

Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge

Response from Community Rail Network, June 2020

Prepared by Jools Townsend, chief executive, for submission to the Department for Transport

About us

The Community Rail Network is a not-for-profit organisation working across Britain to support and champion community rail: a unique and growing grassroots movement that involves communities in their railways, helping people to get the most from local lines and stations, and helping the rail industry put communities at the forefront. We support and represent 71 community rail partnerships (CRPs) and 1,000+ station friends groups, social enterprises and other local groups.

We connect those working in community rail, share good practice, and help our members to develop their impact. We provide advice, resources, training and awards. We raise awareness about community rail and feed in its insights at a strategic and policy level. We are funded by the DfT, devolved authorities, agencies and transport partners, and **we're the lead delivery partner for the DfT's Community Rail Development Strategy, which has 'sustainable and healthy travel' as one of its four pillars.**

We work with other national organisations in sustainable travel and social inclusion, to develop opportunities for collaboration, share insights and good practice. We are part of new alliance of 10 national organisations working in sustainable and inclusive transport, supporting communities and advising government and partners on achieving a more sustainable and inclusive transport future. [See our recent statement.](#) **We and our partners are keen to collaborate with and advise the Transport Decarbonisation (TDP) team.**

[About community rail and sustainability](#)

Community rail's importance to decarbonisation and multiple public policy goals is evidenced in our [Value of Community Rail](#) report. This found community railway lines consistently perform better in terms of usage, plus wide-ranging social, environmental and economic benefits being delivered, in line with the DfT's [Community Rail Development Strategy](#).

As is recognised in the DfT's strategy, community rail works to promote rail as a part of sustainable end-to-end journeys, and to improve its integration with other forms of public and active travel. Our members advise rail partners, run awareness-raising, confidence building and educational campaigns on multi-modal sustainable travel, provide local leisure travel information, run promotions, spearhead improvements at and around stations, and collaborate with bus operators, local authorities, and other local community groups and partners to help rail provide a coherent offer with buses, walking and cycling. **Find out more about our work, and our members, at communityrail.org.uk.**

[About this submission](#)

This submission draws on our extensive experience of supporting and championing community rail over two decades, and our wide-ranging understanding of activities, opportunities and challenges in community rail. We refer to qualitative and quantitative evidence we have compiled on community rail, as well as academic research related to community engagement and sustainability. See the footnotes for a selection of evidence underpinning our recommendations. We also draw on findings from an exercise we have been conducting, phone-surveying community rail partnerships and station groups to ask for their views and experiences on integrating sustainable transport. *We will feed in a full write-up of this at end of July.*

It should be noted that while our members are focused on engaging communities with local railways and stations, they also seek to connect rail with other sustainable and healthy modes, and promote rail as a part of sustainable mobility,¹ in light of the fact that railways don't work in isolation. Community rail experience therefore extends

¹ See p16-18 of Community Rail Network (2019) *Value of Community Rail*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Acorp-Value-of-Community-Rail-12019-V3.pdf>

well beyond rail, and so our response considers how communities and individuals can be helped and encouraged to make use of sustainable travel as a whole.

As stated in our initial response to the DfT's call for evidence (see appendix A), we are keen to facilitate the involvement of community rail in the development and implementation of the TDP. We have promoted the call for evidence among our members, and are now looking forward to working with the DfT on a webinar for our members to help them feed in directly. *We would also be pleased to offer further discussion, details and examples, or direct to our members delivering relevant work.*

Main recommendations

We strongly welcome the development of the TDP and consultative approach to its development, and are keen to facilitate engagement with community rail, and work with our partners in sustainable and inclusive transport, on its development and delivery. We comment in the section below in detail on the six priorities the Decarbonising Transport report sets out. We are mainly supportive of these but advise that a clearer focus is needed on priorities one and four: these can provide strong foundational aims that all decarbonisation work can rest upon, and for integrating across DfT activity. We also recommend that priority two should be reframed, to avoid undermining priority one, and that priority four gives greater emphasis to community engagement and empowerment.

These adjustments would have an enabling effect for communities, so the TDP can tap into the passion, enthusiasm and knowledge within communities to overcome the great challenges ahead and set us on the trajectory we need. These changes would also ensure the TDP provides clear and coherent leadership, and a vision of the future, which supports both decarbonisation and the levelling up agenda: showing how, by developing and integrating public, community and shared transport, alongside active travel, we will all be able to use, depend on, and enjoy a transport system that works for all our communities and our future.

Overall, we make four main recommendations for the Plan:

1. Ensure a sharp focus and positive messaging on 'making active travel and public transport the natural first choice', as the key to decarbonisation and extensive co-benefits

We have already seen our community rail members react positively to this crucial phrase in the Secretary of State's foreword, and contained in priority one, demonstrating the enabling, empowering effect it can have. This positive, aspirational framing of active transport and public transport, as modes of the future, and our primary solution, is itself critical, from our experience and as shown by behavioural and social change research.² It should be accompanied with proactive encouragement and enabling of active travel use for short journeys and combining active travel and public/shared/community transport for longer. *This framing and emphasis should be consistent throughout the TDP, and will need to be reflected across all aspects of DfT and transport sector activities, and related policy areas such as housing and development.*

However, there is currently a risk that this will be undermined by a push towards mass uptake of electric cars. The two are not compatible as priorities, especially as development of public transport and active travel has suffered for decades from priority being given to the car. A rapid shift to electric cars seems unrealistic, given affordability and other challenges, but it also would also not achieve the co-benefits that can be delivered from shifting to modes other than driving.³ Overly focusing on electric cars can also hinder progress on public transport and active travel at strategic and community levels, and pulls against the levelling up agenda, risking people being left behind. We comment further below, proposing how priority two should be reworked, to ensure consistency and contribute more constructively to decarbonisation, levelling up, and Covid-19 recovery.

² See chapter on 'promoting positivity', p16-18, for an analysis of research and community rail examples showing why positivity is valuable in promoting sustainable travel: Community Rail Network (2017) *Communicating Community Rail* <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CommunicatingCommunityRail-researchreport-2017.pdf>

³ See: Jones, S.J. (2019) 'If electric cars are the answer, what was the question?' *British Medical Bulletin*, Volume 129, Issue 1, March 2019, pp 13–23, <https://academic.oup.com/bmb/article/129/1/13/5274656>; comments from Kevin Anderson at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/26/leading-scientist-criticises-uk-over-its-climate-record>; Graham-Rowe, E., Skippon, S., Gardner, B., Abraham, C. (2011) 'Can we reduce car use and, if so, how? A review of available evidence', *Transportation Research*, Part A 45, pp.401-418

2. Recognise and prioritise the role of communities and community-led change in achieving a more sustainable and inclusive transport future

Community rail shows the difference it makes when communities are engaged and empowered in relation to local transport networks. Railway lines with community rail activity are better used, stations are better loved, and rail partners more attuned and responsive to local needs and future trends.⁴ Community engagement creates positivity and pride around sustainable transport modes: something that is invaluable (according to research⁵) if we are to promote more sustainable transport behaviours, and manage the challenges and seize the opportunities that Covid-19 has created. This is crucial in both rural and urban areas, supporting and spurring the innovative approaches and rapid transition needed across locations.

The TDP should recognise the way that community-driven change can help achieve behavioural shift,⁶ in the context of the car's embeddedness in our communities, lifestyles and identities.⁷ The opportunity to nurture community-based change may be especially ripe, and important, in the wake of Covid-19, with heightened attention to our immediate localities. This not only enables place-based approaches that recognise local needs and diversity, but also builds efficacy and ownership over transport developments, so people are more likely to be aware of, buy into and take advantage of improvements, from improved walking and cycling paths, to waiting shelters, to new Sunday services. This delivers great co-benefits, for health, wellbeing, inclusion and cohesion, as well as supporting behaviour change. A community engagement and empowerment approach also helps the transport sector to align itself with sustainability and inclusion goals, continually adapt and ready itself for the future, ensure innovations work on the ground, and show it's caring and listening. This would support all six priorities, and represent a world-leading approach to an inclusive, community-focused transition.

3. Set out how public transport and active travel will be integrated and developed as a coherent, aspirational, affordable transport system

In line with a clear, positive vision to make public transport and active travel the natural modes of the future, the TDP needs to set out how this is to be achieved, through developing these modes, their capacity, reliability and integration. Aside from in priority one, the report does not explore the *role* public transport can play in decarbonisation, through enabling shifts away from cars and planes, even in the cross-modal section. Instead, public transport modes are treated almost as part of the problem, with decarbonisation of each mode considered separately. Work is clearly needed to model how rail and bus capacity and service provision needs developing to allow modal shift, to achieve reductions in car and plane travel. The TDP should set this out, including how this will involve ongoing community collaboration.

Related to this, we strongly advise that the TDP spearheads more holistic thinking about sustainable, and considers how this will need to be reflected at a policy level and in enabling local change. For example, the report doesn't mention how walking and cycling improvements (including those being invested in now) should be well linked-up with stations and bus stops. Nor does it reference the need to align bus and rail timetabling and ticketing – a major barrier to modal shift and inclusive mobility – so these modes work well together for sustainable end-to-end journeys. Such changes can be driven locally, but the DfT and TDP can play a crucial

⁴ Community Rail Network (2019) *Value of Community Rail*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Acorp-Value-of-Community-Rail-12019-V3.pdf>

⁵ Community Rail Network (2017) *Communicating Community Rail*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CommunicatingCommunityRail-researchreport-2017.pdf>

⁶ For example: Dale, A., Ling, C., Newman, L. (2010) 'Community Vitality: The Role of Community-Level Resilience Adaptation and Innovation in Sustainable Development', *Sustainability*, 2, pp.215-231; Klein, N. (2014) *This changes everything: capitalism vs the climate*. London: Allen Lane; Moser, S.C. (2010) 'Communicating climate change: history, challenges, process and future directions'. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 1(1), pp.31-53; Schatzki, T. (2015) 'Practices, governance and sustainability'. In Strengers, Y. and Maller, C. (eds.) *Social practices, intervention and sustainability: beyond behaviour change*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge, pp.15-30; Shove, E. (2010) 'Beyond the ABC: climate change policy and theories of social change'. *Environment and Planning*, 42, pp.1,273-1,285; Walker, G. (2015) 'Beyond individual responsibility: social practice, capabilities and the right to sustainable ways of living'. In Strengers, Y. and Maller, C. (eds.) *Social practices, intervention and sustainability: beyond behaviour change*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge, pp.45-59; Todhunter, T. (2011) 'Low-carbon Communities: A Grassroots Perspective on Public Engagement'. In Whitmarsh, L., O'Neill, S. and Lorenzoni, I. (eds.) *Engaging the public with climate change: behaviour change and communication*. London; Washington: Earthscan, pp.252-269; Weintrobe, S. (2013) 'Introduction'. In Weintrobe, S. (ed.) *Engaging with Climate Change: Psychoanalytic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp.1-15.

⁷ Murtagh, N., Gatersleben, B. & Uzzell, D. (2012) 'Self-identity threat and resistance to change: Evidence from regular travel behaviour'. *Journal of Environmental Behaviour*, 32(4), 318–326; Steg, L., Vlek, C. & Slotegraaf, G. (2001). 'Instrumental-reasoned and symbolic-affective motives for using a motor car'. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 4, 151–169; Gatersleben, B. (2012) 'The psychology of sustainable transport'. *Psychology*, 25, pp. 676-679, <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-25/edition-9/psychology-sustainable-transport>; Goodwin, P. and Lyons, G. (2010) 'Public attitudes to transport: interpreting the evidence', *Transportation Planning and Technology*, 33:1, pp3-17.

enabling role, removing barriers to modal integration, and ensuring this is reflected in other policy areas like housing development.

4. Commit to going ‘further, faster’, to support a green and fair recovery from Covid-19, and show global leadership on climate transition

As the government acknowledges, we need to go ‘further, faster’ to address the climate crisis,⁸ and we recommend the TDP overtly recognises that this is especially so with transport. Not only have we seen little progress on transport’s decarbonisation, with it now the biggest emitter, there are indications we are moving in the wrong direction, with road mileage continuing to rise and uptake of highly-polluting SUVs.⁹ For the UK to show leadership on the global stage at COP26, bold moves are needed in transport. As the report shows, this involves going beyond working towards the 2050 target: challenging interim targets are needed for 2030 and 2040, with action front-loaded, especially to aid modal shift.¹⁰

We recommend that TDP also recognises that this action is needed to keep global heating *under 1.5 degrees*, the aim of the nationally-determined contributions agreed at COP21; we suggest the references to ‘well under two degrees’ in the report may jeopardise the chance to show global leadership, given the worldwide devastation predicted if we exceed a 1.5 degree rise.¹¹

There are also a range of challenges and opportunities that have emerged from Covid-19 that the TDP should deal with. We have a great need to move swiftly to repair rebuild trust and positivity around public transport, linked to both decarbonisation and the government’s levelling up intentions, and the TDP can show leadership on this.

Also, if we act decisively, we have a chance to:

- preserve and extend rises in walking and cycling, delivering major health and wellbeing benefits;
- link the active travel network development taking place with public transport, for healthy and sustainable longer journeys;
- tap into the widespread recognition that our communities have benefitted from less traffic, positioning the alternatives to driving as aspirational;
- lock in the reduction in unnecessary journeys and peak time surges by tapping into altered working patterns, while enabling greater use of public transport for healthy, sustainable leisure;
- nurture and draw on the sense of community and determination to get through this together.

The recommendations we make will assist, but there is clearly a need to move swiftly and decisively to turn the corner on carbon emissions in the few years we have left to keep under the watershed of 1.5 degrees.¹² We *reiterate our offer to work proactively with the DfT, alongside our [sustainable travel partners](#), to make this happen.*

Response to the six priorities

Below we comment on each of the six priorities in the report. We offer lessons and insights from community rail, and related research, to suggest how these can be achieved, including how community rail, and community engagement in transport, can assist. We are mainly supportive of the priorities, albeit with suggestions on how they could be strengthened in the TDP. **However, we recommend it will be critical that the TDP gives clear focus to priorities one and four**, and ensures they are not undermined by other activities or aspects of the TDP. Our experience and research suggests priorities one and four are vital in achieving rapid decarbonisation, while ensuring an inclusive transition fitting with the levelling up agenda.

However, there is currently a risk of these priorities being undermined by priority two as it is set out. So **we recommend that priority two is recast, to be about ‘decarbonising future transport modes’**. This will help to avoid inefficiencies, scepticism, and wasted investment. It would ensure a clear, coherent vision, which communities can look to, of making public transport and active travel the norm, and creating a sustainable *and inclusive* transport system.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-to-go-further-and-faster-to-tackle-climate-change>

⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/870647/tsqb-2019.pdf

¹⁰ Some scientists suggest an 80% reduction is needed in transport carbon emissions by 2030: see <https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/1%20More%20than%20electric%20cars%20briefing.pdf>

¹¹ <https://interactive.carbonbrief.org/impacts-climate-change-one-point-five-degrees-two-degrees/>

¹² <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-how-much-carbon-budget-is-left-to-limit-global-warming-to-1-5c>

We also highlight how greater emphasis on integration and development of public, shared and active modes, so they work better together to support modal shift, and of empowering communities to spearhead local solutions, would be highly beneficial.

1. Accelerating modal shift to public and active transport

- Help make public transport and active travel the natural first choice for daily activities
- Support fewer car trips through a coherent, convenient and cost-effective public network; and explore how we might use cars differently in future
- Encourage cycling and walking for short journeys
- Explore how to best support the behaviour change required

We strongly welcome this priority and its position at the top, given its evidenced importance to both decarbonisation and supporting a raft of policy goals on health, wellbeing, community development, access to opportunity, and local environments. We strongly support all four objectives underneath, and can see how the first (on making public and active transport and travel the natural first choice) can act as a beacon for communities, transport partners and authorities, providing leadership on shifting priorities and attention towards public transport and active travel. We are already seeing it being used in community rail, as a network of community advocates for sustainable travel. Such leadership on public transport and active travel is critical, given how 'car is king' mentality has been so dominant across transport, planning and decision making for decades. The language is powerful, as it positions public transport and active travel as natural, normal, positive and aspirational. Research, and evidence from community rail, shows this is important.¹³ We therefore recommend the DfT gives prominence to this, putting it at the forefront of the TDP, so can be utilised at local level. **We advise it should become the heading of this priority: as making active travel and public transport the natural first choice is the end goal**, with modal shift a means to an end. This priority would thus become a positive vision of the future, rather than a problem.

Recognising the role of public transport:

For us to realise this vision, of making public transport and active travel the natural first choice, it needs to be consistently reinforced throughout the TDP and DfT activity. It is important to emphasise that this is the *main way* that significant, rapid decarbonisation can be achieved and broad co-benefits delivered. Simply swapping petrol and diesel vehicles for electric will not deliver the co-benefits on p11,¹⁴ and experts increasingly recognise that it is not a realistic path for us achieving the significant, rapid decarbonisation we need. Parliament's Science and Technology Committee, having reviewed wide-ranging evidence and consulted experts concluded in 2019 that *'In the long-term, widespread personal vehicle ownership does not appear to be compatible with significant decarbonisation.'*¹⁵

The TDP will of course need to go further than the Decarbonising Transport report in exploring the scope for modal shift to be achieved. The report presents some evidence on the potential for shorter journeys to shift to walking and cycling, although we suggest the TDP more clearly references the barriers to this and opportunities to overcome them. However, the report includes little consideration of the potential for shift from cars to public transport and what can bring this about. Most transport carbon comes from car journeys of 10 miles plus.¹⁶ This means that it will be critical to decarbonisation to shift as many car journeys over that length as possible to public transport, or a combination of public/community/shared transport and active travel. Yet, aside from in the foreword and priority one itself, public transport is treated more as a problem in the report, to be decarbonised (important though this is), rather than an opportunity for reducing car journeys. This would be a more constructive way to conceive of public transport, for the DfT and TDP to show leadership on priority one, and to the aid rebuilding of trust and positivity around public transport that is doubly important post-Covid. There is also a major opportunity in the coming year, with the government looking at how it can respond to the findings of the

¹³ Community Rail Network (2017) *Communicating Community Rail*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CommunicatingCommunityRail-researchreport-2017.pdf>

¹⁴ Jones, S.J. (2019) 'If electric cars are the answer, what was the question?' *British Medical Bulletin*, Volume 129, Issue 1, March 2019, pp 13–23, <https://academic.oup.com/bmb/article/129/1/13/5274656>

¹⁵ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmsctech/1454/145408.htm>

¹⁶ <https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/1%20More%20than%20electric%20cars%20briefing.pdf>

Williams Review in the context of Emergency Measures Agreements, for rail provision to be reimagined as first and foremost a sustainable and inclusive mode, serving communities and our future.

Integration of public transport and active travel modes:

Another crucial area for the TDP to cover, acknowledged in this priority but not reflected across the report, is the integration of active travel and public/shared/community transport. We welcome the term 'coherent', and suggest this needs major emphasis. We know through our members' activities that lack of coherence is a ubiquitous stumbling block in enabling more people to use rail, and people accessing railways through sustainable means. Often, stations are not well served by safe walking and cycling routes, or bus services that arrive and depart at convenient times for the train.¹⁷ Our members testify to it being hard to encourage modal shift when such practical barriers are in the way: people cannot 'choose' the train if they can't get to the station at all, or in time for a train, or without risking their life by walking or cycling an unsafe route. The significance of such practical barriers is supported by behavioural research, especially social practice theory, which shows how people need to be 'recruited' to more sustainable behaviours.¹⁸ While work is taking place locally to improve integration, we have a long way to go, and there are many hindrances (see below). Priorities can also be confused. Rail franchise obligations on integrated transport often have increased car parking at the top of the list, suggesting a focus on getting people onto rail by any means (even if it means greater traffic and pollution within communities, and excluding the many people who don't drive) rather than prioritising inclusive, sustainable modes. An important contribution the TDP can make is asserting that the priority across all transport operations and development is to link up and develop public transport and active travel for sustainable end-to-end journeys, enabling inclusive mobility *and* decarbonisation.

Alongside showing leadership on public transport and active travel, and their integration, it seems critical for the DfT to remove common difficulties experienced by those striving to deliver such change at a local level. A big part of community rail (as per the DfT's *Community Rail Development Strategy*) is spearheading modal integration and sustainable access to stations. This ranges from engaging rail/bus/community transport operators to encourage timetable alignment, to improving information and wayfinding around stations, to achieving improvements to walking and cycling routes. But while we see many examples of progress,¹⁹ we also hear about common blockages, such as:

- achieving greater/sufficient space, priority and safety for active travel on surrounding roads (which can be seen as taking space away from or disadvantaging drivers);
- regulatory barriers to bus and train operators working together, to do with competition laws, which especially hinders timetable coordination;
- misalignment in the operations of bus and train operators' ways of working, or a difficulty bringing partners to the table to work collaboratively;
- slowness and bureaucracy in making changes that are evidently needed by the community;
- lack of availability of coherent ticketing and pricing to incentivise combined use of bus and rail.

We are currently undertaking a review of these challenges and intend to provide a more detailed briefing to the DfT. However, it seems clear that to achieve the aim of making active travel and public transport a natural first choice, and enable place-based solutions as per priority four, these barriers need to be broken down; we would welcome the TDP setting out how this will happen.

Capacity, reliability and cost:

Clearly, if public transport and active travel are to become the natural choice, there are major capacity implications that need to be modelled and allowed for. While there is much opportunity for shorter journeys to shift to walking and cycling, four-fifths of car emissions are from journeys of over five miles.²⁰ Achieving decarbonisation will

¹⁷ These are common issues getting in the way of sustainable end-to-end journeys, which our toolkit on community-led station travel planning seeks to address: Community Rail Network (2020) *Connected stations* <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ACoRP-STP-toolkit-final-version.pdf>

¹⁸ Schatzki, T. (2015) 'Practices, governance and sustainability'. In Strengers, Y. and Maller, C. (eds.) *Social practices, intervention and sustainability: beyond behaviour change*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge, pp.15-30; Walker, G. (2015) 'Beyond individual responsibility: social practice, capabilities and the right to sustainable ways of living'. In Strengers, Y. and Maller, C. (eds.) *Social practices, intervention and sustainability: beyond behaviour change*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge, pp.45-59.

¹⁹ See our recent toolkit on community-led station travel planning, which includes good practice case studies as well as guidance and tools: Community Rail Network (2020) *Connected stations* <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ACoRP-STP-toolkit-final-version.pdf>
²⁰ <https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/1%20More%20than%20electric%20cars%20briefing.pdf>

require many of these journeys to be shifted away from the car, although reducing the number of journeys can also play a part (especially with changes in working patterns and commuting prompted by Covid-19). Rail can play an especially important role in the 25 mile plus category, but capacity must be further developed, alongside modal integration, reliability and other improvements. This is not only to enable more people to use rail, but also to ease overcrowding which can be off-putting. We gather from rail partners that even small shifts from car to rail would mean major capacity increases, plus, in some cases, upgrading lines to ensure longer journeys can be made reliably, in reasonable timeframes and comfort, although the (possibly long-term) downturn in commuting journeys means this needs to be assessed in the current context. The decarbonisation report suggests this has not yet been mapped out. As well as in-depth initial analysis, this should be a continuous process, which engaged communities can feed into. For example, community rail partnerships can work with local businesses, hospitals, schools and service providers to understand employees/students/service users' travel needs and anticipate (and encourage) shifts in travel habits. This type of work to understand local needs and future demand is proving especially important in the uncertain, rapidly changing environment created by Covid-19.²¹

Another critical area that requires further exploration and mapping is the relative costs of different modes of transport, and how public transport can be made more affordable and comparatively cheaper than driving. It is a common concern among our members and the members of the public they work with that rail is expensive, with many people seeing it as out of reach for them in terms of affordability, or more expensive than driving a car. The affordability of rail tickets comes up time and again in our conversations with members as a major barrier, especially with the contrast between annual rail fares rises and fuel duty freezes. This represents a message that driving is the norm and being encouraged, while rail users must pay a premium if they are to benefit from upgrades and modernisation. This picture is not helped by the complexity of rail ticketing and lack of multi-modal, smart ticketing outside of London and a few other major cities. Even buses can be far more expensive, especially for families, than taking the car. **We set out to Rail Delivery Group our recommendations on rail fares**, including making ticketing simpler, more accessible and affordable, and much of our advice could be applied across public transport. We propose that an open, pressing conversation is needed on this issue, involving partners across the sustainable and inclusive transport field, to feed into the TDP, and that the TDP clearly sets out bold commitments.

Another area of concern for many of our members is that bus services, especially in more rural areas, have declined or disappeared. With one third of the adult population without personal access to a car,²² and many unable to walk or cycle to their nearest station, or other local services, due to distance, health, fitness or road safety concerns, buses are essential for people accessing the railway and all manner of other opportunities. Yet many of our members express consternation about standards of, and access to, bus travel in their localities. This is exacerbated by the lack of integration and competitive nature of transport: limited rural bus services are often directly competing with limited rural rail services, rather than working together to provide the best combined offer to communities. This leaves people with poor alternatives to driving, or limited mobility if they don't have access to a car. As well as many passengers suffering from needlessly lengthy, unpleasant and unreliable journeys, these issues mean that many people are disenfranchised from the railways entirely due to not being able to get to and from their station (at all, or reliably). This also contributes to communities with stations being beset with the noise, pollution, danger and congestion from so many driving to and from it, with the poorest and most vulnerable in society suffering the most.²³ Clearly, the TDP needs to address this, in connection with the forthcoming Bus Strategy, and this can pave the way to a raft of co-benefits.

Additionally, in considering how transport can be developed to provide a coherent and appealing alternative to driving, we recommend the TDP recognises the role of community transport and shared transport. In order to promote and aid access to rail, and increase sustainable mobility in their localities as fully as possible, our community rail members look to and work with (or in some cases help to establish) community transport operators, and shared mobility schemes, as well as considering public transport and active travel. Our guidance for

²¹ Community Rail Network set out this briefing to outline the role community rail can play in Covid-19 recovery, including helping to map and predict local needs: <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Community-rail-and-Covid-19-recovery-renewal.pdf>

²² NatCen (2019) *Access to Transport and Life Opportunities*,

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

²³ The poorest, most vulnerable, and young people are least likely to have access to a car (See NatCen, 2019, *Access to Transport and Life Opportunities*,

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831766/access_to_transport_report.pdf). The poorest and most vulnerable groups are also most vulnerable to the effects of air pollution and road danger (See House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, 2016, *Air Quality, Fourth Report of Session 2015–16*, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmenvfru/479/479.pdf>).

communities on station-travel planning encourages this,²⁴ and through our [partnership work with third sector sustainable transport organisations](#), we recognise the benefits of connecting community and shared transport with public transport and active travel, and thinking holistically about these modes as all forming part of the sustainable transport picture. We therefore recommend that the TDP makes clear that modal shift is desirable and beneficial *onto public, community and shared transport and active travel*, and that linking these modes effectively is crucial to this.

Achieving co-benefits:

Community rail evidences how the development and integration of public transport and active travel – especially when combined with local engagement and empowerment – enables a host of social, economic and environmental co-benefits.²⁵ This is particularly so when sustainable transport is opened up to wider audiences. Community rail shows the transformational effect it can have – potentially life-altering – for someone to be or feel able to use the train for the first time. Modal integration is incredibly important to this.²⁶ Without integration with buses, walking and cycling, rail is inaccessible to many, especially the poorest and most vulnerable in society, and no journey by rail will be as sustainable, healthy, convenient and enjoyable as it might be. Hence, better joining up rail, buses, walking and cycling unlocks greater social, environmental and economic value from our transport network, by enabling more people to travel who would otherwise have limited mobility, and by enabling those journeys to be made by entirely sustainable, healthy, socially responsible means. This is before any additional investment is made to improve service regularity or capacity. In other words, integration of modes, in a way that meets local needs, creates additional value from nothing (or very little) aside from partnership working between operators and communities. It also greatly enhances the value derived where there is investment in service improvements, especially if the community is not only consulted but meaningfully engaged and put at the forefront of such changes, as we return to below.²⁷

There seems a particular opportunity and pressing need at the present time to think holistically about public, shared and community transport and active travel in combination, for the health, wellbeing and sustainability of our communities. Through Covid-19, we have seen walking and cycling levels soar, greater confidence around active travel related to quieter roads, including among families, and a widespread recognition of how much healthier, cleaner, quieter and more pleasant our communities are with reduced car use. With the government investment now going into active travel, we have a chance to lock in long-term benefits by connecting the resultant improvements with public transport facilities. At the same time, we face a great challenge in rebuilding trust around public transport, following the negative messaging of recent weeks. Nevertheless, enabling, encouraging and supporting more people to utilise public transport and active travel could be put at the heart of a sure, sustainable and inclusive recovery from Covid-19, including improved health and wellbeing from more active lifestyles²⁸ and reduced air pollution,²⁹ more liveable, pleasant and cohesive communities,³⁰ reduced social isolation,³¹ and levelling up so everyone has the opportunity to prosper. We also have opportunities with the forthcoming rail reforms, and Bus Strategy, to ensure public transport is run in a way that maximises social, environmental and economic value.

²⁴ Community Rail Network (2020) *Connected stations* <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ACoRP-STP-toolkit-final-version.pdf>

²⁵ Community Rail Network (2019) *Value of Community Rail*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Acorp-Value-of-Community-Rail-12019-V3.pdf>

²⁶ NatCen (2019) *Access to Transport and Life Opportunities*, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831766/access_to_transport_report.pdf

²⁷ The value of community engagement to public transport use is shown through the enhanced use of community railway lines. See Community Rail Network (2019) *Value of Community Rail*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/ACoRP-Value-of-Community-Rail-2019-final-for-web-141019.pdf>

²⁸ Extensive academic research is available on the health, wellbeing and societal effects of sedentary lifestyles, and showing that building walking and cycling into daily routines is an effective counter to this; see a selection of evidence, effects and guidelines at <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/lifestyle-and-wellbeing/physical-activity>

²⁹ See House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, 2016, *Air Quality, Fourth Report of Session 2015–16*, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmenvfru/479/479.pdf>

³⁰ Numerous experts, organisations and academics discuss and evidence the effect that car-based lifestyles have in eroding community and sense of place. For example, Hanna, K.; Dale, A.; Ling, C. (2009) 'Social capital and quality of place: reflections on growth and change in a small town', *Local Environment*, 14, 33-46.

³¹ For the implications of social isolation, and the relevance of access to transport, see DCMS, 2018, *A connected society: a strategy for tackling loneliness* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/750909/6.4882_DCMS_Loneliness_Strategy_web_Update.pdf

Achieving behavioural change:

The fourth objective under this priority recognises the behavioural shifts needed to achieve decarbonisation, and the need to explore further how this is achieved. We welcome this, and suggest that this is a major feature of the TDP, recognising the evidenced role of community engagement and community-led change in achieving beneficial behavioural shifts. Key insights from behavioural and social science research that are highly relevant include:

- behavioural economics, especially as set out in *Nudge*,³² suggesting that where there are choices, people will often take the path of least resistance, or the default. Hence it is crucial to make sustainable options easier and more natural, and address common barriers to these;
- social norms are shown to be important in guiding choices and habits.³³ Hence messages and attitudes that hold car use in high-esteem are problematic, and efforts to normalise sustainable alternatives are helpful;
- a raft of communications research explores why attempts to promote shifts towards more sustainable behaviours have been largely unsuccessful to date, suggesting that many have turned away from the scale, complexity, remoteness and intangibility of the problem, as well as finding the changes needed to be at odds with their lifestyles and identities – suggesting that localised, interactive engagement may be key;³⁴
- social practice theory argues that people cannot just be ‘persuaded’ to adopt different practices, but need to be ‘recruited’ within their social contexts – again underscoring the need for interactive engagement that allows sustainable transport to be assimilated to local needs, lifestyles and identities;³⁵
- social psychology research shows the importance of values and emotions in people’s behaviours, and particularly the power of feelings of belonging³⁶ – resonating strongly with our evidence showing how community rail plays a strong role in sustainable development through building a sense of community and efficacy.³⁷

A common theme across much qualitative evidence is the value of localised approaches, dialogue and engagement, supporting people to make change together. The idea that people will simply make different ‘choices’ with different information (as is suggested in 1.14 in the report) has been disparaged as overly-simplistic at best, and potentially counter-productive.

A crucial point for the TDP is that transport mode is not simply a matter of ‘choice’ based on having the right information. The vast majority of miles travelled will not be subject to a conscious choice of mode, or any choice at all. Many people are unable to afford or otherwise access some modes altogether. As noted above, one in three adults don’t have personal car access,³⁸ many more are struggling with the costs of car ownership,³⁹ while young people are increasingly priced out of driving.⁴⁰ From our members’ experience, rail and even buses can be seen as unaffordable or unattainable, limiting mobility and access to opportunity. As well as some people being completely disenfranchised from some modes, which mode you use is down to habit, lifestyle and necessity: behaviours, not consumer choices. In fact, research cautions against seeing people using transport as ‘consumers’, who choose between modes, as though they are choosing a TV to buy.⁴¹ Many people will have (or feel they have) no realistic alternatives; it will simply be a case of, ‘this is how you get there’. In other cases, there will be alternatives, but they may be less practical or viable (for cost or journey time reasons), or it may be that they are

³² Thaler, R. & Sunstein, C. (2009) *Nudge*

³³ Ibid; Reynolds, K.J. (2019) ‘Social norms and how they impact behaviour’, *Nature Human Behaviour* 3, 14–15, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-018-0498-x>

³⁴ This is explored in our report, with reference to a range of academic sources: ACoRP, *Communicating Community Rail*, 2019, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CommunicatingCommunityRail-researchreport-2017.pdf>

³⁵ See Strengers, Y. and Maller, C. (eds.) *Social practices, intervention and sustainability: beyond behaviour change*; Shove, E. (2010) ‘Beyond the ABC: climate change policy and theories of social change’. *Environment and Planning*, 42, pp.1,273-1,285.

³⁶ See, for example, Fiske, S.T. and Taylor, S.E. (2013) *Social Cognition*. Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill; Leiserowitz, A. (2006) ‘Climate change risk perception and policy preferences: The role of affect, imagery, and values’. *Climatic Change*, 77(1-2), pp.45-72; Neuman, W.R., Marcus, G.E., Crigler, A.N., Mackuen, M. (2007) ‘Theorizing Affect’s Effects’. In Neuman, W.R., Marcus, G.E., Crigler, A.N., Mackuen, M. (eds.) *The Affect Effect: Dynamics of Emotion in Political Thinking and Behaviour*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, pp.1-20.

³⁷ Community Rail Network (2019) *Value of Community Rail*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/ACoRP-Value-of-Community-Rail-2019-final-for-web-141019.pdf>

³⁸ NatCen (2019) *Access to Transport and Life Opportunities*,

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

³⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2012/jul/25/majority-car-owners-struggling-costs>; <https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/cars/783346/Car-repair-breakdown-fix-costs-money-struggle>

⁴⁰ <https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/cars/article-3698959/Are-young-people-priced-driving-Average-age-drivers-taking-test.html>

⁴¹ See, for example: Jaspal R., Nerlich B., Cinnirella, M. (2014) ‘Human Responses to Climate Change: Social Representation, Identity and Socio-psychological Action’. *Environmental Communication*, 8(1), pp.110–130; Hoggett, P. (2013) ‘Climate change in a perverse culture’. In Weintrobe, S. (ed.) *Engaging with Climate Change: Psychoanalytic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge, pp.56-71.

not considered at all, because of ingrained habits. Research shows it is hard to ‘persuade’ people to opt out of unsustainable behaviours when they are embedded in our lifestyles and identities,⁴² and we should not underestimate the extent to which the car is embedded. This has likely been exacerbated by recent messaging to avoid public transport, and implications that it is something you only use if you have no other choice. To move forward from here, coherence, collaboration, positivity, support and empowerment at community level is crucial, working with and not against people’s sense of identity, and this can achieve major co-benefits.

2. Decarbonisation of road vehicles

Support the transition to zero emission road vehicles through:

- regulatory framework
- strong consumer base
- market conditions
- vehicle supply
- refuelling and recharging infrastructure – energy system readiness
- Maximise benefits through investment in innovative technology development, and development of sustainable supply chains

There is a contradiction between priorities one and two, and to avoid inefficiency, it needs to be clear in the TDP that the first is overriding, as per the ministerial foreword. Currently, priority two’s wording begs the question: are we genuinely aiming to transition to mass use of public transport and active travel, as per priority one, or are we swapping one type of mass car use for another? The two are not compatible as priorities, and electric cars would not deliver the co-benefits on p11. They are unlikely to be affordable for the majority, or to offer a realistic route for rapid decarbonisation,⁴³ while they fail to address the manifold problems with space, congestion, sedentary lifestyles, noise and disturbance, road safety, and particulate pollution that petrol and diesel cars pose.⁴⁴ Simply replacing widespread petrol and diesel cars with electric cars poses practical issues too, for achieving priority one. Bus operators and their passengers already attest to the huge problems that congestion poses in running quality services,⁴⁵ while the threat of traffic is a major barrier to people cycling.⁴⁶ Experience from Norway also shows how incentivising and promoting electric car uptake can reduce active travel and public transport use and increase vehicle ownership.⁴⁷

We therefore recommend that priority two is reframed to be about ‘**decarbonising future modes of transport**’. This would align priorities one and two and create a strong, clear direction of travel, making clear that we need to do two things, simultaneously:

1. Enable and encourage a widespread shift onto the lowest carbon modes, i.e. walking, cycling, public/shared/community transport, and reaping the benefits of this;
2. Bring down the carbon produced through the modes of the future (those people are shifting towards or will continue to use), towards net zero.

As well as removing risk of mixed messaging, and improving the efficiency of the transition, this would strengthen leadership shown through the TDP, pointing to a positive vision of future transport. It would have an empowering effect for communities, authorities and transport operators, who would have an unambiguous mandate for working towards two complementary goals: achieving modal shift and decarbonising modes people are shifting towards. It would strongly support the goal of making public transport and active travel appealing and

⁴² See Jaspal R., Nerlich B., Cinnirella, M. (2014) ‘Human Responses to Climate Change: Social Representation, Identity and Socio-psychological Action’. *Environmental Communication*, 8(1), pp.110–130 and Walker, G. (2015) ‘Beyond individual responsibility: social practice, capabilities and the right to sustainable ways of living’. In Strengers, Y. and Maller, C. (eds.) *Social practices, intervention and sustainability: beyond behaviour change*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge, pp.45-59.

⁴³ <https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/1%20More%20than%20electric%20cars%20briefing.pdf>

⁴⁴ Graham-Rowe, E., Skippon, S., Gardner, B., Abraham, C. (2011) ‘Can we reduce car use and, if so, how? A review of available evidence’, *Transportation Research*, Part A 45, pp.401-418; Jones, S.J. (2019) ‘If electric cars are the answer, what was the question?’ *British Medical Bulletin*, Volume 129, Issue 1, March 2019, pp 13–23, <https://academic.oup.com/bmb/article/129/1/13/5274656>; <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmsctech/1454/145408.htm>

⁴⁵ https://greenerjourneys.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/TBusReport_Digital.pdf

⁴⁶ <https://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/wiki/barriers-cycling>

⁴⁷ Højkliint R. & Hansen C. (2017) ‘The Adverse Effects of the Norwegian Electric Vehicle Incentive Scheme with emphasis on congestion and public funding’, Norwegian School of Economics MSc thesis,

<https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2454238/masterthesis.PDF?sequence=1>; Bauer G. (2018) ‘The impact of battery electric vehicles on vehicle purchase and driving behaviour’, *Norway Transportation Research* Part D, pp. 239-258

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1361920916305235?via%3Dihub>; Aasness M. and Odeck J. (2014) ‘The explosion of electric vehicle use in Norway – environmental consciousness or economic incentives?’, *Association for European Transport 2014 European Transport Conference*, <https://aetransport.org/public/downloads/8tuFk/4400-5400a2876cd3d.pdf>

aspirational, by sending a message that *these modes are the modes of the future, and that will protect our future*. It would help to align these modes in people's thinking with sustainability, community, and wellbeing, assimilating public transport and active travel with values and identities, which research suggests is important to behavioural change.⁴⁸

The growing evidence that electric cars do not represent a silver bullet underlines the need to rework this priority. Even if we did accept that widespread electric car use was something to aim for, the most substantive hurdle, affordability,⁴⁹ is not dealt with in the report, so it is unclear how this would be addressed. This is of concern given that private car use is already prohibitively expensive or otherwise inaccessible for a large part of the population, and that many of those with cars struggle with the costs. We are also likely heading into recession due to Covid-19. Thus, pursuing electric cars as a key tenet of transport decarbonisation undercuts the government's levelling up agenda. However, it should also be recognised that electric cars have high levels of embodied carbon, use non-renewable materials, and represent an inefficient use of space and resources. They also cause particulate pollution, and fail to address the health, wellbeing and inequitable mobility problems of widespread car reliance.⁵⁰

On the other hand, shifting towards public transport and active travel, in line with priority one, can drive rapid transition to net zero,^{51 52} and achieve huge co-benefits:

- Playing a key role in the government's levelling up agenda, by enabling wider access to opportunity, currently greatly stymied by our car-orientated society,⁵³ and helping to reduce social isolation;⁵⁴
- Preventing the tens of thousands of premature deaths and injuries, widespread health conditions and billions in NHS/other costs caused by traffic collisions and fumes;⁵⁵
- Healthier lifestyles from increased active travel and more family-friendly streets and places, improving mental health, and reducing obesity, cancer and other conditions;⁵⁶
- Enabling planning and development that is no longer prioritising the movement of cars, which undermines communities, their wellbeing and cohesion;⁵⁷
- Freeing up vast amounts of under-utilised grey space in cities, towns and villages taken up by cars, for recreation, social and green spaces, benefiting health, wellbeing, biodiversity and our climate.⁵⁸

It is also clear that overly focusing on electric cars and proactively promoting their uptake, can undermine progress towards priority one at a strategic and community level. The objectives under priority two, and paragraphs 2.3-2.20, expose how this pulls against encouraging a shift to public transport, walking and cycling. For example, the report talks of making it easier and more attractive to buy and charge EVs, including consistent,

⁴⁸ Jaspal R., Nerlich B., Cinnirella, M. (2014) 'Human Responses to Climate Change: Social Representation, Identity and Socio-psychological Action'. *Environmental Communication*, 8(1), pp.110–130; Hoggott, P. (2013) 'Climate change in a perverse culture'. In Weintrobe, S. (ed.) *Engaging with Climate Change: Psychoanalytic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge, pp.56-71; Todhunter, T. (2011) 'Low-carbon Communities: A Grassroots Perspective on Public Engagement'. In Whitmarsh, L., O'Neill, S. and Lorenzoni, I. (eds.) *Engaging the public with climate change: behaviour change and communication*. London; Washington: Earthscan, pp.252- 269; Spence, A. and Pidgeon, N.F. (2010) 'Framing and communicating climate change: the effects of distance and outcome frame manipulations'. *Global Environmental Change* 20 (4), pp.656–667.

⁴⁹ Jones, S.J. (2019) 'If electric cars are the answer, what was the question?' *British Medical Bulletin*, Volume 129, Issue 1, March 2019, pp 13–23, <https://academic.oup.com/bmb/article/129/1/13/5274656>

⁵⁰ Ibid; Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions (CREDS) (2019) *Shifting the focus: energy demand in a net-zero carbon UK*. Available online at:

<https://www.creds.ac.uk/wp-content/pdfs/CREDS-Shifting-the-focus-July2019.pdf>; plus comments from climate scientist Kevin Anderson at

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/26/leading-scientist-criticises-uk-over-its-climate-record>

⁵¹ Science and Technology Committee, Houses of Parliament (2019) *Clean Growth: Technologies for meeting the UK's emissions reduction targets*, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmsctech/1454/145402.htm>.

⁵² Graham-Rowe, E., Skippon, S., Gardner, B., Abraham, C. (2011) 'Can we reduce car use and, if so, how? A review of available evidence', *Transportation Research, Part A* 45, pp.401-418.

⁵³ See our 2018 report exploring community rail's role in social inclusion, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ACoRP-CRSI2018.pdf>; plus Jones, S.J. (2019) 'If electric cars are the answer, what was the question?' *British Medical Bulletin*, Volume 129, Issue 1, March 2019, pp 13–23, <https://academic.oup.com/bmb/article/129/1/13/5274656>

⁵⁴ See references to transport and community rail and its importance in addressing loneliness and isolation in HM Government (2018) *A Connected society: a strategy for tackling loneliness*, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/750909/6.4882_DCMS_Loneliness_Strategy_web_Update.pdf

⁵⁵ See Department for Transport (2019) *Reported Road Casualties Great Britain*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-annual-report-2018>; and Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, House of Commons (2016) *Air Quality, Fourth Report of Session 2015–16*, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmenvfru/479/479.pdf>

⁵⁶ Jones, S.J. (2019) 'If electric cars are the answer, what was the question?' *British Medical Bulletin*, Volume 129, Issue 1, March 2019, pp 13–23, <https://academic.oup.com/bmb/article/129/1/13/5274656>; Martin, A., Goryakin, Y., Suhrcke, M. (2014) *Does active commuting improve psychological wellbeing? Longitudinal evidence from eighteen waves of the British Household Panel Survey*, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4262577/

⁵⁷ Hanna, K.; Dale, A.; Ling, C. (2009) 'Social capital and quality of place: reflections on growth and change in a small town', *Local Environment*, 14, 33–46.

⁵⁸ <http://urbanpollinators.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Urban-crisis-50-ideas-for-cities.pdf>

simple charging, but does not refer to the need to make public transport ticketing and access consistent, convenient and inclusive. The report does not explain how making EVs the 'new norm' (p20) won't undercut work to make public transport and active travel 'the natural first choice'. There is a question of logic, and of use of public money, in investing in widespread EV facilities, and encouraging purchase of vehicles high in embodied carbon,⁵⁹ if we ultimately want to encourage people to travel by alternative means. Such an approach may invite scepticism, and can hold up meaningful progress at community level. For example, installing charging points, such as at stations, can be seen as an easy tick-box solution, while deeper underlying problems with public transport and active travel access go unresolved. This can send a message it's expected that we will all get around by electric cars in the future, and those who don't will be left behind: especially disempowering for the third of adults who don't have access to a car.⁶⁰ A directive to focus on the important, evidenced shift set out in priority one, will guard against this, and mean that sustainable transport can play a maximum role in helping communities to recover and build back better from Covid-19.

Finally, the current focus of this priority, on decarbonising *road* transport, leaves unanswered questions as to how we will decarbonise across transport, taking a holistic view and accounting for the need to achieve shift between modes. As noted above, achieving modal shift will involve growth and development of public/shared/community transport, including integration, strengthening our depleted bus network, and increasing capacity, reliability and affordability. Such development, like new and refurbished vehicles and stations, opens opportunities for these modes to rapidly decarbonise, so these goals should be pursued in tandem. Although it is already far more carbon-efficient to travel by these modes, there is of course much scope for driving down emissions further, as the report acknowledges, such as through rail, bus and minibus electrification, and ensuring these vehicles are powered by renewable energy. This also a need for the *source* of energy to be renewable (or, where needed, to draw on emerging sources like green hydrogen); this is referenced in a case study on p29 but in need of greater attention in the TDP. We recommend the TDP should expressly set out how it will accelerate this, especially by supporting public and community transport operators (facing great challenges due to Covid) to achieve net zero as a priority, as well as businesses that will continue to depend on road transport by necessity (such as tradespeople, or those operating shuttle buses for staff or service users). This should be recognised prominently within the priorities.

This would also mean the modes we are aiming to shift towards can become beacons and leaders in sustainable, zero carbon travel. We know from supporting our members that there has been some reticence in holding up rail as a sustainable option, due to the ongoing prevalence of diesel trains. Similarly, some hold the perception that buses are dirty and polluting, despite the number of cars they take off the road, and their potential to reduce traffic and pollution further. Such views are of course related to 'car is king' mentality. It should be noted that communities, transport operators and authorities are much more able to counter this mentality, and promote public transport use, if they can confidently advertise that they offer the more sustainable option, chiming with government messaging, and be proud of the sustainability and inclusion goals they are supporting. For the public and community transport sector to be able to say 'we are aiming for zero emissions transport by 2035, in support of national goals', and 'this bus/train runs on sun and wind', and 'this is a sustainable station, zero carbon and supporting the community' is powerful, in supporting behavioural and attitudinal shift, and positioning these modes as the future.

3. Decarbonising how we get our goods

- Consider future demand and changing consumer behaviour for goods
- Transform 'last-mile' deliveries – developing an integrated, clean and sustainable delivery system
- Optimise logistics efficiency and explore innovative digitally-enabled solutions, data sharing and collaborative platforms

Because of our area of expertise, we provide less commentary on this priority. However, while we recognise the great importance of sustainable freight and deliveries to our communities, especially with changing consumer habits, we also recommend that this area of work should not be seen as entirely separate from the challenges of moving people about sustainably. Both can and should be taken forward in synergy, with attention to circular economy principles. We make a few observations in support of this:

⁵⁹ <https://www.thegreenage.co.uk/tech/environmental-footprint-electric-cars/>

⁶⁰ NatCen (2019) *Access to Transport and Life Opportunities*,

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

- Transitioning freight off our roads as much as possible has been recognised by the government and many others as beneficial, to decarbonisation and to deliver benefits to communities' health, wellbeing, safety and local environments. Yet the opportunity to do this is not fully explored in the Decarbonising Transport report: it is not referenced at all in the sections on HGVs and vans (p39-43) and there is just a brief mention in the separate section on rail freight in 3.31, suggesting some joined-up thinking across modes may be needed;
- There may be additional opportunities to transport goods on or in tandem with passenger transport, which may emerge when communities are engaged and put in the driving seat of change. For example, community rail partnerships have put forward suggestions around parcel delivery services making use of spare capacity on passenger trains, or secure locker collection points at stations; there may also be opportunities to utilise (and bring in additional funding for) community transport services, especially in more rural areas;
- Passenger transport and goods transport can be harmonised in other ways to bring carbon efficiencies. For example, encouraging and providing for community-based outlets and collection points at stations means people can buy or collect goods as part of other journeys, rather than making additional journeys to shops or opting for home deliveries. Again, our experience shows that engaging communities in their local transport networks, and putting communities at the forefront of transport development, tends to encourage approaches and enterprises like this that are sustainable, enabling, and fitting with local needs. For example, community rail has set up and spearheaded numerous projects to return disused station buildings to community use, including social enterprises selling locally-produced goods and zero-waste shops.⁶¹ This type of activity connects local people with local goods, reducing the amount of transportation from source, and enabling them to be taken home through the most efficient means, such as on existing public transport journeys. These principles should be utilised and promoted through the TDP.

4. Place-based solutions

- Consider where, how and why emissions occur in specific locations
- Acknowledge a single solution will not be appropriate for every location
- Address emissions at a local level through local management of transport solutions
- Target support for local areas, considering regional diversity and different solutions

We strongly support this as a priority in the TDP, but recommend that it be strengthened, overtly recognising the role of community engagement and empowerment, so communities are enabled to co-create place-based solutions and drive and own local progress. We suggest that it can act as a strong foundation, alongside priority one, enabling the other priorities to be delivered more effectively. We also suggest how its four supporting objectives can be strengthened to help unleash the potential of community-led change, which is relevant and useful in all localities, not only those with higher emissions.

Evidence basis for community-driven change:

There is a strong evidence base for this, with a swathe of studies showing that community-led approaches may hold the key to achieving the behavioural shifts needed to protect our climate, and that community empowerment naturally produces more sustainable forms of development. This is especially relevant with transport, due to the way driving is so embedded. Relevant research findings include:

- Car use is not only widespread, but ingrained in lifestyles and identities.⁶² While most people know that driving a car is 'bad' for the environment compared to other modes, and show some willingness to

⁶¹ Community Rail Network (2017) *Community stations: innovative uses for station buildings*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ACoRP-Community-Stations-Document-web.pdf>

⁶² Gatersleben, B. (2012) 'The psychology of sustainable transport', *Psychology*, 25, pp. 676-679, <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-25/edition-9/psychology-sustainable-transport>;

Goodwin, P. and Lyons, G. (2010) 'Public attitudes to transport: interpreting the evidence', *Transportation Planning and Technology*, 33:1, pp3-17.
Steg, L., Vlek, C. & Slotegraaf, G. (2001). 'Instrumental-reasoned and symbolic-affective motives for using a motor car'. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 4, 151-169.

change,⁶³ this has not translated into the behavioural shifts needed to address the climate crisis.⁶⁴ In fact, vehicle mileage and ownership of highly-polluting vehicles continues to rise.⁶⁵

- A range of researchers offer insights as to why significant behavioural change on the climate crisis, including within transport, has not emerged to date, linked to: the shortfalls and problematic nature of communicating complex, global and intangible environmental issues in a way that influences at a day-to-day level;⁶⁶ the habitual and convenient nature of unsustainable behaviours like driving;⁶⁷ the social psychology of transport, with driving a social norm and signifier.⁶⁸
- Numerous sustainability, communications and social change researchers propose that, to overcome these barriers, the issue must be made real and relevant at a local, day-to-day level, and people engaged proactively and in an interactive manner to co-create change, ensuring local ownership; correspondingly, others suggest that when communities come together to make positive local change, it *naturally* produces more sustainable forms of development,⁶⁹ and most promising results on sustainability;⁷⁰
- Drawing on insights from across disciplines, it is evidently not nearly so simple as to provide information to 'persuade' people to adopt more sustainable habits.⁷¹ We should recognise that individuals are not fully autonomous and able to adopt any sustainable practice: they are guided and constrained by social structures and practicalities;⁷²
- On top of practical barriers, changes to embedded habits like driving can be emotionally difficult, provoke resistance,⁷³ and require support through multiple stages to re-orientate lifestyles;⁷⁴
- Research shows the scope for community engagement to address this, by (re)building a sense of identity and belonging⁷⁵ around other transport modes, promoting them in ways that are engaging, relatable and empowering, connected to local realities and identities;⁷⁶
- Transport, development and planning research attests to social contexts, values, and learning being critical to achieving change on sustainability,⁷⁷ while some propose community-level action is where greatest hope lies for widespread behaviour change on the climate.⁷⁸

In this way, research across disciplines, points to localised, community-driven engagement and development as being important, if not vital, to achieving sustainable transport use.

Experience within community rail further evidences that by empowering and enabling communities to engage with, influence and lead change on transport, we can identify and break down barriers, and mobilise local people

⁶³ Goodwin, P. & Lyons, G. (2010) 'Public attitudes to transport: interpreting the evidence', *Transportation Planning and Technology*, 33:1, pp3-17.

⁶⁴ Murtagh, N., Gatersleben, B. & Uzzell, D. (2012) 'Self-identity threat and resistance to change: Evidence from regular travel behaviour'. *Journal of Environmental Behaviour*, 32(4), 318–326.

⁶⁵ DfT (2019) National Transport Statistics,

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/870647/tsqb-2019.pdf

⁶⁶ Lorenzoni, I. and Pidgeon, N. F. (2006) 'Public views on climate change: European and USA perspectives'. *Climate Change*, 77, pp.73–95;

Moser, S.C. (2010) 'Communicating climate change: history, challenges, process and future directions'. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 1(1), pp.31-53.

⁶⁷ Stradling, S.G., Meadows, M.L. & Beatty, S. (1999). *Factors affecting car use choices*. Edinburgh: Transport Research Institute, Napier University.

⁶⁸ Gatersleben, B. (2012) 'The psychology of sustainable transport', *Psychology*, 25, pp. 676-679. Available online at:

<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-25/edition-9/psychology-sustainable-transport>

⁶⁹ Roseland, M. (2000) 'Sustainable community development: integrating environmental, economic, and social objectives', *Progress in Planning* 54, pp.73–132.

⁷⁰ Dale, A., Ling, C., Newman, L. (2010) 'Community Vitality: The Role of Community-Level Resilience Adaptation and Innovation in Sustainable Development', *Sustainability*, 2, pp.215-231.

⁷¹ Anderson, A. (2015) 'Reflections on Environmental Communication and the Challenges of a New Research Agenda'. *Environmental Communication*, 9(3), pp.379–383.

⁷² Shove, E. (2010) 'Beyond the ABC: climate change policy and theories of social change'. *Environment and Planning*, 42, pp.1,273-1,285.

⁷³ Murtagh, N., Gatersleben, B. & Uzzell, D. (2012) 'Self-identity threat and resistance to change: Evidence from regular travel behaviour'. *Journal of Environmental Behaviour*, 32(4), 318–326; Steg, L., Vlek, C. & Slotegraaf, G. (2001). 'Instrumental-reasoned and symbolic-affective motives for using a motor car'. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 4, 151–169; Weintrobe, S. (2013a) 'The difficult problem of anxiety in thinking about climate change'. In Weintrobe, S. (ed.) *Engaging with Climate Change: Psychoanalytic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*.

Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp.33-47.

⁷⁴ Gatersleben, B. (2012) 'The psychology of sustainable transport', *Psychology*, 25, pp. 676-679, <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-25/edition-9/psychology-sustainable-transport>

⁷⁵ Goodwin, P. and Lyons, G. (2010) 'Public attitudes to transport: interpreting the evidence', *Transportation Planning and Technology*, 33:1, pp3-17.

⁷⁶ As social psychology research suggests is crucial in influencing behaviours: see Fiske, S.T. and Taylor, S.E. (2013) *Social Cognition*. Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

⁷⁷ Gammelgaard Ballantyne, A. (2016) 'Climate change communication: what can we learn from communication theory?'. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, no pagination; Jaspal R., Nerlich B., Cinnirella, M. (2014) 'Human Responses to Climate Change: Social Representation, Identity and Socio-psychological Action'. *Environmental Communication*, 8(1), pp.110–130; Wiest, S.L., Raymond, L., Clawson, R.A. (2015) 'Framing, partisan predispositions, and public opinion on climate change'. *Global Environmental Change*, 31(3).

⁷⁸ Goodwin, P. and Lyons, G. (2010) 'Public attitudes to transport: interpreting the evidence', *Transportation Planning and Technology*, 33:1, pp3-17; Roseland, M. (2000) 'Sustainable community development: integrating environmental, economic, and social objectives', *Progress in Planning* 54, pp.73–132.

⁷⁹ Dale, A., Ling, C., Newman, L. (2010) 'Community Vitality: The Role of Community-Level Resilience Adaptation and Innovation in Sustainable Development', *Sustainability*, 2, pp.215-231.

behind the changes needed.⁷⁹ This can create a sense of local ownership and momentum that cannot be created from the top-down, so there is no need to 'persuade' people to change their behaviours. It becomes about the community making things better for the community and their future: the shifts needed and people's sense of local pride, identity and aspiration become assimilated and inextricably linked. We can offer a raft of examples from community rail of this type of work,⁸⁰ and will be pleased to continue working with the DfT to consider how such activity can be nurtured and supported.

Community engagement and modal shift:

As evidenced above, community engagement and empowerment is invaluable in creating behavioural shifts on sustainability. This is especially relevant with transport, given that cars have become symbolic of status and identity. Car use is shown by research to have become aspirational and a social norm,⁸¹ and is commonly assumed to be an option open to all. Our members' work shows that many people have become detached from and unaware of the alternatives to driving: many children, young people and families they work with have never been on a train, and don't know they have a station close by. Evidence also shows how our local 'places' have become increasingly designed and orientated around the car, affecting health, wellbeing, cohesion and inclusion^{82, 83}. This includes in most new housing developments.⁸⁴ Moving on from this will be challenging, involving re-orientating our lifestyles and identities around the more sustainable alternatives.⁸⁵ There will be a need to forge closer bonds between public transport and active travel and people's sense of self and place. Not only does community engagement hold great promise for achieving this, but when communities are empowered, it may naturally produce this result.

Community rail – and other forms of community engagement and community-led change – demonstrates how this works. When communities are empowered to influence and drive the infrastructure and service changes that they need, these changes are not only more likely to work for local people, but there will be awareness and ownership from the outset that will help to ensure these improvements are utilised. For example, community rail often brings about positive change by:

- a) working with rail partners to feed in local needs and opportunities (e.g. lack of a suitable walking and cycling path connecting the station with town centre/attraction/cycle network), then...
- b) collaborating on achieving positive changes, engaging the community in the process (e.g. achieving funding and permissions for a new/improved path, running local consultation/competitions/ volunteering around the plans or delivery), then...
- c) creating positivity, awareness and ownership around the change, linking with wider community activities (e.g. art competition for new signage for the path, launch event, volunteers planting up the entrance and maintaining the path).

In this way, community rail helps the railway work better for local communities, while also encouraging local people to take advantage of such improvements. Community rail also visibly puts the community's stamp on the railway, from station murals created by local students, to gardens tended by volunteers, to guided walks from stations around local landscapes and histories. In this way, community rail shows how the railway is for and all about the community, and it provides a mechanism for the community to have a sense of ownership over the railway. It integrates the railway with local identities, and creating a feeling of belonging and connectedness that social psychology asserts is so important in driving behaviour.⁸⁶ Our evidence shows that this isn't just nice-to-

⁷⁹ Community Rail Network (2019) *Value of Community Rail*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/ACoRP-Value-of-Community-Rail-2019-final-for-web-141019.pdf>

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Gatersleben, B. (2012) 'The psychology of sustainable transport', *Psychology*, 25, pp. 676-679, <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-25/edition-9/psychology-sustainable-transport>

⁸² Hanna, K.; Dale, A.; Ling, C. (2009) 'Social capital and quality of place: reflections on growth and change in a small town', *Local Environment*, 14, 33-46.

⁸³ NatCen (2019) *Access to Transport and Life Opportunities*,

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

⁸⁴ <https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/green-promises-broken-garden-villages-and-garden-towns-will-be-dominated-by-the-car/>

⁸⁵ Murtagh, N., Gatersleben, B. & Uzzell, D. (2012) 'Self-identity threat and resistance to change: Evidence from regular travel behaviour'. *Journal of Environmental Behaviour*, 32(4), 318-326; Steg, L., Vlek, C. & Slotegraaf, G. (2001). 'Instrumental-reasoned and symbolic-affective motives for using a motor car'. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 4, 151-169; Weintrobe, S. (2013a) 'The difficult problem of anxiety in thinking about climate change'. In Weintrobe, S. (ed.) *Engaging with Climate Change: Psychoanalytic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp.33-47.

⁸⁶ See Fiske, S.T. and Taylor, S.E. (2013) *Social Cognition*. Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill; also see our report *Communicating Community Rail* (2017) for analysis of what research tells us on how community-level involvement and communications on rail can bring about change on sustainable travel attitudes and behaviours, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CommunicatingCommunityRail-researchreport-2017.pdf>

have: it works. Lines with community rail partnerships consistently perform significantly better in terms of passenger numbers.⁸⁷ Qualitative evidence shows countless examples of people's perceptions, appreciation and use of the railway being transformed.⁸⁸

Developing and expanding community engagement:

Community rail enjoys valuable support from the DfT and rail industry, as set out in the DfT's *Community Rail Development Strategy*. Without this, its growth, development, and existence, would not be possible. We therefore recommend that the role of community rail in working towards modal shift and sustainable transport, and scope for drawing on its insights and extending this type of work further, is recognised in the TDP. Although it is already widespread, there is scope to expand community rail into new areas, with our support. Community rail has been growing, but we anticipate this growth being checked by the challenges brought about by Covid-19, and some community rail partnerships could possibly be at risk. The transport decarbonisation agenda makes it even more important for community rail to be protected and enhanced, to enable it to continue bringing our railways and stations into the hearts of communities, and we look forward to continuing to work with the DfT to this end.

There is also much opportunity for community rail to develop its activities on sustainability, especially to support improved transport integration and promote end-to-end sustainable journeys. We are working hard to support and advise our members to develop their impact in this area of work, while ensuring that community rail remains community-led. The leadership of government, and a clear focus across transport partners, spearheaded by the TDP, will be hugely beneficial. Our recommendation to put 'making public transport and active travel the natural choice for daily activities' and community-led, place-based approached at the forefront of the strategy would have a powerful, empowering effect. Our consultation with members reveals many barriers to them achieving local changes, especially in regards to modal integration. There are often evidenced and relatively low-cost 'no brainers' that would make much difference to local people, which come up against bureaucratic or regulatory issues. Affordability, complexity and accessibility (in its broadest sense) are also blockers to people engaging positively with rail. We recommend that the TDP sets out commitments to work with communities (with support from us and our [sustainable transport partners](#)) to better understand such barriers and break them down.

Community engagement, levelling up and young people:

There are some aspects of community engagement that bear a particular importance to transport decarbonisation and can unlock greater co-benefits. We strongly welcome the recognition of diversity in this priority, and recommend this is a prominent, integral theme of the TDP. This is not only to recognise and respond to differences between communities and particular local contexts so interventions are appropriate. It also enables a more equitable approach to transport, which addresses disadvantage, and draws on and celebrates local diversity and identities. As we have emphasised, it needs to be ensured that the decarbonisation transition does not leave people behind, but more than this, it can potentially re-engage, enable and empower people from all sections of society in relation to their transport networks, supporting the levelling-up agenda. As community rail shows, increasing access to sustainable transport can have a transformative effect on people's lives, broadening mobility horizons and opening opportunities, especially for those who have been marginalised and excluded.⁸⁹ This should be strongly recognised in the TDP, alongside the idea that engaging and empowering widely across communities, in a way that celebrates local identities, can support feelings of ownership, pride and positivity towards sustainable transport, as we have described. Sustainability, inclusion and diversity are inextricably intertwined, and many experts argue that you cannot have one without the other; the most widely accepted definition of sustainable development is based on inter- and intra-generational equity.⁹⁰

We also urge that a particular strand of inclusion and empowerment is considered and emphasised within the TDP: youth engagement. Engaging young people in sustainable transport is especially valuable socially and economically. Our members' work shows that helping young people to become familiar and confident using sustainable transport (not a given by any means) can have profound, life-changing effects, enabling access to

⁸⁷ See p16-18 of Community Rail Network (2019) *Value of Community Rail*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Acorp-Value-of-Community-Rail-12019-V3.pdf>

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Community Rail Network (2018) *Community Rail & Social Inclusion*, <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ACoRP-CRSI2018.pdf>

⁹⁰ United Nations (1987) *Our Common Future - Brundtland Report*, Oxford University Press.

education, training and work that might have otherwise seemed unattainable. Youth organisations we have worked with support our view that sustainable transport access and confidence is crucial to young people's life chances. We understand too that transport came up repeatedly in the government's development of its Youth Charter. Successfully introducing young people to sustainable transport means reaching people at a key point in life, as transport habits are formed, meaning there is no need to try to achieve a (difficult) shift later on. This is crucial to decarbonisation, and there is an opportunity to put young people at the forefront of change, especially as many are less car-oriented⁹¹ and more environmentally concerned than older generations. Of course, engaging young people also aligns with the concept of sustainability, which is about thinking to the future, and building equity between generations. Hence drawing on young people's voices and ideas encourages greater attention to sustainability, and can support the transport sector to be future-focused. Yet, in our experience, involving young people meaningfully and drawing on their views is not widespread in transport. How this can be done more widely is explored in new report on '[Engaging young people in rail](#)'.

Putting community empowerment at the centre of the TDP:

We make the arguments above partly to get across the role that community rail – our unique network of community involvement in transport – can play in transport decarbonisation. However, we recommend that the TDP should recognise *the role that communities and community empowerment can play generally* in decarbonisation, and bringing about a more sustainable and inclusive transport future. As noted earlier, community rail hinges around the railway, but it is increasingly working, thinking and engaging on a much broader basis, and encouraging rail partners to think holistically about rail, considering what the railway means to local people and their places. We believe that the lessons and principles of community rail can be applied in multiple ways across the transport arena, and, while there are some other wonderful examples outside of community rail aligning with this ethos, there is room for much wider application and community involvement and empowerment in transport, as a standard mode of working. We propose that the TDP could address this, showing leadership and supporting transport operators and authorities to not only decarbonise individual modes, but involve and empower local people in transformation. We and [our partners in sustainable travel](#) would be willing, able and excited to work with the government to embed such a world-leading, innovative approach.

As we have proposed, putting community engagement and community led change at the forefront of the TDP could have a powerful, enabling effect in communities being able to drive and support changes on transport decarbonisation that work for them, to have ownership over the transition, to take advantage of improvements, and reap the benefits. This may make decarbonisation not only more effective and swift, but also more inclusive, ensuring local needs are met and diversity understood, and probably more cost effective, by capitalising on the will and enthusiasm within communities to create a more sustainable future, and encouraging collaboration and pooling of resources. It would also help transport decarbonisation to be effectively linked at a local level with related policy areas, such as ensuring that new housing developments are well connected with public transport and active travel.

To deliver on this, we recommend that the wording of the priority and objectives underneath should be strengthened, as follows:

A place-based approach, driven by communities and their needs and aspirations

- **remove barriers to empower communities to spearhead positive local change that responds to local needs and opportunities**
- **provide proactive support for local areas, considering and drawing on local diversity and identities**
- **help communities to collaborate and communicate with transport providers and authorities, working towards inclusive, accessible and sustainable transport networks that serve local people and their places**

We have proposed removing the top objective, as this can be interpreted as prioritising cities, which will invariably produce greater emissions due to population density. *A place-based approach is appropriate and valuable everywhere*, and may work especially well in developing innovative practices needed in more rural areas that do not lend well to large-scale mass transit (as experience in community rail and community transport shows). We also advise greater emphasis on empowerment, so the will, enthusiasm and capacity within communities can be

⁹¹ <https://info.uwe.ac.uk/news/UWENews/news.aspx?id=3754>

drawn on, and communities enabled to drive changes that work for them and their future. The current version sounds 'top-down' in places, as though solutions may be different for different areas, but still imposed from 'on high'. A truly place-based approach, that aligns with research and best practice in community engagement and sustainability, must be driven from the ground up, albeit with support, facilitation, leadership and barriers removed by government, and mechanisms for communities to feed in continually to policy and decision makers. We are happy to discuss this part of the TDP further with DfT, based on our extensive knowledge of community engagement in transport.

5. Green transport technology and innovation

- Utilise the UK's world-leading scientists, business leaders and innovators to position the UK as an internationally recognised leader of environmentally sustainable technology and innovation in transport
- Build on expertise in the UK for technology developments and capitalise on near market quick wins

Again, we comment in less detail on this priority given our field of work and expertise, but offer a few observations that tie in with our recommendations above:

- Related to our points above about behaviour change evidence, we would emphasise that using data is not really about 'informed choices' as the report asserts (p59), but making it easier and more natural to use public transport and active travel. Therefore, all technology development should be with this aim in mind, and some will be especially important in aiding modal shift, such as smart multi-modal ticketing, for example;
- The report refers to rail electrification but not the rate at which this will happen nor ensuring that the electric will be produced by renewable sources, despite the case study on track side solar (2.36, p29). Uncertainty and delays around electrification of course has an effect on the purchase and refurbishment of rolling stock and how swiftly rail can decarbonise; given the embodied carbon of rail vehicles, which should be taken into account in the TDP, the longevity of vehicles is important;
- Innovation is about much more than technology; as we have alluded to, community engagement can itself be seen as an innovation, drawing on the resources, ideas and enthusiasm within communities to make sustainable travel attractive, aspirational and natural (2.43);
- Community engagement and empowerment can continually enable and encourage innovation, by shining a light on local needs and opportunities that might otherwise be overlooked, and bringing partners and interests together to think creatively about local solutions;
- Communities can also feed into and communicate technological advances, helping to build interest, enthusiasm and awareness of low carbon options, while also ensuring that technologies are appropriate and tailored to local challenges and tested in real life situations;
- Communities may also be able to identify opportunities for application of new technologies and efficiencies, such as locally generated renewable energy powering both a railway station (or even traction) and other local services and facilities.

The latter points would all be achieved through the empowering, place-based approach we describe above, hence the importance of a strengthened priority four acting as a foundation for other priorities.

6. Reducing carbon in a global economy

- Lead international efforts in transport emissions reduction
- Recognise aviation and maritime are international by nature and require international solutions
- Harness the UK as a global centre of expertise, driving low carbon innovation and global leadership, boosting the UK economy

Again, we comment in less detail on this priority given that our experience lying mostly within the UK. However, we suggest a few ways that community-based and led responses can also support and align with international concerns, perhaps in unexpected ways:

- Despite the research evidence pointing to its importance, community empowerment in transport is far from typical, within the UK and beyond. Globally, we believe community rail to be unique, as a well-established, connected and widespread network of community involvement and mobilisation in transport

(although there are a few isolated examples elsewhere). Putting communities at the forefront and lead of the TDP is therefore itself an opportunity to show global leadership: a practice that is evidence-led, and which other countries might adopt and learn from;

- We advise against seeing aviation and maritime as requiring solely international solutions: in both cases, domestic and localised solutions can play a big part. For example, encouraging domestic (or inter-Europe) sustainable tourism by train can be boosted through local communications and promotions, and by community businesses working with transport operators, as community rail experience shows. Communities can also reduce their reliance on shipped/transported goods by encouraging and supporting local producers and creating a more circular economy;
- We advise against detaching UK-based transport entirely from the international picture, which might disguise a tendency to shift problems overseas; for example, promoting rapid take-up of new electric cars, as per priority two, will mean cheaper second-hand petrol and diesel cars being sold to other, poor countries, potentially off-setting any carbon gains made here. If we have even more cars in the world in total, being driven just as much overall, any progress made in the UK will be futile;
- To show leadership on the international stage, the UK government will also need to learn from experience in other countries, such as the problems that have occurred in Norway with accelerating take-up of EVs (referenced above) and localities that have achieved significant modal shift, such as Copenhagen.

Appendix A:

Extract from our initial response to the decarbonising transport call for evidence, setting out how we can feed in and help our members across community rail to feed in is below.

How we and our members can feed in

There are a number of ways we can coordinate input to the Plan from community rail, and support the DfT in gathering views in a constructive manner. We propose to:

- **Provide a written response** to the consultation document, commenting on its contents from a community rail perspective, using examples of our members' work, and drawing on research on what works in engaging communities on sustainability and transport - *We aim to do this in May;*
- **Encourage our members to feed in their views and examples** – *We have already promoted the consultation and will continue to do so and advise on responding;*
- **Feed in the outputs of our review of integrated sustainable transport work community rail**, which we are currently getting underway. This is involving consulting community rail partnerships on their past work, successes, challenges and ambitions in regards to the integration of rail with bus, walking and cycling. The results of this should be highly relevant to the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, as integration across sustainable modes is clearly critical – *We anticipate providing the write-up of this review in June/July;*
- **Attend and promote the Transport Decarbonisation workshops** – *We have already encouraged members to register their interest, and register ours below;*
- **Explore whether we might coordinate a dedicated community rail workshop** to feed in to the Plan. As noted above, our members will all have useful insights to contribute. With our existing (part DfT funded) events programme, we suggest that a dedicated workshop for our members would be useful, which we would be happy to coordinate, perhaps at our existing seminars or conference, once face-to-face events are possible again, or via video conferencing before this. *We are keen to discuss this further.*
- **Offer our expertise to the Net Zero Transport Council** – We would be very pleased to sit on or otherwise engage with the Council, and suggest that we would bring a unique perspective to the table on community-led change, as outlined above.