for a year in advance and therefore are financially invested in their travel habits.
- CONS: The problems of Total Transport must not overshadow the value of the idea. Car sharing will face much the same sceptical resistance from organisations.
- REGG: Getting the NHS involved in clinics at P&R or other hubs might increase collaboration for total transport on asset sharing.
- NGO: Supports the idea of Total Transport but warns against overthinking it. The scale of the rural bus subsidy grant compared to the road building budget - is a ratio of 1: 300,000. 5 orders of magnitude greater. This small grant budget helped establish 1800 new bus routes.
- ACAD: Research at Aberdeen University into how to use existing assets better in three parts of Scotland. Examining the existing legislative framework and collaborating with EU to explore options. In USA access to a bus is a civil right.

NGO: Do an 'Incentives Analysis'. Look at what hard and soft power central government and other stakeholders have:

1. What works top down? NHS. What works bottom up? Community car clubs.
2. Determine priorities. Go for the low hanging fruit. Replicate what works well already. Examples include Local Authority fleet reviews, where a LA examines its vehicles, allowances, systems, cultures. Include the grey fleet (employees cars used for work). Some LA fleets have now been taken over by shared fleet projects.
3. Seek out concentrated travel flows. These are very important in rural areas. Business parking, employment centres, local catchments. You can improve the mode share at sites using demand responsive transport, walking/cycling, liftshare. Examples of 0-50% liftshare in 3 months if you ban everyone from 5 day a week parking at a workplace and incentivise alternatives at same time. Look at Netherlands⁴ where there are ambitious targets for car sharing led by LAs.

⁴ <https://worldstreets.wordpress.com/2013/10/17/rapid-rise-of-carsharing-in-the-netherlands-act-3-him/>

6.6 Locating development, density and the importance of retrofitting

NGO: CPRE commissioned research Jan 2020 A Housing Design Audit for England and CPRE report found 94% of rural housing developments should not have been granted permission because they were so car dependent. A report on Transport Deserts is due to be published shortly.

DEV: Gascoyne Cecil Estates is following the model of Garden Cities with standalone satellite settlements to avoid urban sprawl, using design and building codes to create places that respect the landscape and complement the rural environment while still achieving sustainable density. Problems are greenbelt designation and difficulty for LAs to approve space for employment while still meeting housing targets. Aim to deliver a rural feel while also providing density.

ACAD: There is huge scope for retrofitting existing places that are hostile to walking. Example of a local park with no pedestrian access whatsoever, or a village where there is no walking route for a young peoples' residential home and 400 new houses to access the village centre.

CC: Sees many opportunities for retrofitting in market towns as well.

CC: Hertfordshire has a population of 1.2M in ten conurbations and is planning for 100,000 new homes and new jobs by 2033. The County Council has adopted a new approach to achieve these targets, with a reversal of the transport user hierarchy in LTP4. Delivery will be a challenge nonetheless. The council's collaboration with UoH is important and sites such as the De Havilland mixed use site with the employer Ocado is a 'living lab'.

DEV: Hertfordshire is incredibly car dependent. It has a complex geography and is dominated by London to the south, Cambridge to the north and the interconnecting road and rail routes. Most developers design for housing schemes stops at the red line site boundary. However, Gascoyne Cecil Estates is responsible for managing the estates of the Cecil family (based at Hatfield House) and are empowered to take a long term approach and seek to deliver wider benefits for the environment, tenants, employees and local communities. 16,000 new homes are needed in Welwyn/Hatfield in the next 20 years. The developer wants to engage actively now to ensure these new homes are sustainable.

REGG: Not all counties are the same. Herefordshire is much less dense 82 people/km² compared to Hertfordshire's 720 people/km². As a result different solutions will be required.

NGO: When asked what to do given that conventional approaches are failing, a radical suggestion was made to increase the population in rural settlements from 17% of the total population of the UK in rural or small population centres to 24%. This would bring rural settlements above the threshold for services but would require top down population targets '... which of course is not how we do things in England'. [This comment was met with nervous laughter].

GOV: Villages used to be self-sustaining. They are not now. Beware of subsidising people to move out into inaccessible places.

ACAD: We are ruralising the problem of affluence and generating travel demand in places that are the least suited to it. Development needs to be in the right locations.

DEVEL: Agreed that density needs to increase and recommended avoiding urban sprawl by building standalone settlements as satellites of main towns. Building and design codes should be used so that the settlements have a strong sense of rural-ness. Greenbelt designation is a major problem. People object to any new development on greenbelt. This makes employment as well as housing targets hard to achieve.

6.7 Hubs

Some felt that talk of hubs is too sophisticated, and in practice this is just about village halls and village pubs. Others felt it is a useful term that encompasses more than this.

REGG: Suggested a model for collaboration between connected villages where they nominate the one with a pub or post office to be a delivery hub. Questioned our modern obsession with next day delivery, when weekly delivery for many things would be fine. If there is a bus link between villages there could be a weekly district nurse clinic in one village to serve a cluster of settlements.

CC: For a market town, a hub at a park and ride can be very successful. This not only provides a bus ride into town reducing congestion but can also host services for village dwellers at the periphery. It can include homeworker meeting spaces, business advice, medical clinics but needn't undermine the town centre's economy. Installing EV charging points at Park and Rides can attract people to use the bus to access town and city centres. Park and rides can also be used for freight consolidation for last mile delivery by cycle or motorcycle.

NGO: if a place has some combination of shared transport, public transport, public realm, routing and active travel then it could work as a hub.

NGO: Need to get a few hubs set up quickly and learn from them. Review land use planning approach in light of lessons learned.

6.8 Economics of Buses

BUSOP: The structure of commissioning subsidised buses has to change. It works differently in other countries. For a bus operator non-urban buses are not a soluble problem. Off major corridors the cost per trip is very high and local authorities do not have the funds to subsidise services. The situation worsens every year. If the economics of bus operations does not work now we must change the structure of commissioning so that all transport services are handled together (see Total Transport).

NGO: Don't over-think the problem of financial viability for rural buses. The Rural Bus Subsidy Grant was £80m pa and helped establish 1800 new bus routes across the UK compared to £28.8bn announced for new roads.

6.9 Regulation Reform

CONS: Research on a Smart City project with the London Transport Museum revealed that all private sector stakeholders want regulation to clarify data standards and assure interoperability in new markets⁵. This is important to reduce risk and encourage investment. Collaboration between cities is encouraged by the goal of shaping a new market in the early stages. This is not easy to do, especially as no single solution will work everywhere but it is important to get an overall idea of the shape or outline of a new market and then try local delivery and learn, iterate by refining to encourage the marketplace. This can't all be left to individual local authorities. There may be similar opportunities for collaboration for rural areas.

BUSOP: Competition and Bus Services Acts need to be tweaked to allow new models to emerge. It is important that the law does not block opportunities for sharing and collaboration to get promising new projects running.

GOV: DfT welcomes input to call for evidence on regulation review on the Future of Urban Mobility with three themes initially: flexible bus, MaaS and micro mobility, with an intention to look at transport data later.

⁵ <https://www.pwc.co.uk/assets/images/smart-futures/rethinking-smart-futures.pdf>

7.0 Themes and conclusions

7.1 Summary of key themes

It's essential that carbon and social exclusion objectives are not separated.

There is an imperative for rapid action to cut carbon emissions from transport. Waiting until 2049 to reach net zero will be too late.

Engagement, persuasion and public communication was a major theme.

Need to think about public transport and shared transport together and attract SOV drivers to opt into alternatives.

Hubs are important but there are very diverse options being explored in terms of services and place making.

Retrofitting better transport into existing places is also important.

Herts CC is doing good work on the future of transport in counties, collecting data and developing methodologies, which regional transport bodies could follow. Regional government research (eg toolkits for rural transport) should be disseminated.

Some community transport services aim to deliver very bespoke services for the car-less rather than change car use on a large scale. Business park example of 0-50% car share after parking restraint is the scale of change needed to decarbonise as per Jillian Anable's paper.

Existing appraisal and decision making methodology is widely accepted to be problematic:

- Cost of carbon is priced too low
- Suppressed demand is not represented, so some people's needs are never addressed
- Quality of life and social inclusion are not modelled
- The existing models fail cities
- Decision making tools generally are failing.

7.2 What wasn't discussed

Autonomous vehicles were not raised by the group. When asked a regional government representative said they feel AV technology will not work in their region for a very long time. Some villages have no pavements, kerbs or consistent white lining. A representative from a catapult pointed to the success of a recent journey from Cranfield to Sunderland without driver intervention⁶. This was part of the HumanDrive project with Innovate UK and other partners. The technology exists but is not yet commercially viable.

7.3 To Note:

DfT will shortly announce winners of the Future Mobility Zone challenge funding. Rural trials may be an option if funding can be obtained from HMT and these would include pilot mobility hubs. Other ideas welcome including ideas from overseas that have not been tried here.

DfT is actively seeking success stories of businesses like Liftshare in Norwich. Open to helping similar technology companies to grow especially in rural or semi-rural communities. Government can help remove barriers such as regulation. Aviation and marine transport are in scope.

⁶ <https://humandrive.co.uk/nissan-leaf-completes-the-uks-longest-and-most-complex-autonomous-car-journey/>

8.0 Reports and research referred to in the discussion

To be published soon

DfT Regulation Review – Future of Mobility Call for Evidence

CREDS (Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions) - Local Authority model using household energy and MOT data.

MHCLG new planning policy guidance

Published reports

A Housing Design Audit for England, Prof Carmona UCL, 2020 commissioned by CPRE <https://matthew-carmona.com/2020/01/21/68-a-housing-design-audit-for-england/> and

Living with Beauty – promoting health wellbeing and sustainable growth, Jan 2020, Building Better Building Beautiful Commission <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-with-beauty-report-of-the-building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places, Aug 2019, CIHT/TPS/RTPI
<https://www.ciht.org.uk/knowledge-resource-centre/resources/better-planning-better-transport-better-places/>

Transport Deserts: the absence of transport choice in England's small towns, Campaign for Better Transport for CPRE, February 2020, <https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport-deserts-report/>

Rural Mobility Toolkit: <https://interpretingrurality.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/rural-mobility-toolkit/> commissioned from University of Lincoln by Midlands Connect

Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy, DfT
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/846593/future-of-mobility-strategy.pdf

Lucas et al (2019) Inequalities in Mobility and Access in the UK Transport System published by Government Office for Science Evidence Review Foresight Future of Mobility project
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/784685/future_of_mobility_access.pdf

Social Exclusion Unit (2003) Making the Connections: final report on transport and social exclusion. London: Social Exclusion Unit.
https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/publications_1997_to_2006/making_transport_summary_2003.pdf

Campaign for Better Transport (2012) Transport Accessibility and Social Exclusion
<https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/Transport-and-social-exclusion-summary.pdf>

Changing journeys to work: an employers' guide to green commuter plans C Newson 1997 Transport 2000 Trust

Understanding Successful Workplace Travel Initiatives in the UK, S Cairns, C Newson, A Davis 2010 Transportation Research Part A Policy and Practice 44(7):473-494

The essential guide to travel planning, I Taylor - 2008 - Department for Transport
https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/files/essential_guide_to_travel_planning.pdf

Rural Reach, Lynda Addison for Dorset AONB in 2007 and 2008 (unpublished)