

COMMUNITY RAIL: ENCOURAGING AND ENABLING MODAL SHIFT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - ACCESS THE FULL REPORT [HERE](#)

This report highlights how community rail can support modal shift from private car use to rail, combined with other public transport, and active and shared travel. It emphasises the importance of community-led activity in partnership with rail industry, government, and other partners. It also examines the importance of modal shift to transport decarbonisation and considers how rail is prioritising and contributing to sustainability, especially as we look to 'build back better' and greener from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Why is local engagement and action important to modal shift?

- Community groups and partnerships, local councils and volunteers are well-placed to know, or find out, what communities need in terms of sustainable transport and how barriers can be overcome;
- Effective and efficient place-based solutions can be developed that are well-suited to local transport challenges, and which can gain profile, buy-in and understanding in the community;
- A sense of efficacy, pride and togetherness is created through local engagement and community-led change, aligning sustainable transport with local values and identities;
- Embracing local knowledge should enable transport strategies, services, and infrastructure improvements to be inclusive, appropriate to local needs, and most likely to spark behavioural change.

Research insights into modal shift:



How is community rail encouraging modal shift?

Partnership working

- Bringing partners together to maximise resources and expertise
- Using local knowledge/insights to inform sustainable transport improvements
- Working with or learning from other community rail partnerships and groups



Modal integration

- Delivering projects with partners to achieve integrated journeys and ticketing
- Building the case for changes and acting as a 'broker' between different stakeholders
- Spearheading improvements at/around stations to create multi-modal travel hubs



Active travel

- Creating materials to promote activities/ provide information, e.g. walking/ cycling routes
- Promoting the benefits in terms of physical and mental wellbeing
- Offering support, e.g. cycle training, for those looking to incorporate active travel into multi-modal journeys



Community engagement

- Reaching out to a broad spectrum of local people and community groups
- Using a range of engagement and data collection techniques, e.g. to understand local views, barriers and travel patterns
- Ensuring proactive, ongoing collaboration/engagement at all stages of planning and delivery



Youth engagement

- Delivering confidence-building programmes with young people
- Creating projects that develop young people's life skills and creativity
- Harnessing young people's passion for the environment and sustainable behaviours



Communications, promotions, and events

- Giving adults/children the chance to try the train and sustainable travel
- Running projects/community events that bring people into stations or onto trains for fun, sociable, or creative activities
- Promoting the benefits of rail travel via positive messaging and communications campaigns



Key findings and recommendations:

For community rail:

Think modal shift – Consider how modal shift could be enabled as part of existing initiatives, to increase impact.

Share inspiring examples – Share examples through communications to show what we're achieving together.

Normalise non-car use – Build a sense that public transport, active travel, and shared mobility is the 'natural' way to get around.

Hold up the benefits – Raise awareness of and reinforce the benefits to individuals and communities of sustainable travel.

Get armed with the facts – Use stats to show that rail is a green travel option and part of a sustainable future.

Go beyond the railway – To reach out to non/rare rail users, get out there, and go to people where they are.

Listen, enable, and empower – Work to break down barriers and address worries and unfamiliarity to enable more people to travel sustainably.

Engage young people – Work with young people, drawing on their ideas, empowering them to travel sustainably.

Be clever with communications – Use communications to promote our work, amplify key messages, and show the railway as part of the community.

Collaborate across modes and sectors – Develop partnerships to integrate rail, bus, walking, cycling, shared and community transport.

Keep up-to-date – Be aware of emerging developments and policies, locally and nationally, that you can align with and tap into.



For the rail industry and wider transport sector:

Seize the opportunity – Develop policies and communications to seize the opportunities for behaviour change provided by COVID-19.

Maximise community goodwill – Make use of and nurture the sense of community and new-found attention to our local vicinities.

Recognise community rail – Include community rail as a meaningful partner in the design and implementation of modal shift projects.

Use community rail's knowledge and networks – Utilise the good will, knowledge, and experience of those involved in the movement.

Focus on integrated travel – Always be on the lookout for opportunities to collaborate across transport modes, to make stations multi-modal mobility hubs.

Embrace new ideas – Maximise the role of rail, and community rail, in innovative projects or new technologies and approaches.

Prioritise community engagement – Recognise the importance and role of community-level activity in stimulating and maintaining behaviour change.

Listen to communities – Ensure mechanisms are in place for listening and responding to communities and supporting them to spearhead positive change.

Focus on leisure travel – Develop communications and initiatives to promote rail for both long-distance domestic tourism and local leisure journeys.

Reinvigorate public transport – Develop positive messaging around the use of rail and other forms of public transport, to rebuild confidence and positivity post-pandemic.

Promote a sustainable transport future – Look for opportunities to help people access the railway through non-car-based means, and consistently emphasise the benefits of this.



For more information, and to view the **full report**, visit communityrail.org.uk