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West Midlands Railway
London Northwestern Railway
Operated by West Midlands Trains

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Connected stations

A guide to community-led station travel planning:
linking rail with sustainable transport

Produced by the **Association of Community Rail Partnerships**

Supported by **West Midlands Trains**

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Front cover: The Friends of Handforth Station

INTRODUCTION

Empowering communities to travel through sustainable and healthy means, including a shift away from car use, and more equitable access to transport, brings a range of benefits for local people, places and our wider environment. This is the ethos behind the travel planning concept.

Research suggests that to achieve this, we need engagement and participation at a community level. This helps to build support, enthusiasm and ownership of sustainable transport, while overcoming barriers and ensuring transport meets local needs. When spearheaded and delivered by local people and partners, station travel planning can put communities at the forefront of sustainable transport development, tapping into local identities, aspirations and needs.

Many station travel planning activities can be delivered through creative local resourcing and thinking, meaning that the process does not have to be costly; it can simply be about bringing together existing talents and ideas from within the community in a different way.

Community rail is a grassroots movement spanning Britain, growing in its scope and influence. It is made up of community-based partnerships, groups, enterprises and volunteers, seeking to benefit communities through connecting people with, and engaging them in, local railways and stations.

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) is the umbrella body for community rail, empowering, supporting and championing those working locally. Our previous reports show the vital role community rail plays in delivering social value, developing social inclusion, promoting social enterprise, and putting stations at the heart of communities.

Community rail has a critical part to play in promoting rail as part of everyday sustainable and healthy travel, and in helping railways play a major role in bringing about a more sustainable society. The movement is already contributing to sustainable development, but there is scope for it to make a greater contribution, especially to help avert the climate emergency.

This toolkit can be used by any community group, town or parish council, or local authority wanting to connect their station to its community by walking, cycling and public or shared transport, whether already involved in community rail or not. It has been developed by ACoRP in conjunction with West Midlands Trains, two organisations that will be proactively supporting their members and stakeholders to use it, and a range of partners and experts. **To find out more about benefitting from ACoRP's support, see** www.communityrail.org.uk/join-us or call **01484 548926.**

We hope the insights, guidance and tools presented here will help you work with the rail industry to deliver successful station travel plans (STPs), creating 'connected stations' at the heart of communities and sustainable transport networks.

For an easy-to-navigate online version of the toolkit, complete with links to downloadable tools, examples, and further information, go to **www.communityrail.org.uk/resources-ideas/reports-resources-tools/station-resources/station-travel-planning-toolkit/**

Passengers at Bedford Station

I. What are travel plans?

Travel plans involve local partners agreeing improvements or developments that will help more people access particular places using sustainable and healthy means, i.e. walking, cycling, public and shared transport, and monitoring the results.

They have become an important way to enable active and sustainable travel to wide-ranging locations, and encourage a shift away from car use, particularly single occupancy car use. Travel plans are now a requirement of the National Policy Planning Framework for developments, e.g. housing, industrial, commercial, that will generate significant transport movement, to provide sustainable alternatives to additional traffic and the associated noise, pollution, danger and congestion.

> A travel plan is a long-term management strategy for an occupier or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through positive action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.[1]
>
> **Department for Transport**

Using jointly-agreed, site-specific actions and measures, travel plans can positively influence behaviour to be more sustainable, while complementing local development and aspirations. By enabling and increasing access to sustainable travel, through engagement and dialogue that taps into local identities, values, practicalities and priorities, station travel planning can not only reduce emissions and benefit the environment, but enhance access to opportunity, health and wellbeing.

However, there is scope to move to more participatory travel planning, where the community is more involved and takes a leading role, rather than it being a 'top-down' or tick-box exercise.

II. Travel plans, sustainability and policy

In 2019, the UK parliament declared an environment and climate emergency, and climate change is now widely regarded as a critical public policy issue with concern reaching record levels.[2] Via the Climate Change Act,[3] the UK has committed to reducing carbon emissions by 100% of 1990 levels, or net zero, by 2050.

The UK has also pledged its support to the worldwide effort to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius.[4]
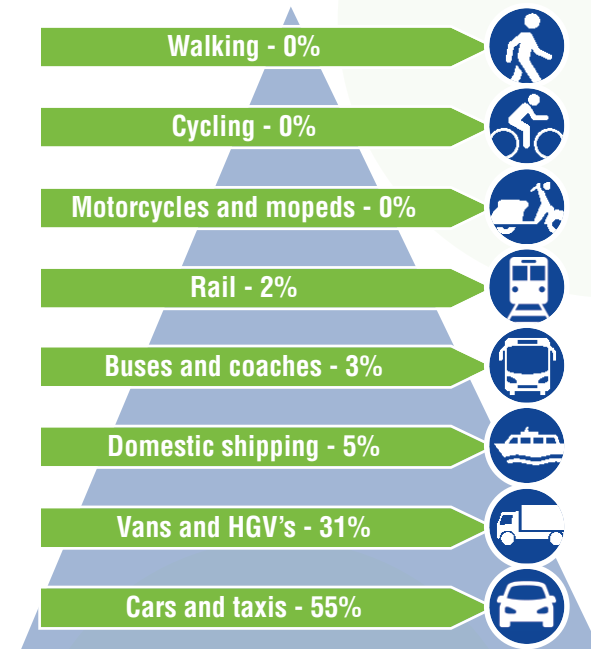
To achieve this, the UK will need to vastly reduce carbon emissions, which were just 44% below 1990 levels by 2018. Transport has a huge role to play, but has so far failed to decrease emissions overall. It accounted for 33% of carbon emissions in 2018, more than any other sector, mostly from road traffic.[5]

> The railway has already taken steps to become greener, more efficient, and more sustainable. However, it has to do more to fully realise its potential. It must place serving passengers and communities at its heart while becoming even more carbon competitive.[6]
>
> **RSSB**

Most sustainable transport mode by greenhouse gas emissions [7]

Mode of travel and % of UK domestic transport emissions – 2017

- Walking - 0%
- Cycling - 0%
- Motorcycles and mopeds - 0%
- Rail - 2%
- Buses and coaches - 3%
- Domestic shipping - 5%
- Vans and HGV's - 31%
- Cars and taxis - 55%

The railway has a critical role to play in developing sustainable travel, with rail travel shown to produce some of the lowest greenhouse gas emissions by transport type,[8] and the lowest emission rate per passenger per kilometre, excepting walking and cycling.[9] As the provider of a green and healthy option, the rail industry has the potential to make a significant contribution to reducing the overall carbon footprint for travel.

Travel planning also aligns with other policy areas, such as the government's 'Communities Framework', which helps people to gain greater ownership over local places, focusing on shared spaces, active citizenship, connectedness and promoting local pride and control.[10] It is also relevant to the government's 'Loneliness Strategy', which highlights the importance of creating an inclusive and accessible transport network that helps people feel connected to their communities.[11]

III. The benefits of station travel plans

STPs are designed to explore and develop the best possible package of environmentally friendly travel options to and from stations and the railway. By examining journey patterns of existing passengers, and engaging with those not currently using rail, plans can identify barriers to sustainable travel and opportunities for increased use.

To view a timeline highlighting the development of STPs alongside wider travel planning initiatives, see **http://bit.ly/STAPtciv**.

> A station travel plan is a strategy for managing the travel options of customers going to and from the station, with the aim of reducing their environmental impact. To lessen local road congestion and air pollution it will encourage people to walk, cycle, car share and use public transport to access the station.[12]
>
> **Rail Delivery Group**

STPs bring together all partners with an interest in rail and sustainable travel (rail industry, local authorities, passenger groups, bus and taxi operators, community groups, local service providers, cyclists and others) to develop and agree common objectives and a coordinated approach to delivering them. An evaluation of pilot STPs found positive results in terms of a reduction in carbon emissions, modal shift away from car use, improved passenger satisfaction, and increases in people using stations.

Where they have been implemented effectively, groups have found that travel plans, particularly those bringing together a range of local partners, can be an effective tool in maximising resources, attracting funding, and promoting multi-modal sustainable travel.

Key benefits of STPs: [13]

- They bring together partners to maximise resources and expertise
- They prioritise sustainable and healthy transport modes, which benefit wellbeing and are more inclusive
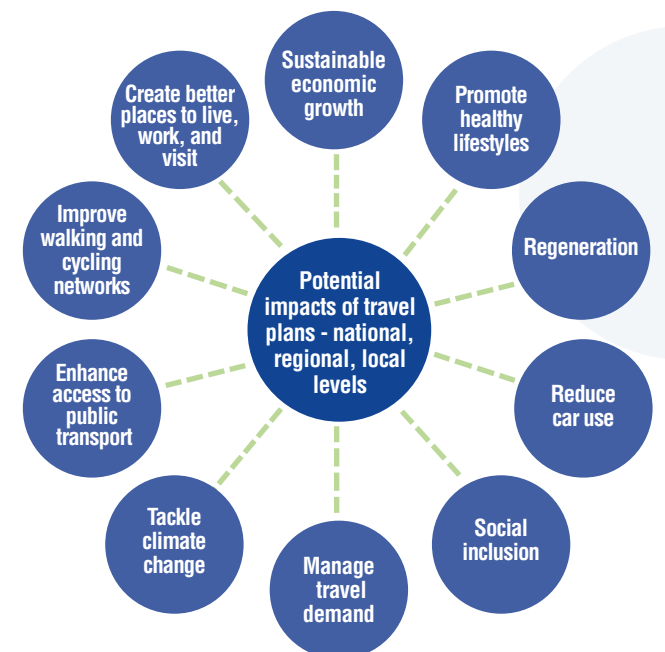- They can combine changes in infrastructure with awareness raising, promotion and engagement
- They are evidence-based and require an agreed plan and coordination between partners to achieve common goals
- They can provide a basis for pooling resources and bidding for funding, including collaboration with the development industry
- They provide a framework for coordination between transport plans and strategies, while engaging local people in positive change

The potential impacts of station travel plans [14]

- Sustainable economic growth
- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Create better places to live, work, and visit
- Regeneration
- Improve walking and cycling networks
- Potential impacts of travel plans - national, regional, local levels
- Reduce car use
- Enhance access to public transport
- Social inclusion
- Tackle climate change
- Manage travel demand

Historically, STPs were seen as a management tool to enhance a station, its accessibility and rail patronage. However, it is now recognised within rail that there is scope to go beyond this, and deliver wider benefit to people and places. By taking a proactive approach to communities and rail working in partnership to stimulate positive change, the potential benefits have increased, as below.

For individuals:

- improved health and wellbeing from walking or cycling at least part of journeys;
- increased levels of social interaction via walking, cycling and use of public transport, community transport or shared transport schemes;
- financial savings in terms of fuel costs, parking charges, or the benefits of smart ticketing;
- decreased door-to-door journey times;
- wider access to employment, education and leisure opportunities;
- a sense of efficacy and connection with your community, by feeling that your voice is heard and you're able to make a positive contribution to change.

For communities:

- a more pleasant, enjoyable and healthy local environment, with reduced air pollution, noise and congestion; supporting local sustainability, providing for future generations;
- improving access to jobs, training, leisure and social opportunities, making the community more inclusive and prosperous;
- enhancing cohesion and reducing isolation, by improving contact between people and empowering people to play a greater role in their local area;
- boosting local tourism, facilitating regeneration, and supporting access and trade for local businesses;
- creating a more attractive environment for investors and developers.

For the rail industry:

- an increase in passenger numbers, satisfaction, and revenue, with any potential drop in car parking revenue offset by increased financial gains from additional fares;
- safer, more accessible, cleaner, greener, more appealing station environments;
- less congestion at stations and in surrounding areas;
- developing transport interchange and inter-modal connectivity, allowing for integrated door-to-door journeys including the 'first and last mile';
- working with developers to ensure that rail travel and access to stations is central to new development proposals;
- opportunities to create living stations at the heart of communities, positioning rail as central to localities and people's lives.

Expert comment:

The value of community station travel plans

" To be effective, station travel plans need to reflect the challenges, culture and community identity surrounding each station. Although the issues and dynamics for each station will be different, having a process to engage and really listen to community needs is vital for success. For train operating companies, having active community groups and community rail partnerships in place will give genuine and invaluable community insight.

From this community-led knowledge base, train operators, local authorities and other partners can build up not only a plan of action, but ensure that fundamental accessibility, equality and inclusion principles are built in from the outset of any station travel planning project. "

Jon Harris, Integrated Transport and Accessibility Lead, West Midlands Trains and Strategic Rail Working Group/Accessibility Panel Member, Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport

Galashiels Station

IV.   The station travel planning process – an overview

Skegness Station

Benefits - Get your group together to explore how your community could benefit from having a STP. What problems or issues might the plan help to solve? Could you use the plan to harness extra support or funding?

Partners - If your group were to undertake travel planning, who would you need to work with? Map potential partners and stakeholders, and invite them to a kick-off meeting to start sharing ideas. Consider existing projects you could link to.

Engage and promote - Consider how you'll engage widely, and get local people's input from the outset, and on an ongoing basis. Consider how to use partners' networks and groups, and reach out in an inclusive way using two-way communications.

Research - Ask, what is already known about travel to and from the station and in the area? What are the barriers to sustainable travel? Consider existing surveys, audits, plans, and reports to help build an understanding.

Data collection - Where needed, collect new data. Audit your station, its surroundings and key access routes from a sustainable travel perspective. Get volunteers and partner groups out and about to collect local views.

Involve people - Use a range of methods to ensure a rounded understanding of local needs and aspirations, such as surveys, interactive workshops and participatory mapping. Let the community lead the way.

Analyse - Consider what the data tells you, and what local people say is needed, to enable and encourage more people to use rail in combination with walking, cycling and public/shared transport. What are the barriers and opportunities?

Get planning - Work with your partners and draw on your evidence to identify 'quick wins', to get going, and longer-term aims. Consider who you need to work with, available resources and potential funding. Make sure your plan is clear, to-the-point and evidenced.

Act, review, monitor - Ensure there are clear responsibilities for making the changes happen, alongside ongoing engagement, communication and monitoring of success. Good luck!

I. Getting started

Community STPs can be led by local authorities, parish councils, neighbourhood or residents' associations, or other community groups or partnerships with an interest in the railway, transport and local sustainability and inclusion. In community rail, it might be driven by a community rail partnership or community station or station adoption group, or a combination of these.

However, all STPs need to be co-designed and agreed with relevant rail industry partners, namely the train operator responsible for that station, and/or Network Rail if relevant, so they will need to be on board as a key partner throughout. Getting in contact with your train operator's community or stakeholder manager (details should be on their website) to discuss the idea, before going any further, is therefore essential. You can also contact ACoRP for advice.

All stations should be able to benefit from the travel planning concept, but before embarking on any project, check whether an STP is either already in place, or has existed previously. If there is or has been one, investigate what worked and what didn't, and whether there is the potential to review or revive it, with greater community engagement.

Whether there is an existing/previous plan or not, you will need to look into existing data and wider plans that you can draw on and align with. For example, the train operating company may already have plans to improve the station, or the local authority may be planning to improve local walking and cycling routes. Both of these projects, and others, may hold useful data for you on how the station is being used and accessed.

The rationale for developing a STP or reviving an existing plan may be influenced by a variety of factors, including those linked to the railway, such as:

- access issues to the station, affecting usage and passenger growth;
- increased interest in enabling end-to-end journeys, especially healthy and sustainable ones;
- changes to rail services that may lead to different travel patterns, e.g. timetable alterations;
- new community activity at the station that may complement travel schemes, e.g. cycle hire;
- redevelopment/upgrade of station facilities, e.g. accessibility or interchange;
- changes in management or community engagement, e.g. a new train operator, formation of a new community rail partnership, station adoption group, or rail user group.

Or there may be wider factors that mean a revised approach is needed:

- local development, e.g. housing, retail, employment, educational/health facilities;
- a local plan or transport masterplan by the local authority;
- a focus, e.g. by the local authority, on improving public health and wellbeing, promoting active travel and sustainability, or reducing air pollution and traffic congestion;
- climate emergency declarations by local authorities, parish councils, or city regions;
- new or renewed support for travel planning by local authorities, groups or businesses;
- new funding opportunities linked to travel, e.g. Section 106 funding from developments;
- plans for regeneration in the area.

II. Engaging the community

The importance of a joined-up approach to building local rapport and empowerment should not be underestimated. Reaching out to partners from the start and generating interest across a broad spectrum of groups and organisations will help you draw on diverse ideas and perspectives, ensuring your STP aligns with local needs and opportunities.

Expert comment:

Community engagement

"There is no one size fits all model for effective consultation or engagement; the most appropriate methods will depend on the local issues. We encourage the widest involvement of a cross-section of the community as possible. Issues can often be very local, so it's crucial to understand local people's priorities and seek transport users' views."

Transport Focus

You should not merely regard local communities as a stakeholder to consult; treat them as a design partner from the outset.

Involving the widest possible cross-section of local people in review, design and planning exercises will enable effective development of ideas and solutions together.

Also make sure there are good mechanisms for ongoing, two-way communication, so the wider community can see what is happening, get involved in ways that suit them, feed in if they wish, and understand how and why plans have taken shape as they have. Try to continually engage people, including reaching out to those who may otherwise be disenfranchised from the process, keeping your door and ears open for people to contact you and give their views.

Expert comment:

Community engagement

"This is a process by which community organisations and individuals build ongoing relationships for the purpose of applying a collective vision for the benefit of a community. While community organising involves the process of building a grassroots movement involving communities, community engagement primarily deals with the practice of moving said communities towards change."

Mapping for Change

Effective community engagement should be a process of proactive and ongoing collaboration. True engagement occurs when people are invited to be involved throughout all stages of planning and delivery, helping to shape plans from the outset and review success.

The communities, or groups within them, that you work with could be:

- communities of place, defined by a specific locality;
- communities of interest, defined by common attributes or goals;
- communities of identity, defined by shared feelings, interactions, or a common bond.

A community STP should be shaped, defined and delivered locally, according to what the most pressing issues are, ensuring a proactive approach to addressing local needs and circumstances.

III. Identifying project partners

You will need to establish key partners to be involved in the research, coordination and delivery of the STP. All schemes are unique, but there are certain partners it will be necessary to engage. It's important to map out all local groups, organisations and partners who might have an interest in the STP, or its results, and who could help you to engage with people who might be affected by or who could benefit from the STP. For further advice on this, go to **www.mappingforchange.org.uk/**.

You might prioritise partners who can help you to engage widely, discussing early on how this might work. This direct and proactive contact should be combined with a communications campaign encouraging involvement and updating on progress. For ACoRP's guidance on marketing and communications, go to **communityrail.org.uk/resources-ideas/reports-re-sources-tools/marketing-and-communications/**.

The range of stakeholders with an interest in your STP might include:

Rail industry and community rail - train operating companies, Network Rail, other community rail partnerships, other community rail groups, e.g. station adopters

Other transport - bus companies, taxi representatives, community transport operators, rail user groups

Interest groups - local walking/cycling groups, transport committees, disability forums, Sustrans, Living Streets, Transport Focus, Campaign for Better Transport

Political - local authorities (including highways/planning officers, transport portfolio holders), parish councils, local chamber of commerce, LEPs, BIDs

Community or business - residents'/business associations, schools/colleges/universities, local employers, businesses based on/near stations, police, charities, sports/social clubs, youth groups, tourism agencies, NHS, National Parks

Different partners involved in a community STP will have varying levels of interest and commitment. **Your STP will need a small group of key individuals to drive things forward and ensure ongoing engagement and success, but you should also try to keep things straightforward for those with other priorities to stay on-board**.

As it develops, you may decide to form working groups, but to begin with, you need to clarify your main aims and decide how your main steering group will work together and move forward, while engaging with the community.

Ask people how much time and effort they can offer and what is reasonable and manageable for them, and ensure you are clear about who the day-to-day contact and decision-maker is within each partner organisation, which may be different.

Consider what communication channels you need to keep both partners and local people informed and engaged, and what opportunities might be available through your partners. Can you take advantage of existing channels with an established reach, such as noticeboards in prominent locations and well-used websites or newsletters? Consider also setting up a dedicated email address and social media accounts, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, for your STP to assist online engagement, and ask all partners to follow these and share your news.

Community rail groups are ideally placed to lead community STPs as they are rooted in the communities they serve and should already have a grasp of local contacts and networks. **However, developing an STP can be an opportunity for community rail groups to reach out to wider partners, and for non-rail related community groups to get involved in rail for the first time.**

Expert comment:

The benefits of community rail STP projects

"You know the area, it's in your DNA, so to speak. But also, because you are a community rail partnership you have got a very good relationship with the train operator, a very good relationship with other stakeholders, and you're seen as the 'honest broker', as opposed to someone who has to do this, for example as part of a franchise commitment. You can use all the bits of what community rail is about, bring people together and take all of the politics out, which is very useful. "

Nick Farthing, Chair of the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

👍 **Top tip:** *Create a contacts database, making sure this is regularly updated. You could develop this into a skills register, recording what each party has to offer (time, resources, expertise) to aid coordination of the STP and interaction between stakeholders. For an example template, see* **http://bit.ly/STAPtcxi**. *For advice on treating data appropriately and legally, go to* **communityrail.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2018/04/Data-protection-guidance-0418ii.pdf**.

To start the STP process, you may want to hold a 'kick-off' meeting to get relevant partners around the table and explore ideas. This should allow you to assign roles and responsibilities to begin creating your STP.
At the meeting, you could consider:

• what are the key opportunities and issues that have triggered the need/aspiration for STP activities, and what long-term goals should you aim for?
• what projects are already happening locally that could be dovetailed with STP work? Is there scope to influence and with link them?
• what type of initial improvement projects could be realistic and achievable in the short-term, to attract interest, engage people, and generate momentum?
• what expertise and resources have you got in your group to be able to develop the STP, what more do you need, and how can this shape roles and responsibilities? How can each partner help to engage different parts of the community and achieve specific goals?
• how will you engage the community as widely as

Launch of new trains on the Marston Vale Line

possible? How can you work with 'harder to reach' groups and those who may be disenfranchised from local transport, especially by taking engagement into places where they meet already e.g. youth clubs, support groups, citizen's advice, health services? How can you build awareness and interest locally, understand local barriers to sustainable transport, and draw on local people's views?
• how might you fund/resource improvements identified in the plan? Are there relevant local/rail industry funding schemes? Is there a chance for any match funding, or financial contributions from partners?
• can you look at and learn from good practice elsewhere? Who can advise you and share the lessons they learnt?
• can you link to existing community rail activity at the station, e.g. a station adoption group? If a group does not exist, could formally adopting the station be part of the STP process, giving added support and profile?
• how will the group keep in contact, make decisions and ensure progress is made? Who will form the steering group, and who will act as lead coordinator? How regularly will you meet?

👍 **Top tip:** *If the station is already 'adopted' by the community (i.e. a station friends group), engage that group early. Station adoption has spread across Britain, reviving stations and bringing them closer to the communities they serve. A friends group can be a key source of ideas and information and a vehicle for change. If the station is not yet adopted, consider if there is the potential to form a group. For guidance, see* **communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Acorp-Station-Adoption-Booklet-050719.pdf**.

Case study:

Lift share scheme at Tring Station

Passengers travelling to Tring Station by car were invited to save money - and the environment - through a pilot lift-sharing scheme from London Northwestern Railway.

The scheme used a secure messaging facility on a bespoke website – **wmtrains.liftshare.com** – to connect train users with other people who drove similar routes to the station. It also offered opportunities to connect people who were interested in regular communal travel or shared taxi arrangements. The train company recognised that travelling by train did not start and end at the station, and wanted to develop a scheme that improved the 'last mile' provision for customers.

A key factor in successfully establishing the project was running an effective community consultation. By working closely with Tring Town Council and the surrounding parish councils, the train operator devised and promoted an accessible station access survey, compiled using local insights of travel patterns affecting the station.

This coordinated approach produced an excellent response of nearly 550 people, with more than a third indicating they would be interested in joining a trip-sharing scheme.

Volunteers at Uttoxeter Station

IV. Linking to community rail

The benefits of STP schemes and links to community rail have been recognised by the Department for Transport in its *Community Rail Development Strategy*. This refers to the potential of STPs as tools to bring a range of partners together, allowing community rail groups to play a key role in enabling and promoting sustainable, healthy and accessible travel.

" Station travel plans can bring together all stakeholders with an interest in rail stations to develop and agree common objectives and a coordinated approach to deliver smarter transport choices with the aim of reducing its environmental impact.[15]

Department for Transport "

Community rail partnerships and groups can act as a conduit to bring together complementary providers to forge integrated transport systems, benefitting sustainability and providing social and economic value.

This fits with all four pillars of the *Community Rail Development Strategy*:

* **providing a voice for the community** – by engaging local people in improvements that meet their needs and views;
* **promoting sustainable, healthy and accessible travel** – synonymous with station travel planning;
* **bringing communities together and supporting diversity and inclusion** – by engaging and empowering marginalised/disadvantaged groups and creating wider access to travel;
* **supporting social and economic development** – by improving the station and wider environment and increasing access to work, training and local businesses.

To agree clear aims and objectives for your STP, you might find it useful to draw on the social value framework on pages 36 to 39 of ACoRP's *Value of Community Rail* report,[16] which breaks down how positive outcomes can be delivered under each of the strategy's four pillars.

Community rail partnerships and station groups – including any group involved in station travel planning – can also benefit from support and advice from ACoRP, including referral to relevant partners, guidance and tools, through ACoRP membership. See **communityrail.org.uk/join-us**.

" Station travel planning connects with the four pillars of the Community Rail Development Strategy really well, diversity and inclusion, sustainable travel, and the whole wider agenda of the climate emergency. That is something that should be a priority for everybody.

Stephen Sleight, Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership Officer "

Passengers on the Heart of Wales Line

STPs can take different forms, although this toolkit focuses on ones that are predominantly led by community organisations, with rail industry and other support. They must be site-specific and informed by local context, needs, views and opportunities, hence initial data collection and ongoing engagement is key. However, the STP should also be a tool for actually getting things done in a way that achieves the aim of more people travelling sustainably to and from the station, and it's important to not lose sight of this.

I. Using existing insights and data

From your 'kick-off' meeting and any prior community engagement and insights from partners, you will already have ideas as to the main issues and opportunities you will need to address. By combining this with local evidence and input, you should be able to produce some overarching aims and headline visions.

It's a good idea to start the STP process by collecting and reviewing existing evidence. Finding out what information is already out there on the station, the area, local developments, services and employers, can avoid duplication and inform further research.

This will involve identifying and reviewing relevant documents, statistics, policies and narratives. Searching online and asking relevant local partners are good places to start. Review as much existing data as possible before conducting any field work. This will equip you with background knowledge to inform your priorities, helping to avoid wasted effort, and identify knowledge gaps to fill through further research and consultation.

Via this review, try to clarify:

* how are people travelling at the moment?
* how many people are using/not using different modes of travel?
* how are people travelling to and from the station and other key local sites in the vicinity (e.g. schools, hospitals, high streets, major employers)?
* how well do different modes of travel connect with each other?
* what are the barriers to sustainable travel and motivations for people driving?
* what are local people's views and concerns about rail/bus/walking/cycling versus driving?
* what changes might enable or encourage people to switch to more sustainable travel modes?
* what work is going on already to improve sustainability and sustainable travel, and how might a STP link in with this?

To answer these questions, evidence you could request from key partners, or gather via desktop research, includes:

Evidence	Description	Source
Passenger surveys	Station-based surveys or others related to transport in the locality, e.g. the National Passenger Survey	Transport Focus, local authority, travel operators
Other surveys and consultation data	Local residents' surveys and results from other local consultations and engagement, related to transport, sustainability or local development	Local authority, associations or development partnerships
Local travel plans	Organisations, schools, hospitals, and major workplaces located nearby	Local authority, organisation websites/ representatives
Station / site audits	Area-based analysis and review of the physical environment	Local authority, train operator, Sustrans
Active travel audits, local travel awareness campaigns, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans	Key route-based corridor analysis of the physical environment	Local authority, train operator, Sustrans
Tourism reports	Reports and research by major trip attractors	Chamber of Commerce, tourist attractions, local authority, LEP
Transport studies	Technical reports, detailed analysis and feasibility studies	Local authority, train operator
Area business plans	Chamber of Commerce reports & BID-based reporting / networks	Chamber of Commerce, BID, local authority
Local Plans, other local authority strategies	Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan raw database	Local authority, town council, parish council
Census data	Information and data on local travel patterns	Local authority, Office for National Statistics
Station usage	Annual ticket sales and number of station entries and exits	Train operators, Office of Rail and Road

II. Collecting data

There are numerous ways to collect new data, based on what is needed and relevant in the local context. This can be labour-intensive, so ensure sufficient time is allowed. This is particularly important for a community STP, where much of this process may depend on the involvement of willing and able volunteers. However, you may be able to draw on STP partners, especially those with existing resources and expertise in research and consultation, or who already have local surveys and data collection taking place.

Audits

This involves assessing facilities at and around the station, and routes to and from the site, especially those connecting it with key destinations and origins. You are looking to collect baseline data assessing how conducive the station and its environs are now in supporting door-to-door sustainable journeys. The results can inform engagement with local people as to their experiences and opinions on the station and access to it.

Station-based audits

Consider how the station site functions in relation to sustainable transport access, and record the quality and availability of services and facilities. You could look at:

- how use of car parks and drop-off points affects those accessing the station on foot/bike/bus;
- cycle parking and access, including how easily cyclists get into, out and through the station with their bikes, and access to cycle parking;
- pedestrian access, including how easily people on foot get into, out and through the station, including those with children, bags and differing levels of mobility;
- bus interchange and access;
- signage and onward travel information and whether this prioritises sustainable modes;
- overall station environment and how it welcomes and 'feels' for passengers, especially those accessing it on foot/bike/bus, and those not familiar with the station or train travel.

For smaller stations, your station audit should take no longer than a couple of hours.

To access an example station site audit form, go to **http://bit.ly/STPssaf**.

Route access audits

These audits look at the start or end, or the 'first and last mile', of people's journeys and links between the station and its surroundings, such as town or village centres, residential areas, high streets, major employers, tourist attractions, schools, hospitals, or other notable sites.

They involve recording physical elements of the environment, and describing and illustrating any barriers to movement or potential improvements needed. They include documenting the quality of routes and level of integration between transport modes, such as walking/cycling routes and bus stops, to understand the scope and ease of making multi-modal journeys.

Ask questions such as: are key employment/residential areas effectively connected to the local active travel network? Is there visible signage and attractive 'desire lines', marking the shortest or most easily navigated path between an origin and a destination?

You might also incorporate 'trip-chaining', where someone makes one 'trip' out from home, for example, but does multiple things on that journey, e.g. a parent drops a child off at school and then goes to work or goes shopping. Considering this type of activity may uncover issues that wouldn't be picked up using traditional 'end-to-end' journey thinking.

As well as an audit form, auditors should be equipped to capture photos or record videos along the route to illustrate different journeys and issues with these.

To view an Excel file to capture audit data in and around the station environment, go to **http://bit.ly/STPaudt**.

Participatory mapping

Consider using participatory mapping alongside or as part of your audits, to understand the station and local routes from different people's perspectives. This can return rich data to inform decision-making, comprising of maps, opinions, images, and videos, painting a picture of how people interact and engage with their environments.

Participatory mapping is an interactive approach drawing on local people's knowledge, enabling participants to explore opportunities, ideas and pose questions, so it is

perfectly suited to developing a community STP. It can be a powerful way to build involvement from the outset, especially for people who face mobility barriers or who are excluded from transport in some way – those who potentially stand to gain most from your STP – to express ideas and shape your plan.

Mapping can be done digitally via an online tool, using a basic 3D model at local workshops, by taking groups out to record their views on paper (ensuring this is done safely with an appropriate supervisor), or by surveying people in the street. By using a model at workshops hosted by partners and groups already working with local people, you can engage people in places they are familiar with and feel comfortable in, getting their views and suggestions on different aspects of the station and its surroundings.

Participatory mapping is particularly useful for STPs, in that it can help to:

- show from the outset that your STP is community-led, based on listening to local people;
- facilitate dialogue with a range of local people with differing situations and perspectives, especially those facing barriers and disadvantages, asking them directly what they need to access the station through sustainable means;
- fill knowledge gaps and offer a deeper understanding of the issues you are trying to address and barriers to change;
- visually display and assess data, opportunities and issues, enhancing your and the community's awareness of what the STP needs to address, and ideas for improvements;
- gather views on the success of existing/previous programmes, plans, and activities, and what further steps are needed;
- provide a valuable, visual communication tool that can enhance stakeholder engagement, helping people to visualise issues and resources, stimulate discussion, and develop solutions.

For more information on mapping methods, go to **mappingforchange.org.uk/**.

Surveys

Surveys are useful for gaining views from, and assessing behaviours among, larger numbers of people, such as how many people use different modes for (parts of) their journeys, and reasons for this. They can therefore be used to gather baseline data to inform your action plans and set appropriate monitoring and evaluation targets. It's crucial to collect data from both rail and non-rail users, and a range of local people, but consider if there are any important groups to target, such as young people, parents, or people with disabilities, to be able to break down your data and understand travel behaviour and attitudes across the community.
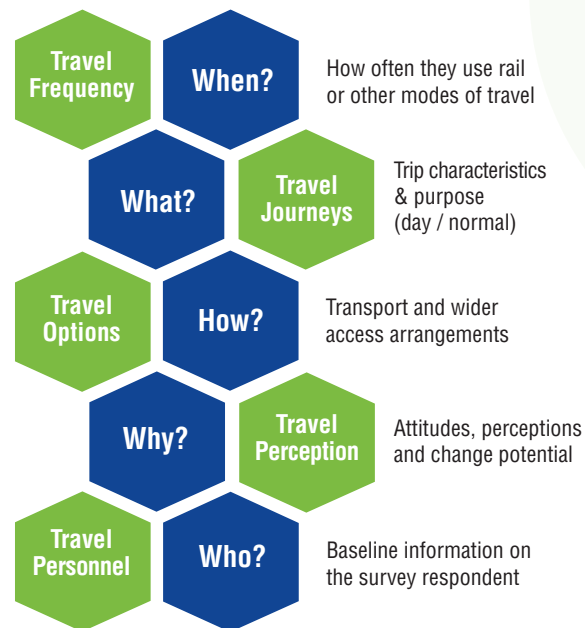
Surveys only offer a snapshot of people's opinions, which are complex, fluid, and dependant on context. However, they can offer a vital starting point, which when combined with more in-depth engagement methods, such as mapping, focus groups, or workshops, can highlight what people think and feel, and identify the factors needed to create and implement community-led local change.

Templates can help to guide you, but you will need to tailor these to the local context and add specific questions where necessary. Using multiple choice helps to complete and analyse surveys faster, but you will need to ensure your questions and answer options work logically, cover all eventualities, and also give people the chance to offer opinions freely.

To gather meaningful data, ensure your questions encourage people to answer 'the Fab Five' points:

Travel Frequency **When?** — How often they use rail or other modes of travel

What? **Travel Journeys** — Trip characteristics & purpose (day / normal)

Travel Options **How?** — Transport and wider access arrangements

Why? **Travel Perception** — Attitudes, perceptions and change potential

Travel Personnel **Who?** — Baseline information on the survey respondent

> " One of the benefits for us has been greater engagement with the community. Just being on the trains doing our surveys has been brilliant. It has got us engaging with peak-time passengers, like students who rely on the trains to get to college. We've had a very good response, and we've got lots of ideas about potential schemes, but we don't want to impose them, we want them to be community-led.
>
> **Stephen Sleight, Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership Officer** "

To collect your data, you could ask people to complete surveys or questionnaires on trains or at stations, speak to people at key, central locations, e.g. town centres, retail areas, or ask local community groups to get their members/users to answer the questions on your behalf. For an example travel survey used by the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership, go to **http://bit.ly/STPexts**.

To view a bank of potential survey questions, visit **http://bit.ly/STPsqb**, and for a list of possible topics and questions you might want to explore in more detail, e.g. in focus groups or stakeholder interviews, go to **http://bit.ly/STPsitl**.

Some
- Avoid surveying during holiday periods, special events, or at times of disruption
- Aside from the station itself, identify recognisable sites with high footfall, e.g. other transport hubs, supermarkets, cafes, pubs, event spaces

Handy
- Use volunteers if you can, but ensure they're well briefed on how to ask people to take part, ask questions and record results in an open, non-judgmental way
- Use major local employers and/or organisations such as the local authority who may be able to distribute surveys internally for you

Survey
- Use a mixture of digital/online and tangible/ hard-copy platforms to try and ensure as wide an audience as possible. You might consider offering people an incentive to take part, e.g. a prize draw for a free local rail ticket
- Include the online link on all hard copy surveys and drop-off boxes to give people a range of options. Produce a QR code for people to access the survey

Hints
- Have a clear idea about how you will receive hard-copy surveys back, e.g. ballot boxes at safe, accessible locations, freepost envelopes, via station/train staff
- To maximise inclusivity, work with different organisations who can help you engage with hard-to-reach, marginalised groups, including non-rail users, and consider producing an accessible version of the survey for local schools

Top tip: *When using surveys to inform STPs, take the opportunity to gather extra information linked to your wider work. For example, you could assess awareness of your group and its activities, or ask if respondents are interested in volunteering. By tailoring your survey, you can collect data to inform multiple projects.*

III. Drawing on volunteers and the community

Carrying out audits and surveys will usually depend on volunteers and local groups. Those already active in community rail, or other parts of the community and voluntary sector, tend to be ideally placed for this due to their familiarity with local issues and environments. This also helps to ensure the process is community-led. To maximise volunteer support, consider the following:

- could you ask, where they exist, station adoption groups to help with audits of their stations, or bring different station friends' groups together to jointly-audit stations, giving fresh eyes and an alternative perspective?

- could you engage local walking/ cycling groups to conduct audits on your behalf?
- could you work with local schools or colleges to complete audits or surveys as part of curriculum work, e.g. geography, maths?
- could local partners offer volunteers or in-kind assistance? For example, Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership worked with a local university, one of their steering group members, to get students conducting STP surveys on their behalf;
- could you engage businesses or organisations on or near stations to collect data, particularly if access issues directly affect them?
- could you work with partners such as train operators, local authorities, or external consultants to support, upskill, and train volunteers?

School activities in Sussex

Case study:

The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership

Thanks to funding from ACoRP, Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership commissioned a physical activity and wellbeing consultant from IMP Wellbeing to train volunteer station ambassadors at the 14 stations along the Tyne Valley line, which runs from Newcastle to Carlisle.

A training workshop was held to assist volunteers in undertaking walking and cycling audits to and from all the stations. The environments surrounding each station were examined to establish whether the current conditions supported or inhibited active and sustainable travel. This process allowed the ambassadors to assess the opportunities to improve the provision at each station, as well as meeting as a group to exchange ideas to make recommendations and improvements.

The findings from the audits will be used to create maps, to display at the stations and online, to inform prospective passengers of what is available to support active eco-friendly travel and inform and complement a station survey update along the length of the line.[18]

Case study:

Pollokshaws West Station

ScotRail identified that community STPs, such as the one at Pollokshaws West Station south of Glasgow, could have a range of benefits, including grassroots buy-in, and a greater sense of ownership of the STP. It also helped to upskill local people to carry out research and gather data.

By working with South West Community Cycles, a social enterprise based at the station – which also hosts the South West Glasgow Community Rail Partnership – part of the STP process was to recruit local volunteers, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, to aid their skills and confidence in undertaking 'first and last mile' audits.

To pilot this 'community auditing', a local volunteer, Thomas Miller, was buddied up with a travel consultant and guided through different environments to observe and gauge factors he saw as crucial to travel choice, taking photos and making recommendations. Not only was Thomas able to lend his knowledge of the local area to improve walking and cycling access routes to the station and feed into the STP action plan, he is now equipped to train fellow volunteers on the process of auditing and data collection.[17]

I. Analysing the data

Once you have completed your research, you will need to interpret the data to allow key themes to be extracted and actions to be planned. Going back to the main headline aims you discussed with partners at the start of the STP process should help you look for patterns or themes to evaluate what the main barriers are to sustainable travel and opportunities to overcome these.

When reflecting on the evidence, look at what infrastructure improvements or behaviour change initiatives could 'nudge' people towards using sustainable travel. Consider:

- what is preventing, or putting people off, using public transport and active travel at the moment, considering individual modes and how well they combine?
- what might open up public transport and active travel to more people, by making it more safe, easy, convenient, familiar, affordable, accessible and attractive?
- if these improvements are made, what will encourage and enable people to make use of them, considering awareness, practicalities, enthusiasm, ownership and local pride?
- how will you communicate these improvements to encourage more people to try public transport?

This is where a greater understanding of the locality and local people, generated via meaningful community engagement, can help you build realistic action plans that hold water and are not purely aspirational.

Remember that people's views and perspectives – qualitative data – are just as important to analyse and use as quantitative data collected on travel behaviours and local populations. Taking a thematic approach to analysis[19] should help, looking for mentions of themes like road dangers faced by cyclists, inadequate connections with buses, and the cost of public transport. With each theme, scrutinise what people say are the main issues and opportunities and start to focus in on the key recurring points.

Bear in mind too that, in maintaining local communications, you will want to be able to show how your STP responds to what the evidence, and local people, have told you: 'you said, we did'.

The following sections highlight potential areas of activity that may arise from your STP data, and the type of actions you may be able to take.

II. Walking

Walking routes to and from stations need to be convenient, safe and pleasant for people to enjoy. When designed with directness and legibility in mind, it maximises people's willingness to use them. More than one-fifth of UK households do not own a car,[20] so walking to the station, or to connect with public transport, is the main option for many, particularly in more urban areas.

There are a myriad of reasons for encouraging people to make more journeys on foot.[21] It improves health, physical and mental wellbeing, and is the cheapest, most environmentally-friendly and inclusive of all travel modes. Making a short journey on foot, e.g. under 25 minutes, can be, given the right environment, just as convenient as hopping into a car, while boosting health, avoiding the stress of parking and congestion, and reducing emissions.

Anyone can be impacted by poor walking environments, and they create particular problems for groups such as older people, parents, and those with disabilities. From your research and analysis of the area and people's views, you should be able to identify and assess the 'walkability' of the area around the station, and key walking routes connecting it with origins and destinations. Look at:

- how safe, easy, direct and attractive are the walks? Are there pavements or traffic-free paths and spaces, and do they feel safe and pleasant, away from fast-moving traffic and fumes? Are they well-maintained, litter-free, well-lit, gritted in winter? Are there crossings in the right places and do any lights change quickly?
- is there enough space for pedestrians, e.g. are pavements and paths wide enough, including for those with children and mobility impairments? Is there any conflict with cars or bicycles?
- is the area immediately outside the station welcoming and well-designed for people on foot, prioritising their needs over vehicles?
- is the walking route obvious, with directions and transport connections (and timetables) clearly signposted? How easy is it to get in and out and through the station on foot?
- are there traffic calming, crossings, 20mph limits or other road safety measures in place to protect people on foot?

Grindleford Station

Potential 'quick wins':

- produce and erect maps to signpost people to key local destinations;
- produce posters/leaflets showing routes to and from the station (print and online);
- remove any temporary obstructions and/or litter from paths and run regular tidy-up sessions, e.g. once a month;
- host an event or training at the station to promote walking (see advice from Living Streets);[22]
- produce a walkability audit with local schools, promoting access for children/families and generating creative ideas you might otherwise miss. This could be done via an Insta/Photowalk, with pupils sharing their views through a selection of pictures.

Potential medium to longer-term solutions:

- work with the local authority towards 20mph limits, traffic calming, and other road safety measures in the locality and on key routes;
- redesign the area outside the station to prioritise and welcome people on foot and bike;
- add lighting or remove graffiti;
- install or improve pavements or other traffic-free walking routes, e.g. through new paths, widening, new surfaces, tactile paving, dropped kerbs, and crossings;
- ensure all walking routes to and from the station comply with The Equality Act;[23]
- develop ongoing work with local schools/colleges/ community groups to improve confidence, skills and awareness about walking and cycling;
- publicise any improvements to station access on the National Rail website.

Note that many measures to support walking also (or can also) support cycling, so consider how both methods of active and sustainable travel might be enhanced together.

For advice on best practice in walkability, visit **www.livingstreets.org.uk/products-and-services/our-services**. You can access their Bus Stop Walkability Audit here **www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/4596/hs101-ls-bus-connectivity-toolkit_08.pdf**, which includes templates for walking route, bus stop, and travel interchange audits.

To access another walking audit tool, used in the development of Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plans, go to **http://bit.ly/STPlcwip**.

You can also consult the following guides from the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation **www.ciht.org.uk/media/4465/planning_for_walking_-_long_-_april_2015.pdf** **www.ciht.org.uk/media/4460/ciht_-_designing_for_walking_document_v2_singles.pdf**.

Walking environments – 'The five Cs'[24]

1. Connected – Walking routes should connect areas to key 'attractors' such as public transport stops, schools, work, and leisure destinations. Routes should connect at a local and district level, forming a comprehensive network.

2. Convivial – Walking routes and public spaces should be pleasant to use, allowing social interaction between people, including other road users. They should be safe and inviting, with diversity of activity and continuous interest at ground-floor level.

3. Conspicuous – Routes should be clear and easy to find your way around, if necessary with the help of signposting and waymarking.

4. Comfortable – Walking should be enjoyed through high-quality pavement surfaces, attractive landscape design and architecture, and as much freedom as possible from the noise and fumes and harassment arising from proximity to motor traffic. Opportunities for rest and shelter should be provided.

5. Convenient – Routes should be direct, and designed for the convenience of those on foot, not vehicles. This should apply to all users, including those whose mobility is impaired. Road crossing opportunities should be provided as of right, located in relation to desire lines.

Signage near Huddersfield Station

Many community rail groups are actively involved in the promotion of walking, often as a leisure or recreation opportunity, for example promoting tourism routes and trails, circular walks from stations, or running guided walks. Some have also developed interventions to benefit both visitors and local residents alike, enabling wider access to and awareness of walking as part of a healthy lifestyle, or as part of everyday travel behaviour. Examples can be found at **www.communityrail.org.uk/resources-ideas/case-studies**.

Case study:

Kent Community Rail Partnership Smarter Journeys and Smarter Travel Challenge

The Kent Community Rail Partnership coordinates and delivers 'Smarter Journeys', a schools programme which enables and encourages young people to make more journeys by walking, cycling and public transport. The programme supports Year 5/6 pupils preparing for the transition to secondary school, providing them with skills, awareness and confidence. Pupils take part in activities, mainly extra-curricular, over a year, including a free train ride and station visit, cycle training, the chance to take part in national cycling and walking competitions, rail safety lessons, and street and station surveys and travel planning work.

The Schools Smarter Travel Challenge is an initiative for Year 6 pupils taking part in induction days at their chosen secondary school. They are challenged to plan their journeys to the new school using Kent County Council's kentconnected.org site, alongside information from Traveline, Cycle Streets, Google maps, Southeastern and National Rail Enquiries. At the end of the challenge, pupils and parents receive a Travel to School Guide, with information also provided at transition parents evenings.

Case study:

Hoveton & Wroxham Station

The Bittern Line Community Rail Partnership worked to improve signage at Hoveton & Wroxham Station, a gateway to the Norfolk Broads, in a bid to support the local tourist economy and increase use of rural walking and cycle routes, to promote healthier lifestyles.

Working with Greater Anglia and local volunteers from the station adoption group, the partnership was keen to add extra signage showing visitors where they could access pathways to attractions such as The Three Rivers Way and the Bure Valley Railway.

However, the group were also keen that the signs promoted everyday walking to and from the station, by marking out pathways to Hoveton village centre, local amenities, and basic facilities such as public toilets. The signs were part of a series of improvements for regular passengers also including real-time information screens, maps and new ticket machines.

III. Cycling

Although around 60% of the UK population live within a 15-minute cycle ride of a station, less than 5% of all rail journeys involve combining cycling and trains. Since 2010, however, rail journeys involving bicycles being parked at stations have increased by 75%, suggesting that many people are willing to take up cycling if facilities are provided.[25]

As with walking, there are many benefits from cycling, even involving just short trips. It improves physical health, mental wellbeing, and is a sociable, green and inclusive travel mode. It can also offer greater reliability and more favourable journey times than driving, particularly during congested peak-time travel periods.

Encouraging cycle-rail travel can also open up new markets for the railways. Cyclists can travel up to four times as far as a pedestrian in the same time, so the catchment area is up to 16 times larger.[26] However, many people are put off cycling, and in particular using cycling as part of a commute, by fears for their safety, bad driving, and a lack of facilities and infrastructure.[27]

Similar to walking, cycle routes to and from stations need to be safe, direct and convenient, minimising delays or conflicts with traffic. Particular consideration should be given to the last half mile around the station which is often the most difficult part of the journey. From your knowledge of the local area, and data from audits and engagement, assess the current level of cycle-rail use and identify barriers to access. Look at:

- are there dedicated, safe traffic-free cycle paths (the preference) or, failing that, on-road cycle lanes? Do they keep cyclists away from fast traffic and fumes?
- how attractive and direct are these routes? Are they safe, flat, well-maintained, litter-free, well-lit etc?
- are there any points of conflict with traffic or pedestrians, e.g. junctions, crossings, station entrances/exits?
- is the route legible, with directions and transport connections clearly signposted? Is the area around the station welcoming for cyclists?
- are there suitable cycle parking facilities at the station? How easy is it to get in and out and through the station with a bike, especially to access cycle parking?
- could you connect to existing cycle networks? The National Cycle Network passes within a mile of over 1,200 stations across Britain and is being extended and improved.[28]

Cycle-rail

Potential 'quick wins':

- produce and display cycle maps to signpost riders to key local destinations (print and online);
- remove any temporary obstructions and litter from cycle paths;
- host an event or training at the station to promote cycling, e.g. a cycling roadshow with Sustrans;[29]
- provide, relocate, or improve cycle parking, making it more accessible and appealing;
- ask a local cycling group to conduct cycle audits to and from the station, such as using 'helmet cams' providing images of any problems or barriers to access;
- speak to any major local employers about Bike2Work (**www.bike2workscheme.co.uk/**), which could encourage cycle commuting to and from stations.

Potential medium to longer-term solutions:

- introduce a secure cycle storage facility, e.g. lockers, CCTV;
- create, extend and join up with traffic-free cycle paths;
- work with the local authority to improve on-road routes and safety, introducing traffic calming, 20mph limits and giving cyclists priority at junctions and crossings;
- consider some form of cycle hire/bike maintenance facility at the station itself;
- consider ongoing work with local schools/colleges/community groups to improve confidence, skills and awareness about walking and cycling;
- if appropriate, work with your train operator and the BTP to become accredited under the government's Secure Stations Scheme[30], helping to allay any fears over the security of cycle parking, as well as improving overall safety for rail users.

For advice on best practice in cycle planning, visit **https://www.sustrans.org.uk/**, where you can access resources including their design guide for traffic-free routes and greenways **https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/infrastructure/sustrans-traffic-free-routes-and-greenways-design-guide/**.

You should also consider Rail Delivery Group's Cycle Rail Toolkit **https://www.raildeliverygroup.com/compo-nent/arkhive/?task=file.download&id=469762597** and advice from the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation **https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/4461/ciht_-_plan-ning_for_cycling_proof_v2_singles.pdf**.

Expert comment:

Cycle-rail integration – Sustrans

- routes to stations should be well-signed with distances and journey times clearly displayed;

- routes should use quiet, local, traffic-calmed roads or, if using or crossing major roads is unavoidable, have segregated cycle lanes or shared paths which ensure cyclists are not placed in conflict with vehicles or squeezed into narrow corridors alongside traffic;

- safe, direct and convenient crossings of any junctions or roundabouts are important, and given that the majority of usage is likely to be for daily commuting, traffic-free paths should be at least three metres wide, have a sealed surface, and be well-lit to ensure they can be used at peak times all-year round;

- station forecourts should observe a hierarchy of provision which prioritises in order – 1. pedestrians. 2. cyclists. 3. buses. 4. taxis. 5. private vehicles;

- shared-use paths should feature drop kerbs for cyclists to access them without dismounting or "bumping up", and any gates/barriers on to platforms should be wide enough to accommodate bicycles;

- any bridges should ideally have ramps with a suitable gradient or, as a minimum, have wheeling channels which allow easy access for bicycles;

- the amount and quality of cycle parking needs to keep pace with the rapid growth in cycling, ensuring it is secure, covered, well-lit and well-sited. It should be determined by future demand rather than present use, as a lack of facilities may suppress demand, and should be easy to see and conveniently located, as close to station entrances as possible.

As with walking, many community rail and other voluntary groups are actively involved in promoting cycling. Projects include guided rides and active travel awareness, and there are a growing number of stations that now house cycle hire or repair facilities, some run as social enterprises. Initiatives also exist to promote regular cycling, such as with schools and workplaces.

There are undoubtedly, however, more opportunities to link cycling to rail, and cycling groups are active in many local communities. Local cycling groups should be engaged at all levels of the STP process, helping to draw up plans and assist in the ongoing delivery of any cycling-related projects.

Case study:

Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership - Bikeability on the Poacher Line

On the Poacher Line in Lincolnshire, the community rail partnership worked with local schools using the government-recognised cycling training 'Bikeability'[31] to promote active, bi-modal travel.

Supported by Sustrans, the programme included training on how to be comfortable, confident and safe in the saddle and helped each student to create a personal travel plan of routes to school, how to ride into and secure a bike at the station, and how to interpret information screens.

This collaboration promoted a healthy, low-cost, sociable and often-quicker way to get to school. By successfully embedding sustainable travel into schemes of work, one academy saw a 1,800% increase in the number of students regularly cycling to school, while one primary school, which also adopted its local station and garden, found that the number of pupils regularly cycling to school rose to 40%.

Case study:

West Midlands Trains and The University of Worcester – Stack Rack Bicycles

West Midlands Trains are running a pilot project with The University of Worcester to increase the number of staff and students using cycle-rail to access the site. Stack Rack Bicycles allow passengers to use bicycles connected to the station as part of their integrated journey to or from work or study.

Funded by the train operator, daily or occasional rail commuters using Worcester Foregate Station can pre-book a bicycle up to ten days ahead. This allows travellers to buy a weekly train season ticket in the knowledge there will be a bicycle available, easing local traffic congestion and parking issues. The plan is to have 12 bikes available at the station, with docking racks at various sites across the university and other workplaces for locking the bike during the day.

The project has created an effective 'last mile' bike link for the 1.5-mile journey between the station and university campuses, and has now been offered to the wider commuter market. Initial feedback has demonstrated that some Stack Rack customers are using the service five days a week as an integral part of their journey.

IV. Public and community transport

Experience from pilot STPs[32] found that if a regular, reliable bus service connects with rail, supported by accurate timetable information and interchange provision, rail passengers are willing to use it.

While providing a new service via a commercial operator requires a strong business case, there may be the potential for shorter journeys, e.g. shuttle runs to and from stations, to be performed by community transport operators – typically charities or voluntary non-for-profit groups – therefore expanding their market. This might be done by 'dial-a-ride' on-demand schemes, or regular scheduled services, e.g. in peak commuting times. Consider what community transport operators there are already locally and whether anything new could be set up.

Another common scenario is that an existing bus service runs near the station, but doesn't align with rail service timetables, is infrequent, or doesn't cater for early morning and evening passengers. Your STP could highlight the benefits of how bus and rail can complement each other in multi-modal travel, if services are extended or revisited to provide combined, seamless journeys. Clearly, in these cases, involvement of both rail and bus operators and local transport authorities is key.

When developing your STP, investigate the bus routes that are realistically serving the station, timetabling, and facilities and information for passengers, trying to identify any issues and barriers. If there are timetables gaps or misalignments, talk to operators about what is preventing those from being resolved? Can the STP help this process?

Some things you might look for:

- how many routes serve the station, stopping either at the station or within a reasonable walking distance, and how regularly do they operate, and how late and early?
- what community transport operators are there in the vicinity, and are there gaps that could be filled by them?
- are there route maps and bus timetables on display at the station?
- are there waiting facilities, e.g. bus shelters, and are they of sufficient size/quality?
- does the station forecourt (if one exists) or surrounding area complement bus or community transport access?

Potential 'quick wins':

- provide/improve bus information and timetables at stations and rail timetables at bus stops;
- provide/improve wayfinding signage linking the station to nearby bus stops;
- improve bus waiting provision, e.g. a shelter and seating;
- provide information on existing community transport schemes or discuss with operators about connecting to the station.

Potential medium to longer-term solutions:

- work with commercial bus operators on changes including re-routing services to serve the station, changing timetables to align with train connections and developing integrated ticketing or promotions;
- install real-time bus travel information at bus stops and on platforms. Every bus stop and railway station has a unique webpage that can be accessed via the Google Maps app;
- develop quality pedestrian routes between stations and bus stops;
- work with local community transport providers to support/run services directly linked to rail.

Expert comment:

Working with community transport – The Community Transport Association

"Many community transport operators will experience taking passengers to their local train station, but it is more likely that they help people who would rarely or never consider rail travel. Through working with community transport the rail network can be made more accessible and inclusive for people who currently experience barriers to access. As consumer expectations shift towards 'turn up and go' rail services, community transport could be integral to supporting good interchange for potentially vulnerable passengers.

Community bus services have their routes and timetables registered with the traffic commissioner and are available to members of the general public. Unlike commercial bus operators, however, they have to be non-profit making and can have a degree of flexibility in the route they follow. This means they can meet a much greater variety of needs, especially for vulnerable and isolated people and communities where bus services have been cut."

By undertaking meaningful engagement with commercial and community bus operators, STPs have the potential to achieve improved links between rail, bus, and other forms of public and community transport. Effective partnerships could lead to routes being reviewed and altered to improve connectivity and station and rail access, particularly if demand for such changes are shown via your data analysis. **However, ACoRP is conscious that such changes can often face difficulties or barriers, and is keen to better understand these and advise on potential solutions.**

For further advice on this issue, you can contact ACoRP, the Community Transport Association (**ctauk.org/find-ct-provider/**), the Journey Solutions Partnership (**www.journeysolutions.com/**), RailFuture's regional branches (**www.railfuture.org.uk/Railfuture+near+you**) or Campaign for Better Transport (**bettertransport.org.uk/**).

Case study:

East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership - Combined rail and bus travel to Aldeburgh

The East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership worked with train operator Greater Anglia and commercial bus company First Eastern Counties to develop a through ticket combining rail and bus travel to the seaside town of Aldeburgh.

The partnership wanted to promote sustainable travel and tourism to the Suffolk coast, but recognised that for any area not physically connected to the rail network, travel via public transport could prove problematic with buses and rail tickets having to be purchased separately.

The ticket, which could be purchased online or on the trains, made the journey much easier and convenient. The key was a successful partnership with the bus operator, which saw First's hourly bus service re-timed to allow better connections to and from the East Suffolk Railway Line at Saxmundham Station.

The project followed a similar community rail initiative which introduced integrated rail and bus tickets to and from Southwold, connecting the resort with the railway at Halesworth Station.

Case study:

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership – 'South Downs Rambler' bus

The 'South Downs Rambler' is a specially-commissioned bus service running from Winchester to Petersfield stations in Hampshire. It is funded by the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership and CrossCountry, operated by the commercial operator Bluestar.

Running on Sundays and Bank Holidays between July and September, the bus takes a rural route between the two stations, offering stunning views of the South Downs. Stops include village pubs and tourist attractions.

It gives visitors the chance to explore the South Downs via relaxed and sustainable transport, and offers excellent bus and rail connections, with concessionary fares and group travel options. The route, popular with summer season travellers, has been hailed by CrossCountry as a "perfect example" of how community rail can promote and facilitate sustainable, joined-up bus and rail travel.

V. Shared travel

Private car use is an unsustainable form of travel, and the main aim of travel planning and STPs is to create a shift towards more sustainable modes. A station where the immediate surroundings are dominated by cars and where access for private vehicles is prioritised over active travel and public transport will not encourage sustainability.

Car parking at stations is often busy and problematic, so an STP can consider whether that space is being used as effectively as possible, especially whether multi-modal provision such as bicycle parking, shared mobility or shared transport schemes can be accommodated. In rural areas in particular, making a short car connection to a station is more sustainable than driving an entire journey to major towns or workplaces, so your STP can also consider how single occupancy car use can be minimised on such journeys.

Shared travel and mobility hubs are sites designed to accommodate and promote multi-modal trips, offering seamless switches between different forms of transport such as active travel, public transport, and shared services.[33] By allowing integration of different travel modes, e.g. shared bike use and/or trip-sharing schemes, sustainable 'first and last mile' connections can be created, encouraging a reduction in personal car use.

Look out for:
- what is the overall car parking capacity at the station, and how busy is it at different times in terms of parking spaces, taxis and drop-off points?
- does the design of the car park and drop-off points hinder access for those on foot, bicycle or bus, and can this be addressed to give greater priority to these modes? Is there any under/unused space at the station that can be used for shared mobility facilities?
- is on-street parking or cars accessing the station creating problems in the area?
- is there any dedicated parking/charging for trip-sharing, car clubs or electric vehicles?
- is the area for passenger drop-off big enough and conveniently placed?
- is there any promotion of lift-sharing or shared mobility schemes linked to the station or local area?

Potential 'quick wins':
- promote trip-sharing initiatives linked to the station and other key local sites/workplaces;
- offer parking spaces purely for trip-sharing or car clubs, identified by a pass or token scheme;
- promote awareness of public/community transport and active travel as easier/healthier /more environmentally-friendly to those currently driving and parking at the station.

Potential medium to longer-term solutions:

- ask the train operator to consider the introduction or increase of parking charges, with the revenue used to improve facilities for those using active or sustainable travel;
- provide electric vehicles/bike charging points or club/hire schemes;
- provide facilities for a shared bike scheme to combine with other travel modes;
- redesign the layout of the station surroundings, forecourt and car park to make maximum use of space and prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and bus users.

Expert comment:

Mobility hubs – CoMoUK, charity for public benefit of shared mobility

"Let's think of stations as hubs which have a vital role to play in their areas, whether people are using rail services or not. Let's also boost the inclusion of shared transport – which I am delighted to say some plans include already – such as car clubs or shared bikes as ways that people can and should travel onwards, rather than only the totally valid routes of active travel or public transport.

If plans can help bring those threads of public, shared and active travel together then that has to be so welcome given our climate emergency and the desire for better places and cleaner air understandably held by so many.

Part of our work is to look at the neglected infrastructure side of shared travel, and to help the design and build of mobility hubs where shared, public and active travel can come together in ways that improve place and air, as well as helping tip the scales away from the lightly occupied private car.

In time we hope there will be a network of such places. As there already is a network of rail stations, they are a very natural place to start with such ideas. Seen this way, rail stations can be engines of mobility change beyond simply attracting people to rail."

STPs can play an immediate role in reducing car journeys and miles, where rail becomes the dominant form of travel and the cornerstone of sustainable and healthy end-to-end journeys. For example, West Midlands Rail Executive have designed three new stations to be built on the Camp Hill Line in South Birmingham that do not include car parks, but instead prioritise provision for sustainable travel modes, bus stops and passenger drop-off.

Your plans need to address people's motivations behind driving and strive to offer alternatives that combine rail with other modes as every-day, convenient and environmentally-friendly choices.

For more information on shared transport options, visit **como.org.uk/**, and their guide on creating effective multi-modal mobility travel hubs **como.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Mobility-Hub-Guide-241019-final.pdf**.

Cycle storage in Birmingham

The lift-share scheme at Tring Station

Case study:

Enterprise Car Club – Partnership with LNER

Enterprise Car Club (ECC) provides vehicles for its 90,000 members within 500 metres of 181 stations across the UK rail network, and is continuing to grow its capacity at or near station sites.

The company is involved in a partnership with the train operator LNER, which involves cross-promotion of car club and rail travel to complete door-to-door journeys, with vehicles located for use at 12 LNER-run mainline stations including in Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, and London.

Prior to joining the scheme, one car club user who lives in Islington in North London regularly hired a car to drive to Doncaster to visit family there. Since ECC offered a vehicle at Doncaster Station in March 2017, he has made more than 50 return journeys from London to Doncaster by train, using the ECC car for a few hours while in Yorkshire to see his elderly relatives. This has resulted in reduced emissions from car use, as well as additional revenue for the train company.

In a survey of its members, Enterprise found evidence of the ECC scheme increasing rail use and providing a favourable option for final mile mobility. 69% of drivers who used vehicles at or near stations said they regularly (quarterly or more) combined rail travel and ECC use to complete their journeys, with drivers saving an average of 71 road miles per long-distance trip.

Case study:

Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership - Gilsland electric car scheme

Gilsland is a village on the Tyne Valley Line, straddling the counties of Cumbria and Northumberland. Its station closed in 1967, and since then, residents have suffered from dwindling public transport links, with bus services bypassing the village and its neighbouring settlements.

Convinced of its tourism potential, locals established the Campaign to Open Gilsland Station group, but realised that the re-opening was a long-term and expensive capital project. To boost local transport options in the meantime, GoGilsland and the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership joined forces to fund the purchase of a hybrid electric car for use as a new community resource.

Capable of carrying four passengers and luggage, the aim was to connect both local residents and tourists visiting the World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall and Gilsland to the nearest railway stations at Haltwhistle and Brampton.

Project sponsors include Northumberland National Park, The Joicey Trust, Gilsland Church of England School, the National Lottery and CrossCountry. A number of volunteers have also been recruited and trained to drive the vehicle.

All partners involved state it has succeeded in making Gilsland more accessible to visitors, delivering a range of social and economic benefits to the area.

Example STP structure

Introduction
- What is the rationale behind the STP? What is going on now?
- Outline the location, context and key issues and opportunities

Vision, aims and objectives
- Give a headline statement summing up your long-term vision for how the station will connect with other sustainable travel modes and serve the community
- Outline a clear set of broad aims (e.g. 3 to 6) that will move you towards your vision, with specific and more immediate objectives stating how you'll achieve these aims

Partners
- Who are you working with? Sum up how you brought these partners together
- How will you maintain these partnerships, and involve others?

Evidence base
- What did existing data tell you?
- What more did you need to find out, and how did you do this?

Research conducted
- What did you find out? What key themes emerged from the new data?
- What did your research and local engagement suggest is needed to promote and enable sustainable travel?

Community engagement
- How did you engage the community? Who did you speak to, and what did they say? What do local people want and need?
- How will you ensure effective and ongoing community engagement? How will community ideas continue to feed in to project delivery?

Action plan
- Set out planned actions, timescales and responsibilities. How will they be funded? How will the process remain community-led?
- Ensure each action is based on your research and community engagement, and supports your vision, aims and objectives

Monitoring and evaluation
- How will you and your partners ensure the plan is being delivered well and kept on track? How will you deal with any problems or delays?
- When and how will you evaluate success and revise the plan if needed? How will you keep all partners and the community engaged and informed?

I. Forming your action plan

With an evidence base in place and potential project areas identified, holding a second workshop – similar to your introductory or 'kick-off' meeting – can provide a platform to share findings and re-connect with, or reach out to new, partners. This is a prime opportunity to (re-)establish your main aims and objectives, present and assess recommendations for solving issues, and encourage people to work together towards focused, shared objectives, informed by (ongoing) community engagement.

When agreeing actions to include in your plan, be bold and ambitious, but remember you may need to manage expectations as to what can be achieved, how, when, and who by. **Remember that working with the rail industry takes time, and if you are considering changes within the station, this will need to be agreed with the appropriate train operator and Network Rail.** If you are looking at changes in the wider area, the local authority will need to be engaged and may need to lead on delivery.

Ensure your actions are well-defined, with both:

- **agreed 'quick-wins' that can be progressed immediately** to build momentum;
- **potential longer-term solutions, which may take further working out** between partners and further local engagement.

You should ensure that every action rests on your evidence base, and supports your STP's headline vision, aims and objectives, which look to ensure everyone involved is heading in the same direction. You may choose to quantify your objectives, e.g. increasing numbers walking and cycling to the station and reducing car use, using baseline data to show your starting point.

Your action plan is the key project management tool in your STP, and you need a way of monitoring progress and reporting back to partners and the community. How you will do this should also be explained in the STP. To help you assess progress, your actions need to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-based).

Your action plan should include, for each action:

- a description;
- who is responsible for coordination and delivery;
- a planned timescale for delivery;
- links to other actions and projects;
- monitoring measures;
- funding sources.

So, for example:

Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Links	Metrics	Funding
Create five dedicated parking bays for a shared car transport scheme, and set up promotional channels	Travel plan coordinator, project working group	Within six months of launch of STP	Existing train operator work to improve station parking facilities	Levels of use of new bays, feedback from station users	Train operator community fund / ACoRP grant
Engage two local schools in an active and sustainable travel awareness programme	Local authority active travel officer, project working group	To start within a year of launch, and be ongoing	Promotion of active travel, redevelopment of paths/walkways serving the station	Number of children engaged, feedback from children and teachers, levels of walking and cycling among pupils	Extension of existing local authority programme

Expert comment:

STP aims

"You need to make sure you have short, medium, and long-term aspirations. For example, in the short-term it might be about improving lighting and putting cycle parking in at the station, medium-term maybe changing the car parking protocol, and long-term maybe completely re-developing a station forecourt, which might take ten years.

You need to know what your local authority's aspirations are, what are they doing in terms of active travel and what are their ideas for increasing access to public transport."

Nick Farthing, Chair, Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

West Midlands Trains' Learn Shop event

II. Managing and monitoring the plan

You need to think about who will take responsibility for delivery of different actions and projects. Will you have dedicated working groups? How can you ensure that you communicate and share progress in a way that is inclusive and coordinated? How do you go from ideas to delivery?

Evaluation of pilot STPs found that a two-tier approach was the most appropriate way of managing plans, with a steering group taking the overall lead – overseeing the main STP action plan, setting top level aims and objectives, coordinating funding, resources, and expertise – with smaller working groups managing delivery of individual projects and actions.

To maintain ongoing community engagement, consider wider community membership of project and steering groups, including local groups and volunteers whose expertise could be invaluable on an ongoing basis, e.g. local walking/cycling groups. Think about how you can draw on their skills and maintain their interest and involvement. Also consider how your working groups can maintain dialogue with the wider community, such as through follow-up workshops and surveys, and ongoing communications that regularly ask for feedback and input.

The key is to create a structure where everyone is clear on roles and responsibilities, with regular updates provided. Smaller project working groups might decide to meet monthly while getting new projects set up, with larger committees/steering groups meeting twice a year. It is vital to establish regular communication channels for all STP partners, and the community, to maintain awareness and highlight progress made. This could be done via an STP e-mail bulletin, station-specific web pages or noticeboards, and/or an STP account on social media, e.g. a dedicated Facebook page to encourage engagement and interaction, including with hard-to-reach groups or individuals.

While you may want to create your whole STP as a well-designed PDF document that you can share online, you also need to have the action plan in a 'live' format to allow regular review, updating and reporting. This might be shared across the different working groups, allowing monitoring to be project-based, but reporting in to the main steering group when it meets. Effective monitoring will allow you to provide assessment updates on aims and objectives, make any changes to the action plan if necessary, and give robust evidence of success.

To see a list of potential metrics to help evaluate the success of STP action plans, go to **http://bit.ly/STPmmap**.

III. Finished plans - some examples

Each community STP will be unique, driven by the station(s) it covers and engagement with local communities. However, in terms of how to structure the STP document, which you should make available to partners and the public both online and in print, there is good practice that can applied regardless of size and scope. You could choose to refer to the diagram at the start of this section, or use aspects of the following case studies and examples, all of which may include elements that could be applied to your STP.

Timetables in Great Yarmouth.
Credit: Norfolk County Council

Case study:

West Midlands Stations Alliance

West Midlands Station Alliance describe 'Stations as Places' as a "station travel plan plus" model that allows local stakeholders and developers to talk about a common agenda for the station, also helping to futureproof station travel plans for the impact of any major housing and commercial growth. To find out more about the programme, e-mail **accessibility@wmtrains.co.uk**.

To view a template showing the structure of 'Stations as Places' STPs, go to **http://bit.ly/STAPtcvii**.

A presentation regarding an alternative way of structuring and presenting your STP can be viewed at **http://bit.ly/STPout**.

Various examples of STPs and STP-related documents involving community rail and community groups, some of which date back to the pilot STP programme, can also be found below:

- Pollokshaws West STP **http://bit.ly/polloSTP**
- Leighton Buzzard STP **http://bit.ly/leibuzSTP**
- Lydney STP **http://bit.ly/LydneySTP**
- Chandlers Ford STP **http://bit.ly/chaforSTP**
- Stroud – Town Council STP feasibility study **http://bit.ly/stroudSTP**

I. Delivering change

Having identified initial options for STP projects and activities, you need to consider how you can make these happen. Your STP, and its action plan, can be used to attract support from partners, and to attempt to gain funding.

While projects may be driven by working groups, ongoing partnership work is key. These groups will need to (continually) ask who they need to work with to get things done. There are unlikely to be any actions that can or should be done alone. To engage and sustain interest from key players, use the evidence in your STP, built on community engagement, to make your case for change.

Delivering on your STP is likely to be a long-term endeavour. It might take years to reach your goals, and so momentum and support will need to be sustained over time. As noted above, smaller, 'quick win' initiatives can be used and promoted to aid this, but there will also need to be a sense of progress towards wider, long-term impact.

An annual progress report and associated communication campaign, including highlighting what's next, may help with this.

As well as empowering communities through involvement, STPs also provide a basis to resource and tailor investment opportunities at stations. Your STP turns local views, feelings and concerns into a consolidated plan that local authorities, rail industry partners and others can rely on and recognise as having community support. Having the plan published, endorsed and easy-to-find is key to giving it a sense of 'permanence' that makes it more likely for partners to take notice and lend support.

The launch of Maryport Station's new transport hub

II. Funding

As part of developing and delivering your plan, it is vital to look at the costs of implementation and where funding will come from.

STPs have proved valuable in demonstrating partnership working and thereby securing funding from a variety of sources, including from the rail industry and national and local government. The existence of an STP can also help to justify a higher priority for funding over an independently promoted project.[34]

Look at all possible avenues of local and national funding, exploring the following:

- speak to your train operator – some have specific funding pots for community rail, community engagement or station enhancements that communities can apply to;
- speak to ACoRP to see whether your group could be eligible for grant funding for community rail or visit **communityrail.org.uk/resources-ideas/funding-advice/funding-available-acorp/**;
- contact your local authority, for example via community development officers, transport officers, or local area support teams. Pots of money may still be available for voluntary and community initiatives, or schemes that deliver transport or regeneration benefits;
- contact your town or parish council: they may have a small grants budget to support local causes;
- speak to your local authority planning department about Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and other potential financial contributions from commercial/residential developers;
- contact major local employers who may have sponsorship schemes for community-based projects, and be able to offer in-kind help;
- if you have one, get in touch with your local Business Improvement District (BID), who are keen to develop and promote local stations as attractive gateways to communities;
- contact your Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP);
- check out local charitable foundations and trusts, and major supporters of voluntary groups such as The National Lottery;
- look at specific active travel funding pots, e.g. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, Bikeability, Access Fund programmes, Walk to School projects, Cycle Rail Fund;
- explore regional government funding, e.g. Department for Health;
- contact any local environmental trusts/charities;
- think about crowdfunding – this may be relevant and attract support given the community nature and appeal of the type of STP projects you are proposing.

Searching for funding streams will be an ongoing process, so ensure that all members of your steering and working groups are informed about STP projects and financial requirements. By acting as ambassadors for the STP they may be able to find and pursue funding opportunities when networking in different environments.

Constantly think about how your STP can tackle local issues and link with other transport or sustainability-related projects. Look for all available resources, and consider how best you can use and connect with them to make things happen.

III. Quick wins

Much of the STP plan-making process is about developing a more collaborative way of working and initiating a cultural change locally, but having some 'quick wins' will be vital to sustain interest locally and to build momentum and morale. They can be low-cost, achievable, and add impetus. Success in such projects should help get and keep people engaged, kick-starting medium and long-term aims. Some schemes may even be free wins that don't require any infrastructure changes, but simply encourage more people to plan journeys to and from the station by more sustainable means.

Alongside the numerous quick wins relating to specific modes of travel alluded to earlier in this guide, you could also consider:

- **Travel planning-themed events** – set up information stands and give onward travel support as part of a campaign or at station open days. You could organise a small-scale travel fair, speaking to passengers to promote sustainable and active travel, combined with walking/cycling activities with groups such as Sustrans and Living Streets. You might choose to represent the station or the STP group at events away from the station. You could also meet with developers of any new housing nearby to get information in 'new home packs';

- **Locality guides** – develop a map of the area to showcase active travel and public/community transport routes and links. Include local tourism and heritage sites, walks, or other attractions that are accessible from the station. This could be displayed at the station, online, and distributed by volunteers at busy times or at events. It might also include aspects where improvements are intended as part of the STP;

- **Marketing/communications campaigns** - create a promotional campaign promoting active and sustainable travel, including a press release for local media. Based around a message such as 'walking or cycling for health', or 'we're fighting the climate emergency' could attract public attention and support. Work with local schools to get pupils to design posters displaying and reinforcing the key message, making the campaign relatable to a wider audience. Poster board sites could be supplied by the train operator or locally sponsored;

- **Clean-up days** – involve local volunteers, e.g. station adopters, other community groups, in mobilising a clean-up around the station. Re-awakening neglected access routes or making paths more pleasant can encourage their use. Ensure you have permission from the train operator or Network Rail and local authority if relevant;

- **Door-to-door travel confidence** – many community rail groups are already working with groups, often young people or marginalised groups, to improve their confidence or safety using the railways. Consider how sustainable travel can be integrated further into such schemes, and groups engaged in your research to improve the station's connections;

- **Volunteer engagement** – being involved in the STP process as a volunteer has an array of benefits, from developing friendships and contacts to learning new skills. The potential workstreams are diverse, allowing community STPs to involve people with wide-ranging interests, backgrounds and experience. In some community rail partnerships, volunteers have been trained as 'travel champions', working to inspire people to make more active and sustainable journeys every day;

- **Identify and recruit 'station neighbours'** – a station neighbour is a local organisation that is willing to provide a helping hand for people using nearby railway stations. They are available voluntarily for people travelling by rail who may need to use nearby facilities or seek a place of refuge if they are feeling vulnerable or in need of assistance. The concept supports sustainable travel by enhancing 'first and last mile' travel arrangements, improving the links between stations and their surrounding areas.

IV. Integrating stations into communities

Alongside the overarching aim of STPs to reduce car use and promote greener, active, sustainable travel, for community STPs, it is also about enhancing the station's role as a multi-faceted community asset, a 'station with a sense of place'. The community engagement aspect of the STP process should see the station placed at the heart of the community it serves.

Every station has a story to tell and should be somewhere a community can be proud of and feel ownership towards. Building on and developing this sense of pride and ownership can in turn feed back into an STP's aims, by helping people feel more inclined to use rail as a part of everyday sustainable travel.

Expert comment:

Station design – Design by CCD [35]

"On establishing a sense of place, for us this is about making the station relevant to the community. What are the stories about the local community that drive design and a sense of place? Is it something about history? Is it about how the local community uses local transport? Is it about local business and how they can benefit from the footfall through the station? How does the community want the station to feel to them and visitors and what does that say about them? What are the considerate touches that show, on arrival, that people have been thought about?"

An event at Preston Station

Expert comment:

Living stations – Network Rail and Arup

"There is a growing focus on health and wellbeing, with customers keen to look after themselves, making more active transport choices and demanding a journey that improves, rather than harms, their health. Customers will appreciate stations that help to improve their physical and mental wellbeing by providing high-quality and healthy spaces where they would choose to spend time.

As well as beautiful public spaces, stations can be the core of a healthy network – where cycling and walking are easy and obvious choices – part of an active journey through a natural environment. Living Stations will be expected to provide experiences like this regardless of their scale or location, always providing safe, healthy and welcoming places to meet, relax and move." [36]

Irlam Station park

Many rail industry partners are embracing the concept of 'living stations', where stations act as a catalyst for creating healthy and sustainable communities, based around their unique and distinct character.

As noted earlier, STPs can dovetail extremely well with wider community rail activity where the primary aim is to improve the appeal and benefits that the station or railway offers to local people, and build positive relationships between community and rail. Similarly, STPs can support a broad range of local community activities to support vulnerable people, improve access to opportunity, regenerate local spaces, reduce pollution, and improve local environments.

It's helpful to think about how much might be achieved by weaving the station better into the locality, and weaving local character, spirit and aspirations into the station. This can be supported through station-based volunteering, community gardening, artwork or heritage displays, and by encouraging local people to enjoy and appreciate the station, through community events, talks, tours and workshops.

By creating sites that are genuine community hubs, stations can be developed into thriving, interactive environments that provide a range of services and benefits to local people and visitors, including leisure and retail opportunities and the use of community space. For examples of projects transforming station buildings, see **https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/up-loads/2018/02/ACoRP-Community-Stations-Document-web.pdf**.

By developing stations as not only access points to the rail network, but destinations and community focal points in their own right, catering for seamless multi-modal travel that fits with what local people need, people might just be increasingly inclined to use those stations, and to access them in the most community-friendly, healthy and sustainable ways.

Stratford-upon-Avon Station. Credit: Norfolk County Council

Disclaimer

The content contained within this toolkit is for guidance only and any groups or individuals should seek appropriate advice before formalising any business arrangements.

End notes

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communityrail.org.uk

West Midlands Railway

London Northwestern Railway

Operated by West Midlands Trains