

Future of Mobility in Counties

Smart Mobility Roundtables 28 May 2020

Short Journeys

This report documents the seventh in a series of roundtable discussions organised by the Smart Mobility Unit at the University of Hertfordshire and sponsored by Department for Transport and others. The format was a 120 minute virtual meeting via WebEx due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions.

1.0 Participants

There were 28 participants in total. Sectors represented were: national, sub-regional and local government, innovation, mobility provider, transport consultancy, academic research, public health and non-governmental organisations. Stephen Joseph chaired the discussion.

2.0 Aim

The aim of the roundtable was to explore short journeys in counties and market towns, many of which are car journeys.

The following questions were used to guide the discussion.

- What can be done to move these short journeys away from cars and towards walking and cycling?
- Will Micromobility substitute for car trips – e-bikes, scooters etc?
- In the wake of Covid-19 can the extra walking and cycling be retained and how can these be given priority in counties?

3.0 Papers and links circulated in advance

- Susan Claris, ARUP Powerpoint: Choice – plan for the past or for the future?
- Rachel Aldred, University of Westminster – background reading online
Propensity to cycle tool case study for Kenilworth, Warwickshire: https://npct.github.io/pct-shiny/regions_www/www/static/03b_case_studies/kenilworth-case-study.pdf.
For more details on the propensity to cycle tool, see PCT www.pct.bike and for the manual and more case studies, including Hereford, West Sussex and Cornwall, <https://www.pct.bike/tabs/manual.html>
For papers on the PCT, see <https://jtl.org.uk/index.php/jtl/article/view/862> and <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140518301257> (propensity to cycle to school)
- Government's statement on cycling and walking on 9 May 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2-billion-package-to-create-new-era-for-cycling-and-walking>.
- Mark Strong. Active Travel in Two Tier Councils (briefing note)
- Ian Philips, Jillian Anable and Tim Chatterton (2019) E-bike carbon Savings, How much and where, CREDS <https://www.creds.ac.uk/publications/e-bike-carbon-savings-how-much-and-where/>

4.0 Presentations

4.1 Susan Claris

As with cycling, walking is seen as a city mode but it is more relevant in towns, though the challenges are different to cycling. Walking needs to be defined in the most inclusive way possible to include wheelchairs and mobility aids for older people and those with disabilities. Four years ago ARUP produced a guide to walking with comprehensive case studies. Housing estates need addressing. Under Covid 19 many people on new estates have likely found ways to access their surroundings by walking. A quarter of all car trips are under 1 mile and 68% are under 5 miles, so there is great scope for a shift to active modes. The commute is only 15% of car trips, whereas 45% is for shopping and leisure. In terms of ownership and usage, we are buying more cars and using them less, while a quarter of all households have no car or van.

On street parking is a controversial issue especially in small towns. Until parking is addressed walking will not become more attractive. We have a syndrome of transport gluttony, with people buying ever larger cars, travelling faster and driving less inconsiderately. SUVs are not fit for purpose in towns and cities. We must not be distracted by technological fixes and rely on EVs to solve all transport problems. EV uptake has fallen far short of that forecast over ten years ago in the Berr Report¹. EVs are not carbon free overall and concerns are rising about particulate emissions from tyre and brake wear. We have a choice about the introduction of CAVs. They could be speed and/or volume limited, restricted to protect small streets, subject to road pricing.

We need to ask whether we are planning for people or for traffic.

4.2 Dr Rachel Aldred

People assume that cycling works in cities but not in the countryside, yet oral history from the 1930s shows that cities had much lower levels of cycling than the rest of the country. Cities had trams and buses, whilst most people walked or cycled to work in towns and more rural places. This reversal has been a relatively recent one. It is also important to note that small cities are marginalised as much as towns.

The Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) can be used to forecast potential for cycling using e-bikes outside metropolitan areas and large cities.

PCT is open access and free to use. It is funded by DfT and administered by Cambridge, Leeds and Westminster Universities. More than sixty Local Authorities used it in 2019. The project's aim is to examine the future growth in cycling. The proportion of commuters of cycling as a function of trip length follows a universal distribution, with less cycling at very short distances, a peak at 2 miles and a long tail. Cycling as a function of hilliness is also well predicted. Together these functions can be used to model cycling behaviour location.

Two scenarios were explored with PCT, "Go Dutch" assuming the same propensity to cycle as in the Netherlands, and E-bike, which changes the effect of distance and gradient. The 'Go Dutch' scenario assumes a revolution in cycling infrastructure and culture. The E-bike assumptions draw upon travel surveys in the Netherlands (to inform distance effects) and Switzerland (to inform hilliness).

'Go Dutch' takes cycle to work levels in England and Wales from 2-3% to 25-30%. However places like Cornwall remain at 10% due to steep hills. This can be brought up to 17% under an E-bike scenario.

In Welwyn Garden City, 'Go Dutch' lifts cycling to work from 3% to 20%. In rural Herts Go Dutch lifts cycling to 7% and E-bikes reaches 13%.

PTC also offers Route data, showing levels of cycle use on the road network, based on census data. E-bikes make a dramatic difference to a rural area. The number of commuter cyclists on the main corridor through the small West Hertfordshire rural settlement of Hemel Hempstead rises from 1- to 20 to 1000 to 2000 under the E-bikes scenario.

Another case study relevant to The Future of Counties Project is the market town of Kenilworth in Warwickshire.

4.3 Neil Poulton

England's Economic Heartland (EEH) is a sub-regional body spanning east/west from Cambridgeshire to Swindon and Oxfordshire and north/south from Northamptonshire to Hertfordshire. EEH asked WSP to create a decision making tool to examine the propensity for mode shift for the first and last mile based on demographic lifestyle group, connectivity and population density. Neil demonstrated the tool via Webex.

The online tool codes each LSOA according to accessibility (using DfT journey time statistics by mode) and population density from 2011 census. Rail stations, bus stops and e-charging points are included along with Experian Mosaic coding by demographic sub-groups (personas). By comparing locations with similar attributes

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/250625/0447.pdf

the tool can broadly suggest which measures will suit a given location. This shows potential mode share in a given LSOA according to the types of people living there and an estimate of the market size for an intervention or new service. For Cambourne in Cambridgeshire the tool suggests e-bikes and owned e-bikes are likely to be successful due to the low population density and resident income.

The tool can also be used to sensitivity test for different scenarios to improve public transport accessibility. For example, it can estimate the first and last mile mode shift potential in the catchment of a new rail station.

This is a guide rather than a definitive model but it can assist Local Authority councillors to justify policy decisions. Attitudes towards personal travel will have changed considerably as a result of Covid-19 however, and this is not captured in the tool.

4.4 Mark Strong

Two tier authorities present challenges when they don't cooperate on planning and transport.

In general, two-tier authorities face more complex issues than unitaries. Some areas have three or four tiers, counting regional or metropolitan authorities and parish or town councils.

Progressive district councils seeking change are being blocked at county level. Local Plan Policies cannot be implemented if the transport authority will not issue the necessary TROs and if there is no long term transport plan.

A good practice approach was the joint committee between Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County Councils, but this has now sadly been abandoned.

Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) can be adopted and promoted by all tiers which is a good focus for coherence.

Countries in mainland Europe seem to have better governance structures for transport and planning.

Local Chambers of Commerce and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are very useful intermediary forums to approach controversial policy ideas with less confrontation. It's not uncommon to observe hostility towards a pioneering trader who is ostracised.

More people from BC or DC needed in these roundtables. This is a problem, because they have no authority over transport and need to be heard.

5.0 Overview of discussion

The discussion is summarised as follows. Detailed comments are recorded in section 6.

Tiers of Local Government

There was agreement that multiple tiers of local government present a range of challenges, including lack of cooperation between tiers, inefficient use of resources, disconnected treatment of housing developments in the transport system, skills shortages causing missed opportunities and lack of scrutiny at pre-planning stage. There was also concern at out of date guidance being used and over-engineering.

Ways forward include adjacent second tier councils adopting common policies in Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans, although the local government policy development process is slow so plans will not be ready in time to bid for new funding. More powers could be usefully allocated to the lowest tiers.

Covid-19 Emergency Measures

All sectors agreed that behaviour changes under Covid-19 have created opportunities for change, but these need to be grasped quickly now that lockdown is being eased and behaviour will revert. The first tranche of Covid-19 emergency funding allocations for Transport Authorities were welcomed. There was support for the clawback clause to prevent mis-use of funds.

New Web tools

There was widespread agreement from all sectors that there is lots of potential to shift shorter distance trips to walking and cycling away from the car and the web tools demonstrated were welcomed. In particular the EEH First Mile Last Mile tool was seen as a potential breakthrough for transport planning outside cities. The Leeds ITS web tool can identify 'quick win' cycling infrastructure improvements to take advantage of increased demand for cycling due to Covid-19 .

E-bikes

The CREDS E-bike briefing shows the great potential for modal shift, especially for long trips in rural areas, above all in hilly areas. Some participants were sceptical about how quickly E-Bikes will be adopted at scale without incentives and safer routes.

Speed Limits, Parking Restraint and Local Traders

Some participants felt that restraint policies are essential, such as parking controls and lower speed limits. Representatives from county councils stressed how unpopular any traffic restraint tends to be in rural areas. This stimulated a detailed discussion about how best to work with local traders to persuade them of the economic value of walking and cycling. Some cited the wealth of evidence already available whereas others insisted that only 'hands on' work with traders to carry out local surveys can win hearts and minds, especially in the current fragile economic climate due to Covid-19.

Walking and Cycling Inspectorate

Government's new focus on and funding for walking and cycling was welcomed but there some disagreement about the likely impact of the new inspectorate and design standards. Some voices felt that the inspectorate needs to have real teeth, whilst another view was that overly high standards might be used as an excuse to do nothing. A more optimistic view was that the new commitment (and funding) from government, in combination with changes due to Covid-19 creates a very different context to the cycling inspectorates of the past. A small number of best practice examples would be very helpful.

Imagining a Different Future

Covid-19 has changed behaviour in ways not previously thought possible and participants underlined the urgent need to build on this. Approaches designed for visioning alternatives in cities are also needed outside cities (rural and suburban). Tools like CommonPlace and Widen My Street could be used to engage communities. There was a lively debate about whether demonstration projects (such as car free days or play streets) are useful to demonstrate possible futures or whether it is essential to commit to more dramatic changes before people can experience and understand the benefits of a different approach.

6.0 Detailed notes of Discussion by Roundtable Participants

The following abbreviations indicate the sector making comments:

ACAD	Academic
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
CONS	Consultant
CC	County council
DEV	Developer
REGG	Regional transport body
PH	Public Health
GOV	National government.
INNOV	Innovation sector

MOB Mobility services

TP Public transport operator

[CHAT] denotes written contributions made in real time during the spoken dialogue.

6.1 Definition of Rural

CONS [CHAT]: It would be useful to define what "outside cities" means. Some towns are quite big & not at all rural (eg Crawley). Though there is as much difference between "next tier" towns & market towns as there is between large metro areas & the rest. Plus the issue of agglomerations of smaller councils (eg in my patch Adur & Worthing, or as Rachel is just showing Watford & Three Rivers).

PH:[CHAT] This is so important - more than half the population of England and Wales (56%) reside in smaller towns and cities with population size up to 225,000 residents. Yet most active travel focus is on large metropolitan areas.

CHAIR: [CHAT] We have kept the definition broad - most counties have a mix of market towns, villages and smaller towns, and some are edge of city regions, and some have new towns (Crawley etc). There has been limited research on any of these places

6.2 Tiers of Local Government

PH: I represent a market town in a district council (DC) and at county level (CC). There are five DCs in our county and one major problem is that even though two towns have LCWIPs in process, there is huge housing development underway and discussion between the highways authority and the lower tier planning authorities is very difficult. There are many missed opportunities because development schemes are looked at in isolation and not as connected schemes in one transport network. For example we have seen a very large and inappropriate roundabout designed in because there is no clear scrutiny process at the pre-planning stage. This is a big issue for DCs especially in areas where there is major housing development. Opportunities are being lost all the time.

CHAIR: In most cases, District and Borough Councils tend to be less progressive than County Councils.

PH: [CHAT] We have Cycling and Walking Design Standards adopted as policy, but not implemented (usually pushback is because they are advisory). Also there is a worry of developers going to appeal.

ACAD: There is an issue with the competence of officers at DC level. The planning authority has power but defers to CC's transport proposals because they lack the specialist skills to challenge highway's decision making. Some DCs appoint transport advisors to argue against County Council policy, which is a waste of resource.

CC: Transforming Cities project is good to get buy in from DCs and BCs by involving them from the beginning. They were keen and want to adopt LCWIPs as supplementary planning documents. Agree there are many missed opportunities that slip through the net. Development principles for walking and cycling will be adopted by CC as policy and allow the rejection of plans which are in breach. LCWIPs are only at conceptual level at present. There is not enough resource to prepare 11 DC's plans at the same time. Local Authority policy development is too slow to take advantage of new funding opportunities from DfT.

ACAD: [CHAT] Developing the theme about two tier government, I am reminded of the recent Town Councils and Parish Councils (third tier) and Radio 4 programme on Frome in Somerset².

CONS: Agrees there is a problem with two tier authorities but it's three tiers in National Parks.

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000jf7s> and <https://www.flatpackdemocracy.co.uk/about/>

ACAD: [CHAT] for an example of excellent action at the town council level, see Otley's Street Vision 2030 plan³

CHAIR: Transport for New Homes has examined twenty garden towns and villages⁴ and compared what is being delivered against the proposals in the masterplans. There are some very poor examples, such as one new community where to get a pint of milk you have to drive 7 miles. Planning officers and highways authority officers are working to out of date design guidelines which are not for purpose on walking and cycling. Walking and Cycling design standards and principles agreed across neighbouring districts sound like a very good way forward.

6.3 Covid-19 and Emergency Transport Measures

ACAD: Re Covid-19, Secretary of State for Transport recently referred to park and cycle to replace park and ride and the repurposing of car parking on the fringes of cities and towns.

CONS: During Covid-19 lockdown we have gained some familiarity with relatively car free places. We need to act quickly before this effect fades, yet there has been no clear announcement of a mechanism to address this quickly.

CC: Highways authorities now have the funding allocations for emergency active travel measures, with a further allocation subject to conditions. The uncertainty caused by the delay in the announcement had the effect of reigning in ambitions. Councillors' were eager to avoid raising expectations for measures that might prove unaffordable. There was also a lack of understanding of the urgency and importance of the temporary measures.

PH: [CHAT] English Highway Authorities received letters setting out their allocations from the £225m Emergency active travel fund a couple of days ago. I notice the initial allocation of emergency funding is coming in tranches, subject to LA starting action within 4 weeks. "a. In the event that any authority does not wish to receive a share of the funding, or does not submit proposals which meet the Department's expectations, we will reserve the right to increase or decrease indicative allocations. (DfT)" This is the first stage of the emergency active travel funding - now £225M (as £25M for cycle repair schemes).

DfT issued a series of regional press releases, including the amounts for each authority in each region⁵.

CHAIR: The government has taken a 'use it or lose it' approach, with the initial tranche for urgent measures. If work does not start within four weeks, funds can be clawed back. Additional funding will be available over the summer for more permanent measures.

CC: [CHAT] We're looking at park and cycle for a large town.

NGO: [CHAT] Yes. Towns / cities need to set up bike-share schemes with hire-bikes at P&R sites

CONS: [CHAT] Park & Cycle (like park & ride) will only work if it's actually accompanied by removal of car parking in the centre.

³ <https://www.otleytowncouncil.gov.uk/streetvision-2030/>

⁴ <https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/the-project/garden-villages-and-garden-towns/>

⁵ <https://dft-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/communities-in-south-west-awarded-gbp-14m-boost-to-build-for-the-future> <https://dft-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/communities-in-the-east-of-england-awarded-gbp-30m-boost-to-build-for-the-future> <https://dft-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/communities-in-the-midlands-awarded-gbp-43m-boost-to-build-for-the-future> <https://dft-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/communities-in-the-north-east-awarded-gbp-21m-boost-to-build-for-the-future> <https://dft-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/communities-in-the-north-west-awarded-gbp-46-8m-boost-to-build-for-the-future> <https://dft-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/communities-in-the-south-east-awarded-gbp-70m-boost-to-build-for-the-future> <https://dft-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/communities-in-yorkshire-and-the-humber-awarded-gbp-27m-boost-to-build-for-the-future>

CC: [CHAT] that's the idea

CONS: The emergency funding may encourage cooperation between CC and DCs/BCs to deliver TROs.

6.4 New web tools

ACAD: Covid-19 provides a tremendous opportunity for change due to experiencing lower traffic levels and better air quality. University of Leeds has used DfT funding to look at popup cycle ways⁶ where road space on wide streets can be reallocated. Lower traffic levels means that some lanes are currently spare. It is vital to act now to take advantage of this opportunity before the traffic levels rise again. The tool uses an approach based on the Propensity to Cycle tool and Cycling Infrastructure Priority Toolkit⁷. This shows there is great potential in rural areas. For example Calderdale and rural Wakefield. PCT was used to explore how to meet the government target of doubling cycling by 2025. While E-bikes are important, take up will take time. In rural areas it is especially important to address road danger from excessive speed. Networks of quiet lanes and improved off road routes would make it feel safer to cycle and see more uptake for longer inter-town trips.

NGO: The University of Leeds ITS work on PCT and CYIPT is very good indeed. The tool on road space reallocation for Covid-19 is now available in β format for Local Authorities to use. Final format is expected shortly.

CONS: The First Mile/Last Mile (FMLM) tool is currently being tested by a steering group of Local Authority partners in England's Economic Heartland. We hope to have it live in a few weeks with access made to EEH partners via login⁸.

CC: [CHAT] The FMLM tool is a real step forward for planning outside cities.

CONS: [CHAT] The pre-circulated CREDS E-bike paper uses this and shows some stonking usable patterns that lead to ideas for interventions. It's the latter (models, target markets, who to lead etc) that's the next step.

CC: Have we forgotten about the work on accessibility planning from the Accession Tool⁹?

CC: [CHAT] What happened to all the accessibility planning and accession tool stuff that all Local authorities had to do for LTP2? All seemed to vanish afterwards.

ACAD: [CHAT] Good question, complicated answer.

ACAD: The web tools are very exciting.

6.5 E-bikes and Modal Shift

CONS: [CHAT] Q: At the moment it looks like we might have E-bike without Going Dutch! Is there a way to show that disaggregated?

ACAD SPKR: [CHAT] E-bike use is still very marginal compared to e.g. the Netherlands... You could look at a Government Target + ebikes (i.e. use Gvt target distance decay curves with ebike effect incorporated) but it wouldn't be transformational (as I don't think ebikes will without improved cycling environments).

CC: [CHAT] E-bikes make a massive difference in windy coastal communities too

CON: [CHAT] Or indeed windy *and* hilly coastal communities like here in the east part of Sussex

CONS: [CHAT] To what extent does lockdown cycle behaviour (a) help calibrate the PCT and (b) show a different reality for ebikes?

⁶ <https://www.cyipt.bike/rapid/>

⁷ <https://www.pct.bike/> and <https://www.cyipt.bike/>

⁸ To gain access to EEH FMLM tool email: neil.poulton@wsp.com

⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3190/accessibility-planning-evaluation-report.pdf

ACAD SPKR: [CHAT] I'm sure the windiness issue is a push for the Dutch to use ebikes too :) On calibration, it's not really that type of a model, in that we are looking at scenario potential, not saying if-we-do-x-then-y.

INNOV: [CHAT] just seen amazing pictures of e- cargo bikes - loaded with nearly the contents of a full van... but bypassing traffic in urban areas...

CONS: [CHAT] ebike grant scheme + ebike loans + try-to-buy + pay-as-you-go ebike pods (c.f. car club model) + ebike share + distributed ebike rental for visitors - then people get access to ebikes and we start to realise the potential.

NGO: [CHAT] On EVs - TFQL research shows that even with electrification of vehicle fleet, a significant reduction in car mileage would be needed to meet net zero targets.

6.6 Restraint Policies

CONS: [CHAT] I did a podcast recently¹⁰ on walking with Joe Irvin and Shane O'Mara and we were asked what one thing we would do if we could to promote walking. Shane said to get rid of town/city centre car parks. Joe said 20mph speed limits in towns/cities and I said national road pricing.

Parking Restraint

CC: [CHAT] What measures would be needed to restrain short car trips - restrictions on car parking?

CC: [CHAT] Reducing parking and vehicle restraint is a difficult sell in rural county when people are being discouraged from using buses and trains. Issue raised at recent meeting with traders when Devon economy has larger than average % of economy based on tourism.

PH: [CHAT] Our District Council has a free-parking policy because it is felt to support retail in a rural/market town area. How do we communicate to politicians that such policies disincentivise modal shift for short trips?

CC: [CHAT] Our Council has also offered free parking and do not wish to see it restricted near town centre as seen as critical to support them.

CCN: [CHAT] Our Council is going to be advising LPAs to reinstate parking charges and considering limiting car parks in busy centres.

Lower Speed Limits

CONS: Traffic calming and speed restrictions. We need more than infrastructure changes to junctions and pavements widths. The absolute traffic levels and speeds need to be reduced to make walking and cycling more enjoyable. We need to have a dialogue about 'sticks' for example modal filters and speed constraints and speed enforcement and road charging. We need to change traffic behaviour on residential streets, with parking measures to make active travel more appealing and more inclusive.

CONS 2: Re Calderdale and Hebden Bridge, this is a steep sided valley with no opportunities for safe parallel routes for cycling, except Sustrans Route 66 along the canal path so unsuitable for all forms of cycles (tricycles and cargo bikes). So the approach here needs to be infrastructure on road or 20mph zones. Speed restrictions and traffic calming are typically rarely used outside cities. Yet at 20mph an e-cargo bike is in the traffic flow so there is no need for other traffic to overtake, effectively levelling the playing field with diesel vans. Small e-cargo bikes can also access ginnels and byways. 20mph zones would achieve modal shift from van and car to e-cargo bike. We need more last mile cycling for freight.

CONS2:[CHAT] Nice to see Todmorden mentioned, I really think we need reduced speed limits in our town as we don't have parallel quiet ways because of the topography.

ACAD: [CHAT] Absolutely, lower speed limits and traffic calming are vital to make sure people feel safe to cycle on the roads

¹⁰ <https://podfollow.com/cheerfulpodcast/episode/a7b4e290c4bc389933dbd5be6816ba87a816aac4/view>

CONS: [CHAT] Lower speed limits and traffic calming also important for walking

NGO: But is this an anti-elderly policy? We need to bear in mind access needs for the elderly. Disability correlates with but is not identical to age. We want to increase walking and cycling in older people. The 50-70 age cohort has been previously neglected and needs more attention. Shorter journeys are very relevant for older people¹¹.

NGO: Policy issue. It is difficult to enforce moving traffic violations and speed limits without expensive engineering measures. Experience is that School Streets¹² have succeeded in London because transport authorities have power to enforce by camera. West Midlands did a cost benefit study of camera enforcement which revealed a huge return on investment. Camera enforcement would be very useful for pop-up cycle lanes. It would make a huge difference to the effectiveness of modal filters and 20mph if Local Authorities could enforce them by camera at all (modal filters) or more easily (20mph).

ACAD: Section 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 would allow it but ministers are fearful of public backlash.

ACAD: Agree. Ministers have always hated speed cameras. The mantra was “the war on the car is over” and local authorities should not be allowed to earn income from highway code violations.

6.7 Walking and Cycling Inspectorate

NGO: We are expecting a government announcement shortly updating the Cycling and Walking Strategy with news of the new design standards. The inspectorate needs to be bolder than previous incarnations, since the funding levels will allow a wider range of Local Authorities to undertake schemes, not just the most experienced and capable. It is good that the emergency funding has a recovery clause to deter mis-use.

CHAIR: The promise of an inspectorate and national standards to assure quality of cycling and walking provision is good but this could end up as an excuse to do nothing.

CONS: History 2002-2005 there was a cycling audit of every highway authority in England under Prescott and Norris. But it lacked teeth and high level support from government. LAs objected to criticism and the project was closed down. The replacement was Cycling England which had no focus at local authority level and simply worked with the willing. There is a lesson here. Success needs real power and strong support from the highest levels of government. Manchester’s cycling innovations worked because Andy Burnham backed up Cycling England when the going got tough.

NGO: The imminent Planning White Paper offers an opportunity to integrate walking and cycling standards into planning policy. Once a few new rural developments are built within cycling range of larger cities the new guidance should provide some best practice examples that can use used to challenge the “cycling wouldn’t work here” argument.

NGO: [CHAT] Good points on government engagement. The walking and cycling organisations are working together as the Walking and Cycling Alliance to inform these developments.

6.8 Working with Local Traders

CONS: Met Bishop’s Stortford Climate Emergency group recently and advised where they could start with a local change to encourage active travel. The least arguable opportunity is to install an all green pedestrian phase at a major traffic junction in the town where at present through traffic has priority. Suggest that if council is serious it would have to accept traffic impacts but it is an opportunity to make the case to elected members. Some traffic capacity has to be removed from the system in order to provide some basic infrastructure for people to cross the junction. Similarly the case for parking. We are familiar with the problems. Many studies show the relatively small importance of car-borne traffic in town centre retail trade. Despite this traders always plead ... but it’s different here. Yet all local centres have populations very close by

¹¹ <https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/publications/ageing-and-mobility-grand-challenge>

¹² <http://schoolstreets.org.uk/>

and if you prioritise the ease of walking, so that it's not a miserable experience to walk to the shops, traders can benefit from that population's trade. There is the potential to get a big win from removing a lot of short car journeys.

Spend by mode studies are easy to conduct and very valuable in revealing how important car borne trade is in a given location. Traders are too busy running their enterprises to gather objective data on where customers have travelled from and how. Traders themselves typically drive and pay more attention to the customers who arrive by car and 'fill up the boot' every one or two weeks, rather than the pedestrian (and cyclist) trade which amounts to more visits and the majority of till receipts. A spend by mode study can help traders value their customers more objectively.

Best to pitch the survey to them as simple market research and conduct it with the traders themselves. Don't preach at them. Accept that they will still need car-borne trade and these customers need to be respected. It may be the trade that tips the balance to profitability. But the parking doesn't have to be immediately outside the shop. Parking should be well sign-posted but the central locations should be reserved for high quality dwell space. People who shop on foot are more loyal, compared to drivers who once in the car can easily decide to change their plans and drive off elsewhere.

A case study is Ivel in Bucks, a tiny village with a busy main road that makes it a hostile environment with no dwell space appeal. But by creating an attractive space to spend time, people will use several shops in one trip. There is no need to eliminate parking, just locate it according to a parking strategy where cars are kept in their proper place. Overcoming resistance from traders is all about the economics.

CC: Recently spoke to traders about improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in a small Devon town with a mix of small shops, parking and through traffic. It's essential to get engagement and take people with you. Many traders haven't reopened after the Covid-19 lockdown as yet and their main focus is business survival. Trader meetings are always tough. The result was raising awareness of the issue, advised they take a watching brief. Simple things could be considered like regular timed road closures, akin to play streets but for trading differently with social distancing. Removing some parking and adding gateway signs to advise drivers to expect people on foot.

CONS: Agrees. We know that as consultants we must not disrespect the long held beliefs of people who believe that trade will die without car parking. People can't be persuaded in one meeting. The consultant has to keep listening and be persistent. A good approach is to say humbly that spend by mode data is very useful and in the longer term it will be necessary. Don't overplay the pedestrian pound argument. Rather ask have any of you an idea how many people there are with a radius of you by walking? They can walk into your shop anytime they choose – just if they fancy a walk. It's a more plausible and persuasive approach.

NGO: You can also add to the pedestrian pound arguments the well understood environmental and economic benefits of active travel. But conversations with local authorities suggests that it is a more intangible problem. It needs conversations to win hearts and minds of local residents and councillors. They are used to a very different way of thinking – with a long term obsession with motor vehicles. We need to help them imagine different places and need to support them to think in new ways.

CONS: [CHAT] Re free car parking - there is lots of evidence (TfL, Living Streets and others) to show that people walking to town centres spend more money than people who drive there.

NGO: [CHAT] Living Streets Pedestrian Pound report has much of the detail on this - <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/products-and-services/projects/walking-works>

~~<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3890/pedestrian-pound-2018.pdf>~~

CC: [CHAT] I used that in presentation to local traders. They still said that people had to get here in the first place. Small town with lots of visitors from elsewhere. A lot of those would usually have come on bus or train but being discouraged. Got to be mindful that many local businesses are on their knees. Sleepless, stress-filled

nights. Need to empathise with that rather than jumping in with our idealistic size 12's. I learnt that the hard way last week :-) Assumed that Covid was make businesses more community minded.

PH: [CHAT] The politicians don't always listen to evidence. They also consider it doesn't apply to rural areas.

CC: [CHAT] Is this a good time to do spend by mode study? Not exactly normal conditions for surveys.

CONS: [CHAT] Parking is always 'felt' to support retail more than anything else. And, of course, car-borne trade is a part of the picture. But it's the focus on this to the exclusion of other modes/issues that's the problem - meaning that the loss of just one parking space is too often considered a veto on whatever it is (walking, cycling, more welcoming public space) that would take that parking space. The best way to address this, I've found, is to address the economic angle head on. Footfall and dwell time are key - so what can be done to increase these? Town/local centre parking strategies are therefore key - numbers, locations and charging strategies. Also, local spend-by-mode surveys (very cheap to do) can be very helpful.

CC:[CHAT] Devon did a study back in 2015 on visitor spend on three of their strategic cycle routes. Was done to help make the case for future investment - 3rd and 4th link down on this webpage -

<https://www.traveldevon.info/tdlibrary/> £14m per annum from just three of the strategic rural routes.

CC:[CHAT] We're also trying to work with businesses to develop their online offer - from virtual High Streets to combined ordering and delivery services - reducing the need to travel.

6.9 Imagining a Different Future

NGO: [CHAT] Agree that it will take longer to achieve 'culture change' (and the associated political will) in rural areas than urban areas: the "it's different here" syndrome. It used to be "but the Netherlands is different", then "but London's different", and now Manchester is investing in cycling it's "but cities are different". What will happen if/when we start getting new housing developments in rural areas with good public transport, cycle/pedestrian-friendly streets etc, which are also within cycling distance of a larger city? (similar to Houten in the Netherlands).

NGO2: [CHAT] We are hearing a lot about tactical urbanism¹³ and seeing a lot of examples that help people imagine alternatives. Not so much about tactical ruralism; what would be quick and effective measures in the context of small towns and rural areas?

CONS: [CHAT] Can we have "Tactical Suburbanism" too please!

CONS: [CHAT] Someone could capture the massive efforts and outputs from the multitude of local groups who have mobilised to identify active travel schemes in and for their rural communities, tempted by the DfT £2bn. This 'colours' in tactical ruralism. Using a tool like Commonplace would do this.

CC: [CHAT] Tools to help communities have the conversation haven't been widely adopted. Things like Commonplace (others available) would be useful. Saw new one yesterday. Widen My Path¹⁴ which might be useful for communities. Good to spread by local facebook pages etc.

CC: [CHAT] There also needs to be shift in emphasis on highways maintenance - which is focused on safety - so potholes get priority for funding rather than the walking environment.

CC: [CHAT]: Also need to think about different people that we're providing transport for - young people, older people.

¹³ <https://www.citylab.com/design/2012/03/guide-tactical-urbanism/1387/> and <http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/about/>

¹⁴ <https://www.widenmypath.com>

CONS: People are more familiar now with not using cars once they arrive at a leisure destination, especially the social demographic that uses Center Parcs.¹⁵ This can be exploited to create widespread attractive car-free destinations.

Parklets and Car Free Days

CONS: [CHAT] Trials can be good ways to show politicians how different things can be. I am aware of various Cities having car-free days/weekends - have any towns done this?

CONS: [CHAT] I was listening to Dr Ian Walker yesterday (Transport Xtra webinar on behaviour change) saying that car free days are no use at all since they don't operate for long enough to create any meaningful impact (on behaviour change). In his view their main function is as a market place to promote possibilities.

CONS 2: [CHAT] I agree car free days may not change behaviours by themselves - but I think they can show how different a street can look if it is not full of traffic.

CONS: [CHAT] But they don't - they're usually on a weekend in a low traffic area to being with. Unless a council follows the European Mobility Week guidance they are usually very tokenistic

PH: [CHAT] We held a Car Free Day in Broad Street Oxford - tied in with a long-term ambition for pedestrianisation. Now high on the list within the emergency measures.

CONS: [CHAT] That's what I mean. European Mobility Week guidance¹⁶ is that they should be part of a longer term process not just a street party!

ACAD: [CHAT] I'd imagine things like car free days work best if they are used as part of a wider more ambitious strategy. Eg in Bogota, roads that had been closed once a week are now being closed full-time due to covid19 measures.

CONS: [CHAT] Also look at parklets esp for pub/cafes when they reopen.

CONS 2: [CHAT] Rotterdam is doing great stuff on parklets (not a town I know) - shop and restaurant owners can convert parking spaces in front of their business into terraces or parklets - with free wooden parklet decks offered.

CONS: [CHAT] Much more extensive post-covid, car-free corridors and areas (rather than days) are now in the public mind - i.e. space not time. In Cumbria-style rural areas, this (just) means access restrictions and speed limits on back roads and calmed village centres.

Summary

ACAD: There are five main areas to work on:

- New build versus retrofit
- Bottom up vs top down approaches. Need to strike a balance between consultation and involvement. Covid-19 and climate emergency both demand top down measures.
- Balance of 'carrot and stick'. Important major change can be achieved quickly by imposing restrictive measures but carries high risk of backlash. Demonstrating relevant examples and encouraging people to choose to change is slower.
- More powers for local government. Encourage the lowest tier of local government (parish and town councils) to propose actions for highways authorities. In villages where traffic is a problem (eg no bypass) we could radically devolve traffic powers to the parish council.
- How to bring people on board in rural areas, where car use is a key part of people's identity and change will meet with resistance? Short term trials (eg car free village days) can show what is possible but the benefits of some changes can only be demonstrated with a 'big bang' permanent

¹⁵ <https://www.centerparcs.co.uk/>

¹⁶ <https://mobilityweek.eu/campaign-resources-for-2020/>

transformation. It may not always be possible to deliver a phased introduction to a new way of operating.

7.0 References

Claris, S. (2016) "Cities Alive: Towards a Walking World" ARUP

<https://www.arup.com/perspectives/publications/research/section/cities-alive-towards-a-walking-world>.

Kirkbride, A (2020) "Can we have a transport plan for life after lockdown in rural areas – please?" Viewpoint Local Transport Today LTT issue № 799

Philips, I., Anable, J. and Chatterton, T. 2020. [e-bike carbon savings – how much and where?](#) Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions: Oxford.

~~<https://www.localtransport.today/can-we-have-a-transport-plan-for-life-after-lockdown-in-rural-areas-%E2%80%93-please/>~~

Propensity to Cycle Tool

<https://rpubs.com/RobinLovelace/372505>

<https://environment.leeds.ac.uk/transport-research-impact/doc/steering-future-cycleway-investment>

<https://www.cyipt.bike/>

<https://www.pct.bike/>

Contacts

Neil Poulton for EEH First/Middle/Mile Modeshift tool

Neil.poulton@wsp.com

Centre for Ageing Better

Jess.kuehne@ageing-better.org.uk

SD 19/6/20