

# Integrated sustainable transport – our core policy recommendations



Enabling communities to travel through sustainable, equitable and healthy means, including a shift away from private car dependency, brings immediate and long-term benefits for local people, places and economies, while being essential to tackling the climate emergency.

Our railways are fundamental to this, and should form the backbone of a sustainable, inclusive, coherent transport system, yet in the majority of locations, railway stations are poorly connected, and challenging to access without a car.

The government's commitment to create an Integrated National Transport Strategy with people and communities at the fore, alongside progressing rail reform, presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to dismantle the ubiquitous challenges around modal integration, opening rail up and enabling greener journeys for all.

This document aims to inform thinking and progress, drawing on insights and experience in community rail.

Community rail is a unique and growing grassroots movement, with 75 community rail partnerships, 1,300 station volunteer groups and other community-led initiatives across Britain, engaging and empowering communities, and helping them get the most from their railways. A key part of community rail's work is spearheading modal integration with rail to better meet local people's needs.

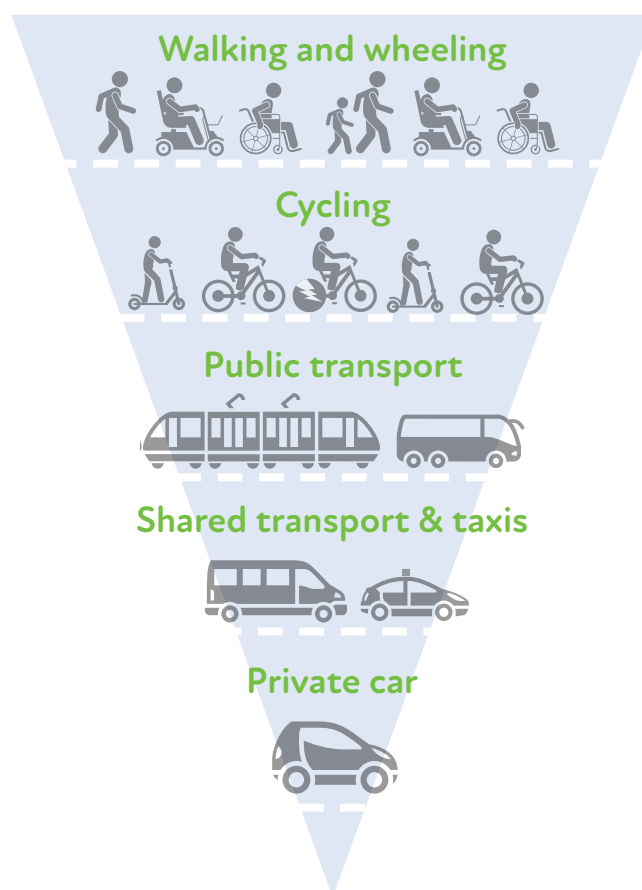


Pic – Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership



Pic – The Friends of Buxton Station

## The Sustainable Travel Hierarchy



Adapted from [www.transport.gov.scot/active-travel/developing-an-active-nation/sustainable-travel-and-the-national-transport-strategy/](http://www.transport.gov.scot/active-travel/developing-an-active-nation/sustainable-travel-and-the-national-transport-strategy/)

## Problem:

Car-centric thinking and assumptions within rail and transport planning gets in the way of creating space and advancing opportunities to connect rail with sustainable modes.

Siloed thinking, and a fragmented, competitive approach between operators, makes it hard to bring partners together and achieve coordination between services.

Local transport solutions are often designed without the involvement of the communities they seek to benefit, via modal silos instead of place-based, holistic approaches with people at the forefront.

Investment in integrated sustainable transport has not been provided in a way to support long-term, holistic and effective change, combining infrastructure and service improvements with local engagement, across the full sustainable transport mix. It has tended to be competitive and has failed to encourage joined-up working.

Train operating companies, which currently manage most of Britain's railway stations, mostly have limited access to resources and expertise to improve integration, which is holding back progress in the sector.

## Recommendation:

Across rail and the wider transport sector, delivery plans and decision-making should reflect the sustainable transport hierarchy, being clear about the need to reduce car dependency and provide for non-drivers, and the benefits this brings, across the urban to rural spectrum.

The set-up of Great British Railways should be used to bring modal integration to the fore within the rail sector, and clarify the railway's role, aligning overtly with the new Integrated National Transport Strategy.

The Integrated National Transport Strategy should set out an approach to ensure transport operators and authorities improve integration between sustainable modes and services, and work in synergy to compete with the private car. This should also be reflected in the set-up of Great British Railways.

National policy should make clear that local communities should be engaged and listened to in the design and delivery of local integrated transport solutions. Great British Railways has a key role in ensuring the engagement of communities in station catchment areas through community rail and other opportunities.

The Integrated National Transport Strategy should support its aims and local ambitions with clear long-term commitments for suitable resourcing. This should be provided in a way that supports a holistic, place-based approach across the sustainable transport mix, involving local people, and requirements for different operators and authorities working together across modes and area boundaries.

Great British Railways should be set up to ensure clear responsibility and resourcing for modal integration at and around stations, including partnership working with bus operators, communities, and local and regional government. In the meantime, train operating companies should be supported to continue to improve their resourcing and approach to integrated sustainable transport.

**Community Rail Network** is ready to work with government at all levels, partners, policy advisers and thought leaders to encourage and enable integrated sustainable transport. For more information on community rail and its work and insights in this area, including [research reports](#) and [policy papers](#), visit [communityrail.org.uk](https://communityrail.org.uk). To get in touch with us to discuss these issues further, contact [info@communityrail.org.uk](mailto:info@communityrail.org.uk).