



Department
for Transport

Better Connected

A Strategy for Integrated Transport



April 2026

Department for Transport
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Contents

Ministerial foreword	4
Executive summary	6
Introduction	8
Strategic framework and principles	14
Priority: Simplify payments and information	20
Priority: Provide safe and dependable journeys	26
Priority: Make travel accessible and affordable	34
Priority: Create healthier communities	40
Priority: Align transport and development	50
Priority: Champion data and technology	56
Priority: Empower local leaders	64
Priority: Optimise decision-making and appraisal	68
Monitoring and evaluation	74
List of case studies	84
Glossary	86
Endnotes	88

Spotlights

Spotlight on: Transport in different settings	16
Spotlight on: Great British Railways	32
Spotlight on: Buses	48
Spotlight on: Roles and responsibilities	62

Ministerial foreword



This government has kickstarted a major overhaul of transport across the country. From powering ahead with rail reform, giving more control to local leaders over bus services and improving the state of our roads – we have wasted

no time in tackling the challenges we inherited. So far, our efforts have been guided by a mission to fix the foundations and to get people moving again. But now, it is time to look further ahead and set out our long-term vision for a better connected future.

We have all felt frustrated or let down when the transport network does not work. Delays and cancellations have come to disrupt too many of our journeys. That is on top of travel information being difficult to find or understand, transport not being there when we need it and the cost of transport putting pressure on household budgets. For too long, this patchwork of problems has stifled the potential of people and places across the country. Growth stalled, opportunities narrowed and confidence in the future faded.

This needs to change. So, this strategy is a call to action for everyone who works in transport in England. It brings together, in one place, our vision for a transport network that works for people and can be relied upon. Built on the three core principles of people, place and partnership, which provide the foundations for our future.

In practice that means a transport network that connects communities, that considers accessibility and safety by default and that gives people affordable choices over how they travel. It also means championing innovation that will knock down all the small hurdles that we know become big barriers to travel, and working with the private sector to embed these innovations to make sure they have real impact.

With a simpler, more reliable network, we can keep more money in people's pockets, unlock good jobs, well-connected homes and good growth for our communities. This is particularly important in rural areas where a well-functioning transport system can mean the difference between isolation and opportunity.

Our multi-year £30 billion transport settlement is already giving local leaders the certainty they need to invest in good transport, but it is clear that politicians in Westminster cannot truly appreciate the challenges facing Woking, Wolverhampton or Whitby. That is why we have co-designed our approach with the people we will work with and aim to serve. We have been up and down the country, hearing from local leaders, industry and the public. Their insight and ideas shine through these pages, and I am confident that our vision captures their priorities.

Truly people-focussed transport is not something that can be delivered by government alone or overnight. We are empowering local leaders, who know their areas best, to take the reins. Their expertise will ensure this strategy's vision and priorities are delivered in a way which best meets local needs. We have already seen this approach be hugely successful in areas like the West Midlands and Greater Manchester, and we want to see more communities across England feel the benefits.

Successive governments failed to understand what people need from transport. They failed to grip the issues at play, and they failed to explore meaningful solutions. This government is taking a different approach. We are listening, we are learning and we are making changes through this strategy that will improve people's lives every day.

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport



Executive summary

Better Connected is this government's vision for domestic transport in England. That vision is simple – for transport to work well for people, for it to be safe, reliable, affordable and accessible so they can get on in life and make the journeys they need to easily.

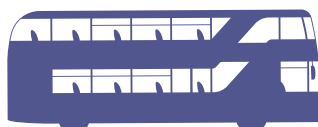
It is shaped by what we have heard from our co-design process and research, the changes we know are happening in society and in transport, and by what we want to achieve for this country. Our guiding principles of **People**, **Place** and **Partnership** will underpin how transport is designed, built and operated in the future enabling more seamless journeys across the network. First and foremost, we will ensure that people are at the heart of everything we do, so transport serves them, no matter who they are. Second, we will use transport to create better connected places across the country, so communities can thrive and grow. And finally, we will work in partnership across government, with local leaders and the transport sector, so that decision-making is effective, collaborative, and delivers the right outcomes for people and places.

These guiding principles support the eight priorities set out in Better Connected, that have been shaped by what people and stakeholders told us matter most to them. These priorities are not premised on what type of transport people might be using, but by what people told us they want and need from the transport system, however and whenever they choose to travel. Progress on these priorities will create an integrated transport system, one where people are able to travel easily and reliably across local and national networks which feel joined up and have been designed to meet their needs.

Journeys will be easier to plan and undertake with a simple approach to **payments and information**, so people can travel door-to-door with confidence that they are not overpaying. This means making fares and payments for all kinds of travel more straightforward and improving integrated ticketing for public transport. We will make more kinds of travel information available, accurate, and easy to access. We will ensure local transport authorities have the tools they need to deliver integrated ticketing in their areas; and that travellers have access to reliable, up-to-date information about everything from roadworks to station lifts.

We will provide **safe and dependable** transport so people can trust the network and travel with confidence. This means anticipating and responding effectively to disruption, improving reliability for drivers and public transport users and proactively maintaining roads, pavements and rail networks. It also means reducing deaths and injuries on the network and embedding user insight into future delivery. To support this, we will expand the role of the strengthened rail passenger watchdog so it can monitor rail passenger experience and advocate for the rights and interests of passengers across all public transport.

The transport network will be increasingly **accessible and affordable**, providing people real choice in how they travel. We will do this by designing accessible travel environments and taking action to reduce the cost of transport, including through the first rail fares freeze in 30 years. We will work with disabled people to build a shared framework for travel through our Accessible Travel Charter that will set expectations for transport providers to implement accessibility best practice across the network.



Transport will help create **healthier communities**, where making healthy travel choices will be easy and convenient, supporting cleaner, quieter and more liveable places. To achieve this, we will improve walking, wheeling and cycling routes, improve integration between cycle and rail, and scale-up shared mobility. This is alongside delivering cleaner transport to improve air quality and reduce noise pollution, helping to reduce health inequalities. We will strengthen statutory guidance for local transport authorities, making clear that pavements and cycle paths must be planned, maintained, and managed with the same priority as road infrastructure.

Decisions on **transport and development** will be better joined up, creating more well-connected places to live. To achieve this, we will integrate our approach to transport, housing and wider development across the system, embed vision-led planning across all tiers of government and use transport infrastructure to unlock new developments. We will set an expectation that where new housing is built close to existing transport routes, its density will be maximised so that more people experience good connectivity.

We will champion **data and technology** to deliver an integrated, innovative and accessible transport system that is fit for the future. This means embedding technology and innovation in transport, strengthening transport's digital and data foundations and investing in digital technology to ensure that we are maximising the opportunities that they offer. We will increase the amount of open data in the transport system and support local authorities to trial innovative solutions that deliver tangible impacts to the places and people they represent.

We will support and **empower local leaders** who are accountable to their local electorate to deliver better local transport for their communities. To achieve this, we will put more power in their hands, provide them with integrated and long-term funding, empower them to deliver local transport that they judge is right for their communities and prioritise local capacity and capability building. We will ensure that the outcomes and indicators we set for local transport funding settlements are aligned with the vision and priorities set out in this strategy.

We will optimise **decision-making and appraisal** so that it aligns with the principles set out in this strategy, and is underpinned by high quality analysis. To achieve this, we will deliver integrated and transparent decision-making, strengthen our people-focussed evidence base, and work to enable excellent local decisions and appraisal. We will shortly publish our new Appraisal, Modelling and Evaluation Strategy, to align our analytical work to the vision set out in this strategy.

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the delivery of this strategy and will publish a progress update this Parliament. We will track the delivery of our commitments, understand what our commitments and the overall strategy have enabled, and monitor key metrics to seek to understand how we are changing people's experience of transport for the better.



Introduction

We need to consider transport through a new lens; rather than a traditional approach to transport which thinks in terms of buses, cars or trains, we must instead prioritise how people experience the transport network as a whole, and the transformative change we want everyone to see and feel when using transport.

Better connecting people through transport is not just about the huge benefit to individuals, it drives economic growth – the number one priority of this government – and closes regional disparities. Improved connectivity enables people across the country to access more and better jobs and raises living standards by cutting costs to households and businesses. It drives innovation by putting us closer to other people, their skills and ideas, allowing businesses to reach a wider pool of employees and customers. This stimulates the investment we need to get the economy and wages growing.

We have published our Infrastructure Strategy, are reprioritising buses through the Bus Services Act, are well on our way to establishing Great British Railways and will publish a new plan for freight later this year. This strategy now sets out this government's vision for transport, one that works for people, and gets the best out of the transport system we have, backed by £30 billion of transport investment. This includes increased multiyear local funding in England's towns and cities, providing local leaders with the long-term funding certainty they need to maintain and improve their local transport network.

How this strategy will be used

This strategy is for England and is domestically focussed, recognising the importance of connectivity to ports and airports. We will continue to work closely with the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern

Ireland to ensure alignment where appropriate, respecting each nation's distinct transport responsibilities and priorities.

It will be embedded throughout the Department for Transport, shaping how we work across the country. It will inform the department's Strategic Plan, influence future organisational transformation, and guide our policy development and investment decisions, including informing our approach to future business cases and programme delivery.

As power continues to be devolved from central government and more long-term and consolidated funding is provided to local areas, the role of local leaders becomes ever more vital, whilst our role moves towards enabling and supporting them to deliver. This government is investing in local democracy, with local leaders accountable to their electorate for delivering local transport. This is supported by the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, widening and deepening devolution to give local leaders the tools they needed to drive growth.

This strategy is intended to support both national and local government by providing a clear national vision and set of priorities that should inform their choices. Local Transport Plan guidance and local transport authority outcome frameworks will set out further detail on our expectations for local delivery. They will be aligned with the vision and priorities set out in this strategy, ensuring local leaders are empowered to deliver locally integrated transport networks.

The private sector also has an integral role to play, with a wealth of knowledge and skills in delivering better transport services and transforming people's experience of transport with innovative and new approaches and technology. We expect them to use this strategy to align their work with our national vision, and to use the principles and priorities to inform how they invest in transport.

Our engagement and research

This strategy has been built from the ground up, co-designed with and shaped by the people who use transport every day. We listened to people's views on transport, their needs and the barriers they face. Through our public Call for Ideas and our Regional Roadshow we heard from over 6,000 members of the public and over 1,000 organisations, from community groups to transport operators, and met with over 600 stakeholders. And through our targeted People's Panels we heard from groups that are often left out of the conversation, including disabled people, younger people, those who live in rural areas and older people.

Alongside our engagement, we conducted analysis of robust data sources and research produced or commissioned by the department (such as the National Travel Survey) and its arm's length bodies to understand how people are currently using the transport network and what they need from it.

From our engagement and research, we know that people's transport needs are changing. People are working and shopping more online, while travelling for leisure, such as day trips and holidays, has increased¹. People also use transport in different ways. For example, 17 to 29 year olds use the bus and rail more than other age groups, with bus usage increasing again for those aged 60+². And two in five of those in the poorest 20% of households do not have access to a car (compared to 14% in the richest 20%) and are much more reliant on local public transport than other groups³.

Other new ways to get around are emerging, with connected and automated vehicles, very light rail systems, micromobility and e-bikes beginning to reshape the world of transport, which provide even more flexibility and choice.



Regional Roadshow locations

Following our launch event in Leeds, we visited the following locations as part of our 11-stop Regional Roadshow.





L3608
CTF-1

GSM-R
608

L367

What people told us they want

People are different and have different priorities and circumstances, however our engagement told us that overall people want to see improvements and changes in a number of areas across the transport system and network, and this is supported by research from across the sector.

Further detail can be found in our supporting documents.

Greater choice in how they travel – whether that is people feeling safe to cycle to work or choosing to take the bus because the service runs frequently enough to fit around day-to-day life.

59% of trips in 2024 were by car; safety was reported as the top reason that people do not cycle (48% of respondents) and increasing frequency of services was the top measure to increase bus use (37% of respondents).^{4,5,6}

Transport that reflects the realities of where people live, rather than one-size-fits-all solutions, improving the transport offer for places that have been traditionally under-served.

For example, a higher percentage of people agreed with the statement 'I could not get by without my car' in rural areas (71%) and some regions (60% in the South-West), compared to the average (52%).⁷

A reliable transport network, where roadworks are managed better to avoid unnecessary and unexpected delays and fewer cancellations including on our trains and buses.

Reliability has the biggest influence on bus user satisfaction and the average person's road journey delay is currently forecast to increase 11% by 2035^{8,9}.

Transport decisions that are shaped by local needs, better integrated with other services like healthcare and education to create better places to live.

Our Model of Connectivity indicates that 66% of people aged 65+ live in areas where no hospital can be reached within 30 minutes by public transport¹⁰.

Services that embrace new technology, and do so in a way that is safe, inclusive and future-ready.

Multi-modal apps/websites such as Google Maps and Citymapper were mentioned in a recent survey as helpful in identifying and comparing different options for completing a multi-stage journey, including where the journey might involve different modes.¹¹

Local leaders that are empowered with the tools and flexibility to deliver what works best in their communities and to grow their economies. Only 54% of local authorities rated themselves as having good or fairly good capacity to plan and deliver transport, contributing to only 28% reporting bidding for funding at every occasion, potentially leading to lost opportunities.¹²

To feel confident and secure when walking to the bus stop, taking a taxi or private hire vehicle, or travelling alone after dark. Only 14% of women reported feeling very safe on public transport and women are more likely than men to take precautions to protect their safety when walking, cycling or using public transport.^{15,16}

Transport that is accessible and inclusive by design, not as an afterthought. Only 64% of disabled people feel moderately confident travelling, compared to 85% of non-disabled people.¹⁷

Fair pricing that reflects the value of the journey and does not lock people out of opportunity. The poorest 20% of households take 15% fewer trips than the average, but spend the highest proportion of their income on transport due to rising costs and lower income growth.^{13,14}

Journeys that are joined-up, with frequent services, aligned timetables, smooth interchanges and integrated ticketing, with transport working as a system rather than a set of disconnected parts. Just 14% of all public transport trips involve more than one public transport mode, which may reflect poor service integration.¹⁸

Taking what we have learnt from our engagement and research, the changes we know are happening in society and in transport, and what we want to achieve for this country, we have developed our strategic framework. This sets out our vision, principles and priorities for transport.

Our strategic framework

Our vision for transport

Transport will work well for people; it will be safe, reliable, affordable and accessible so they can get on in life and make the journeys they need to easily.



Our principles

Underpinning what we do and how we do it in transport



Place

Use transport to create better connected places



People

Put people at the heart of everything we do



Partnership

Work in partnership with local leaders and experts



Our priorities

Informed by what people told us matters to them



Simplify payments and information

Journeys across different kinds of transport will be easy to plan, pay for, and navigate – with integrated ticketing wherever possible



Align transport and development

Decisions on transport, housing and wider development will be integrated, creating better-connected places



Provide safe and dependable journeys

We will provide safe and dependable transport, so people can travel with confidence



Champion data and technology

Data and technology will drive the integrated, innovative and accessible transport system of the future



Make travel accessible and affordable

Increasingly accessible and affordable transport will provide people with real choice in how they travel



Empower local leaders

Local leaders will be empowered and supported to deliver better local transport for their communities



Create healthier communities

Making healthy travel choices will be easy and convenient, supporting cleaner, quieter and more liveable places



Optimise decision-making and appraisal

Transport investment decisions will prioritise our principles of people and place, underpinned by high quality analysis

Our principles

Our guiding principles of **People**, **Place** and **Partnership** mark a shift in how we will approach transport. They frame the priorities set out in this strategy and underpin how we expect transport to be designed, built and operated in future. We will embed them in how we approach transport decision-making nationally and they are designed to support our delivery partners and local decision-makers in determining their approach to transport.



Put people at the heart of everything we do

This means engaging meaningfully with people to understand their needs now and in the future, and co-designing solutions to deliver the experience that people want, like somewhere to sit at the bus stop, accessible access to stations or simple ways to pay for car parking across the country. It also means drawing on behavioural research to understand how people instinctively engage with the transport system, and the challenges they face with it, and aligning our decision-making and appraisal systems to consider the needs of people by default.



Use transport to create better connected places

This means enabling local leaders, who know their communities best, to decide what transport is right for them, ensuring that they have the powers, funding and tools to create good places to live. Most journeys begin or end at home, so it means ensuring homes are well connected to the places people want to go, that it is easy and practical to choose different options for travel, and it means taking care of our roads, cycle paths and pavements across the country so travelling around and between places is safe and easy.



Work in partnership across the transport sector

This means working across government to ensure that transport plays its role in delivering this government's priorities and working constructively with the devolved governments and local leaders so it delivers for their communities too. It means drawing on the expertise of the private sector on innovations like digital demand responsive transport, and recognising the vital role of the third sector, including providing community transport solutions. And it means playing our part in enabling open and accurate data sharing, to ensure that decisions and interventions are underpinned by the best information.

Spotlight on: Transport in different settings

England's population is spread across a diverse landscape and the differing features in each type of place mean that different transport solutions should be provided to meet the needs of the local communities.



Urban

Over 80% of the population live in urban or suburban areas¹⁹. Urban areas generally consist of high employment and population density, mixed land use and a variety of transport options including public transport and walking, wheeling and cycling.

- 1 People should be able to walk, wheel and cycle entire journeys, such as local trips to school or work, enabled by accessible infrastructure and supportive policies. Walking, wheeling and cycling can also regularly be used to support the first and last stage of longer journeys using public transport.

- 2 Micromobility options (e.g. e-bikes and e-scooters) should be available for short trips and to support first and last mile connectivity, particularly rental services that can provide more flexibility than ownership.
- 3 Frequent and well-integrated public transport services supported by measures that give buses priority on the roads, should provide people with good options to get around cities quickly and easily. They should also provide longer distance connectivity to passengers and workers of ports and airports, and reduce congestion.
- 4 Promoting car and lift sharing should be used to manage congestion and overall traffic emissions. Local areas decide if motorcycles can use bus lanes to reduce congestion.
- 5 Taxis and private hire vehicles should support first and last mile journeys and provide services outside of peak hours when other modes of public transport are less available, supporting night-time economies.
- 6 Local transport should connect effectively into national networks, including long-distance rail services and the Strategic Road Network to connect different urban areas. City regions should lead the way in providing attractive and reliable alternatives to private cars, which naturally impacts places outside of urban centres.
- 7 To reduce the amount of congestion on roads, public transport should be the cheapest and most convenient option for the majority of local trips. For journeys that need a car, electric vehicles play a role in reducing emissions and improving local air quality.
- 8 Future transport technologies, such as self-driving vehicles, should complement the existing integrated transport network and improve road safety. Innovative last mile freight delivery solutions should be deployed, such as cargo bikes and local cargo hubs.
- 9 Spatial planning should consider proximity to public transport links and building at high and ambitious densities to support its use, creating developments where people do not need to rely on private cars to access shops, jobs and education opportunities.



Suburban

In suburban areas, private vehicles are often the dominant mode as public transport options can be more limited, although walking, wheeling and cycling is still common²⁰.

- 1 Walking, wheeling and cycling should enable first and last mile connectivity and local trips to schools, shops and other services, with cycling an enabler for connecting journeys (e.g. to rail stations or from suburbs to the centre) as well as end-to-end journeys.
- 2 Public transport connections (e.g. bus, tram, train) around and into the nearest town/city should be dependable and frequent, and made more reliable using bus priority routes.
- 3 Demand responsive transport, community transport, taxis and private hire vehicles should play a key role in complementing and enabling access to the wider public transport network.
- 4 Park-and-ride schemes should be deployed with cars, motorcycles or cycles being used for first and last mile journeys where needed. Car sharing schemes and car clubs should be readily available, supporting a shift to a more circular economy for vehicles.
- 5 Use of electric vehicles should become the norm for journeys that people take using a car, with reliable charging infrastructure readily available.
- 6 Spatial planning should consider proximity to public transport links and building at higher densities to support public transport viability, considering proximity to shops, services and other facilities to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling for shorter trips.



Rural

Approximately 20% of the population live in rural areas which tend to have the lowest population density, fewer public transport options and the highest reliance on private vehicles²¹.

- 1 Good walking, wheeling and cycling solutions should be delivered between small communities. Places where people need to walk or wheel, such as in and around villages, should be safe to do so.
- 2 Reliable, coordinated local bus services should connect people with key facilities and provide a viable alternative to private car use.
- 3 As public transport routes are likely to be more dispersed, there should be safe and well-maintained roads for those who rely on their car. Motorcycles offer another mobility option to provide access to services and opportunities.
- 4 Demand responsive transport, community transport, taxis and private hire vehicles, shared cycle schemes, car clubs at rural rail stations and mobility hubs should offer people flexible options to increase connectivity.
- 5 More people transition to using electric vehicles when travelling by car, supported by expanded charging infrastructure.
- 6 Self-driving vehicles should be integrated in future to complement the existing taxi, private hire vehicle and bus fleet, and provide more travel options.
- 7 Transport at tourism hotspots, such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, should be well managed, with park-and-ride options to reduce congestion in seasonal peaks.
- 8 Island communities that rely on vital ferry routes should be served by affordable and regular services that are integrated with other transport.
- 9 Spatial planning should consider how to minimise transport-related social exclusion and ensure that solutions align with local housing, environmental priorities and the Land Use Framework.
- 10 First and last mile connectivity should ensure people can easily complete their journeys from homes, workplaces, town centres and visitor attractions using different transport.

Simplify payments and information

Journeys across different kinds of transport will be easy to plan, pay for, and navigate – with integrated ticketing wherever possible.

Currently, the system can feel complex, require multiple interactions and be tricky to navigate. We want the experience of paying for a train and bus across town, planning and booking a cross-country journey, or paying for parking in a new area, to be easy and straightforward. We are making fares and payments simpler to protect people from overpaying, improving integrated ticketing options, and ensuring travel information is available, accurate, and easy to access.

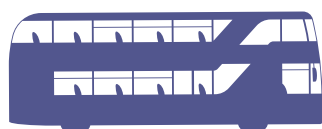
Straightforward transport fares and payments

Paying for all kinds of travel should be simple and transparent – so it is easy to understand the options when booking ahead, straightforward to pay in a new area, and with fare structures that feel intuitive and simple. Passengers told us that they value knowing they will be charged the best fare for their journey, without the need to worry about fare complexity. That is why we are working to simplify fragmented payment methods and fares across the country. The National Bus Fare Cap has simplified the offer to bus passengers, ensuring that no single fare exceeds £3 on participating routes, and some operators are simplifying their other ticket offerings in parallel. For national and long-distance rail, we are working to move away from today's complex fare structure to a simpler, easier to understand approach. As more train operating companies come into public ownership, we intend that

the number of different fare structures will be reduced; and that ticketing will become less complex as the public operator runs a greater proportion of train services.

The launch of Great British Railways in 2027 will, over time, transform passenger rail fares, replacing the current fragmented model in which 14 separate train operating companies have their own fare structures with different restrictions, peak times and approaches to concessions. Passengers will be able to trust that they are getting the best fare for their journey and avoid scenarios of waiting at stations after missing a train because their ticket is only valid on a single operator, or facing a confusing range at ticket machines of marginally different prices for different operators' trains. In parallel to improvements delivered by local and national government, private sector innovation and delivery is vital to improving people's experience of paying for travel, and Great British Railways retail will operate alongside a thriving private sector online retail market, where all retailers can compete in an open and fair manner and continue to drive innovation.

Paying for all journeys should be easier, not just on public transport. That is why we will work with all local authorities in England to roll out the National Parking Platform, a system that allows drivers to use one app to pay for parking in any participating area, rather than needing to download a new payment app in each place. This is digital infrastructure designed by government, now operating in the public interest by the not-for-profit National Parking Platform, supported by the British Parking Association. Beyond simplifying parking payments, the National Parking Platform is exploring opportunities to integrate toll payments and other related road charges, as well as linking parking with rail tickets to make park-and-ride journeys easier, so travellers can drive





to a station, park and continue their journey by train. We encourage all local transport authorities in England to take up support to roll out the platform.

As more people drive and own electric vehicles, it is vital to ensure public chargepoints are accessible to everyone. That is why we have co-sponsored a chargepoint accessibility standard with the Motability Foundation and have passed legislation to enable us to mandate accessibility requirements for public chargepoints in future if needed – to ensure everyone who drives an electric vehicle can charge it when out and about.

Better integrated ticketing for public transport

Paying for public transport will be easier with improved integrated ticketing – allowing more passengers to use a single payment method to travel across different operators and modes. For shorter, local journeys, this means more people can travel easily across all local public transport using one form of payment, with fares automatically calculated. For long-distance journeys, this means a single ticket or barcode can be used for every leg of the journey. There are a variety of options for local areas and operators to deliver simple integrated ticketing,

and the best method depends on the kind of journey, the needs of the passenger, and the priorities of the local area:

- **Contactless** – Passengers with a bankcard tap this to travel, and are charged an automatically calculated fare, referred to as ‘pay as you go’ (PAYG).
- **Smartcard** – Passengers load payment (for PAYG) or travelcards (such as multi-day passes) onto a smartcard with a microchip and tap this to travel.
- **Digital PAYG (DPAYG)** – Passengers download an app, ‘tap’ on with their device (rather than a physical tap reader), and location tracking identifies their journey.
- **Barcode** – Passengers scan a code at a gate, or with a driver or conductor.
- **Paper** – Paper tickets remain available for those who need them.

Contactless payment is our preferred option for delivering integrated ticketing in city regions, and we are committed to supporting and working with them to implement this. That is why **by 2030, we will make available the essential tools for major city regions to roll out integrated contactless ticketing locally in a way that suits their needs [PI1]**. At a national level, this means we will be developing the technology and back-



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end solutions to enable integrated contactless ticketing, so regions do not have to build from scratch; and ensuring local leaders have the funding flexibility and powers to deliver in the way that best suits their communities.

We are working with local leaders and private sector operators on the development of 'Project Coral', a shared technology solution for integrated contactless PAYG. Led by Transport for West Midlands, with funding from the Department for Transport and in partnership with the UK's major bus operators and Midlands Connect, Project Coral will allow anyone with a bankcard on the global Europay, Mastercard, and Visa (EMV) standard – 99.78% of British and European bankcards – to pay for travel across participating bus and tram operators, with fares automatically capped according to the rules set by local authorities. In parallel, **we will develop the technology to enable expansion of Project Coral to rail [PI2]**. We expect Project Coral to be able to be integrated with local transport authorities across bus, rail and tram by 2030. We recognise major city regions are currently delivering according to their needs and priorities, and adoption timelines may vary. Coral is designed to be the national contactless solution for integrated ticketing, and we expect franchising authorities to plan for integration.

Most journeys are local, with 70% of all trips in England under 5 miles in 2024; and we are supporting local leaders with funding settlements to deliver for their areas²². Some of England's largest city regions have received a share of £15.6 billion in multi-year, consolidated funding through the Transport for City Regions settlements. This investment provides long term funding to eligible mayoral strategic authorities to invest in their local transport networks. We recognise that integrated ticketing is a key aspect of improving local connectivity, and this funding will enable mayoral strategic authorities to continue to invest in ticketing where this is a local priority. **We will work with these major city regions to support the delivery of integrated contactless ticketing [PI3]**. Outside city regions,

local transport authorities will receive simplified, long-term funding settlements for transport, allowing them to deliver on their priorities. Our "Empower local leaders" priority sets out how we will support all local transport authorities to deliver for their communities.

We are developing technologies to give local areas in every part of England a menu of choices for implementing integrated ticketing [PI4] – supported by standards and tools developed nationally, and close partnerships with government, operators and the private sector, without being mandated a single solution. As part of this commitment, we are working with the private sector to support the exploration of new and evolving technologies that could offer lower-cost or more flexible ways to implement integrated ticketing. In the East Midlands and the North, we are trialling GPS smartphone-based DPAYG systems which will identify journeys and automatically calculate the correct fare – improving flexibility by removing the need to plan ahead or purchase a physical ticket. We are prioritising the rollout of digital smartcard technology, so Android and Apple users will be able to access travel passes and season tickets on their mobile devices. This will make smartphone-based railcard, season ticket, and PAYG travel possible, while retaining the ability to use physical cards for those without easy access to smartphone apps. By refining and testing these emerging solutions, we aim to give local areas more choice in how they deliver integrated ticketing.

We are working with local partners across the country to implement existing technology in more places, bringing better access to tap-and-go payments to more passengers. For rail passengers in the West Midlands and Greater Manchester, PAYG capability will be delivered at an additional 90 stations by spring 2027. We are supporting efforts in Greater Manchester to integrate eight local rail lines into the Bee Network, allowing passengers to pay for rail journeys in the same way they pay for bus and metro travel. In the North East, local authorities

have worked with operators to deliver the Pop card, allowing passengers to pay for bus, ferry, tram and metro travel with one contactless card.

We are expanding PAYG to a further 52 rail stations in the South East, taking PAYG to over 240 stations – so people can tap in at St Albans and tap out at Sevenoaks, for just one fare. This includes all of London’s airport stations, allowing seamless journeys in the region for visitors and holidaymakers.

Building on this, **we will provide £6m funding to support an integrated transport demonstrator programme in the rural region of the Hope Valley [PI5]**. This programme will explore how delivering simpler ticketing and clear information, alongside integrating existing hourly rail services with an hourly or better bus service, can create a rural public transport system that works for local residents and visitors alike. The demonstrator is inspired by the “Mini Switzerland” concept, with funding provided to East Midlands Combined County Authority to test the potential of integrated transport over the coming years.

Ensure travel information is accurate and easy to access

Travel information for every journey should be straightforward, up-to-date and easy to understand, so people can plan travel with confidence and respond easily if things go wrong. This is not just for public transport information like timetables and fares, but essential practical considerations like whether a lift is working at a station, or how long it takes to walk between a train and a connecting bus or ferry and whether that walk is step-free. For drivers, it means up-to-date disruption and traffic information as well as data about parking and roadworks.

Everyone should be able to plan journeys based on up-to-date information, and adjust easily on the go when conditions change. That is why we will work with transport providers to ensure they open up access to high-quality data in line with existing legislation, enabling the private sector



CASE STUDY PlusBus integration of rail and bus tickets - Nationwide

Traveline (a partnership of transport companies, local authorities and passenger groups) and the Rail Delivery Group have developed and launched a digital version of PlusBus – an add-on eTicket that allows unlimited travel from the passenger’s rail connections – with a National Rail barcode that can be used on most local bus and tram services in PlusBus areas. This new ticket is now live, making integrated travel more convenient, especially for domestic tourism, as rail travellers can benefit from unlimited bus travel both ends of their journey if travelling to or from a PlusBus enabled station. With scanning technology on most bus operators in place and all bus drivers trained to accept the ticket, this opens up possibilities for better integrated ticketing across the country.

to deliver more innovative, user-focussed travel solutions and services – including **working directly with Google to integrate the live location and expected arrival times of local bus services into the Google Maps app [PI6]** for the first time.



CASE STUDY Improving journey planning with open data - Nationwide

Journey navigation apps illustrate how private sector innovation based on open and accurate public data can help passengers easily plan complex journeys in urban areas. Using open datasets including real-time public transport arrivals and service disruptions, Citymapper identifies options for end-to-end routes for journeys, including calculating the time for connections across modes, showing accessible options, and suggesting the best part of the train or tram to board. Passengers can easily see and choose the best route based on their preferences and needs, and real-time location tracking and service information updated across the journey enable accurate arrival times to be shown, reducing uncertainty. Wayfinding and journey planning apps using open data across the transport network allow passengers to undertake complex door-to-door journeys with confidence.

Better road information helps everyone travelling by car, motorcycle, bus, taxi or private hire vehicle get around by the quickest, most efficient route. National Highways is working with third-party wayfinding services to improve information on road conditions, allowing drivers to more easily avoid roadworks when planning journeys, and respond to changing conditions such as disruption or congestion. For public transport, AI technology is helping to optimise traffic flow and route planning, reducing congestion and improving journey times. AI technology can also support passengers on their journeys, such as the Northern Rail WhatsApp chatbot, delivered in partnership with Audacia, which provides real time information underpinned by open data.

We know that many people, especially those with disabilities, report needing better access to wayfinding, audio announcements and visual displays when travelling²³. We are continuing the implementation of the Public Service Vehicles (Accessible Information) Regulations, requiring audible and visible route and location announcements on board local bus services throughout Great Britain; and we will also require local transport authorities in England to pay regard to new statutory guidance on the safety and accessibility of bus stations and stops, including on the information that should be provided to ensure that everyone can travel confidently. In 2025 we trialled Welcome Points at 37 railway stations – touchscreen units offering visible, consistent support to help passengers navigate stations and travel. Passengers can now look up crucial station information ahead of travel, with National Rail Enquiries updated station web pages which include clear, detailed information about facilities such as lift status, step-free access, toilet accessibility, and staff assistance. More widely, our [Roadmap to an accessible railway](#) sets out how government and industry will work together in the lead up to Great British Railways to improve the day-to-day travelling experience for disabled people, ensuring passengers have access to reliable and up-to-date information for train travel – including clear navigation and real-time information about facilities at stations, such as the working status of toilets and lifts²⁴.



CASE STUDY Go Eden - Cornwall

The 'Go Eden' initiative in Cornwall shows how collaborative working at a local level can transform passenger journey experience and benefit regions, without the need for costly expenditure. Working in partnership, the Eden Project, Visit Cornwall, Go Cornwall by Bus, and Great Western Railways created a seamless passenger experience to the attraction, which led to increased visitor numbers, reduced car dependency and stronger national reach for Cornwall's tourism offer.

Transport operators worked together to better connect journeys across different types of transport. Signage at St Austell rail station was improved so information about connecting buses is clear and easily accessible, and with live information on real-time bus departures. And Great Western Railways and Visit Cornwall created a marketing campaign about the links, so visitors and travellers without access to a car were aware of the Eden Project public transport connections. Through collaborative working and alignment, transport operators and regions can improve transport connections for locals and visitors alike, open up to new visitors and provide a substantial uplift in journey experience for all travellers.

People rely on internet connection during train journeys to monitor delays and check onwards connections. We are committed to people having reliable Wi-Fi connection on trains. By spending £57 million to introduce new satellite connectivity on all mainline trains, we will significantly improve both the availability and internet connection speeds for Wi-Fi connected passengers, in turn enabling a better-integrated transport network²⁵.

Network Rail is also improving connectivity through Project Reach, a partnership delivering 4,500km of new fibre along rail routes. This enhances mobile and Wi-Fi coverage, including in tunnels, and supports future 5G rollout, helping passengers to stay connected to reliable, real-time information at all stages of their journey.



Provide safe and dependable journeys

We will provide safe and dependable transport so people can travel with confidence.

Too often, journeys are hindered by poorly coordinated roadworks, unreliable networks, or risks to safety on our roads and railways. We want the transport system to be predictable, allowing people to plan their lives with confidence and avoid unexpected costs. We will achieve this by embedding resilience, improving reliability, prioritising maintenance, and designing transport systems in a way that keeps people safe.

Anticipate and respond well to disruption

Threats and hazards that affect the transport network are complex and rapidly changing. Geopolitical and transnational challenges (including climate change), rapid technological changes and increasing cyber risks, greater exposure to economic shocks, alongside many of the risks identified on the National Risk Register, can all influence the smooth running of transport services. These disruptions can cause significant delays, damage and uncertainty for people and businesses across England. The transport system needs to better anticipate, withstand and recover from these disruptions. To achieve this, we expect strong cross-sector collaboration, including joint exercising of response plans, bold leadership on resilience and climate adaptation and improved resilience of communications between operators. To support delivery, we have recently published a [Climate Adaptation Strategy for Transport](#) which sets out the practical actions government and the wider sector will take, and we are working to implement transport activities from the [UK Government Resilience Action Plan](#).

Improve reliability for people driving and using public transport

Reliability is one of the biggest issues that affects people's transport experience – whether they are driving or using public transport and too often, journeys simply are not reliable^{26, 27}. Our People's Panels highlighted that unreliable journeys disrupt daily life and can make arriving on time a “gamble”, causing stress and missed appointments. We know this can also create unexpected costs from missed shifts and childcare penalties. We are targeting our investment and setting strategies that ensure operators and infrastructure owners prioritise improving reliability and punctuality for drivers and public transport users. Improving reliability and punctuality also enhances perceptions of safety on public transport as shorter wait times mean fewer moments spent waiting at stops or stations. Delivering this will require a concerted effort across the transport sector to plan and execute maintenance works well, stick to timetables, and minimise cancellations.

To support our goal of a more reliable road network, we are tackling one of the most frequently raised concerns by drivers – disruptive street and roadworks²⁸. We are updating guidance to improve safety standards and accessibility for both workers and road users, including pedestrians, and have introduced tougher penalties for utility companies for works that overrun and for non-compliance. In addition, we are supporting the roll-out of more lane rental schemes which incentivise faster completion of roadworks on the busiest roads, cutting congestion and keeping traffic moving. The impact of these schemes is clear. Transport for London's lane rental scheme has led to an average reduction of 988 days of roadworks per year across the city²⁹. To accelerate adoption, we





CASE STUDY “Project Amber” - Blackpool

Blackpool Council launched their “Project Amber” pilot in 2019, aiming to modernise road upkeep. The technology used advanced imagery and AI to flag issues using a colour-coded alert system, which engineers then assessed, allowing repairs to be prioritised. This approach significantly reduced the need for manual inspections. As a result, over 5,145 potholes were repaired. The “Project Amber” pilot works reduced costs from an estimated £1.5 million if undertaken traditionally to just under £450,000.

will be devolving the power for mayors of strategic authorities to approve lane rental schemes, we have also streamlined the review process and updated the lane rental guidance to make applications simpler and faster. On motorways and A-roads, the third Road Investment Strategy sets out how National Highways will better manage roadworks and unexpected delays to keep traffic moving smoothly.

To improve the reliability of bus services, we have legislated to give local leaders the power to design bus services around community needs, including reducing delays and cancellations. Further, mayors will be granted a Power of Direction over their Key Route Network, a collection of the most important local roads. This will enable them to direct local authorities to implement targeted measures (such as introducing dedicated bus lanes or bus gates) that support their Local Transport Plans and help improve the reliability of local bus services. We are providing substantial funding for local bus services, including over £3 billion to support local leaders and bus operators across the

country to improve bus services for millions of passengers. This includes multi-year allocations for local transport authorities under the Local Authority Bus Grant totalling nearly £700 million per year, giving councils the certainty they need to plan ahead and deliver better bus services for passengers. We set out further details of this funding in our “Empower local leaders” priority. We are exploring new ways to monitor bus performance, and **we will provide funding to track punctuality and enforce timetables [SD1]**, ensuring operators deliver the services they promise. We also want to give passengers confidence when disruptions occur, so **we will improve the quality of real-time information and ensure digital bus timetables accurately reflect arrival times [SD2]**.

We are already taking action to make rail travel more reliable and punctual – publishing performance data at stations, working with industry to recover service levels, and are bringing train operating companies back into public ownership.





CASE STUDY

Road Prioritisation - West Midlands

Transport for West Midlands is rethinking how road space is used to make everyday journeys more reliable and more sustainable. Transport for West Midlands has worked with local authority partners to take a joined-up approach - balancing improvements for buses, cyclists and pedestrians while keeping roads accessible for drivers. The 20km Sprint bus corridor between Walsall and Solihull introduced extended bus lanes and smart traffic signals to cut bus journey times by up to 22%, with traffic trials used to monitor impacts on car flow before permanent changes were made. These improvements also included passive provision for new cycle lanes and shared paths on the Coventry Road and Lode Lane.

The transition to Great British Railways will enable more joined-up planning between track and train and a single point of accountability, helping to drive improved performance across the rail network. To ensure services run more predictably and recover quickly from disruption, **we will work with GB Rx, the innovation arm of Great British Railways, to create a plan on how AI will be used to improve timetabling decisions and resilience on the rail network [SD3].** By using AI in this way, we can deliver better timetables for passengers and streamline processes, as well as driving time and cost savings.

Proactively maintain our road, pavement and rail network

Too many of our roads and pavements are in poor condition, leading to unsafe journeys, vehicle damage and unnecessary delays. This issue is not only consistently ranked among drivers' and motorcyclists' top concerns, but also discourages people from walking, wheeling or cycling, due to safety fears^{30, 31, 32}. On the railways, infrastructure faults cause delays and cancellations³³. In line with the approach set out in the [Infrastructure Strategy](#) the focus will shift from short-term fixes to long-term, preventative maintenance for our existing road, pavement and rail infrastructure. This is increasingly vital as climate change is expected to cause more frequent track buckling, increase flooding and accelerate pothole formation, while the growing trend toward heavier vehicles compounds wear and damage on our roads. We expect infrastructure owners, including Network Rail (and Great British Railways in the future), National Highways, local highway authorities and local transport authorities to work jointly together to ensure the transport network is well-maintained.

To deliver safer, smoother and more reliable road journeys, we have committed [£24 billion between 2026-2030](#) to maintain and improve motorways and local roads, marking one of the largest investments in recent years. As part of this, we have also committed [£2 billion annually by 2029/30](#) for local authorities to repair, renew and fix potholes on their roads – doubling funding since coming into office.



This £24 billion package includes a structures fund to repair run-down bridges, decaying flyovers and worn-out tunnels. Recognising the vital role that motorways and major A-roads play for long-distance travel, the third Road Investment Strategy reflects our focus on maintenance, and directs an increasing share of funding towards renewals. To support local areas to take a long-term preventative approach, we will publish updated guidance which will reflect the challenges that local authorities are currently facing and highlight innovative new technologies. To unlock their full funding allocation this year, local highway authorities had to publish a report on their maintenance plans, including in relation to their plans for maintaining pavements. This requirement has improved transparency and allows people to monitor the outputs of investment in their local area. We recognise that pavements are a critical part of the network – further detail on the

maintenance of these can be found in the [“Create healthier communities”](#) priority and further detail on the measures to reduce pavement obstructions, including pavement parking, can be found in the [“Making travel accessible and affordable”](#) priority.

To support our goals on the railways, we have provided a £27.5 billion grant to support the operation, maintenance and renewal of mainline infrastructure in England and Wales between 2024-2029, the details of which are set out by Network Rail in the [Control Period 7 Delivery Plan](#). Further, the unification of track and train under Great British Railways will make it easier for staff to plan maintenance, enable quicker decisions and fix problems faster, meaning fewer delays so a more reliable service for passengers.

Reduce those killed or injured on our transport network

While the UK has one of the safest transport systems in the world, we remain committed to reducing harm on our network so people can travel safely and confidently^{34, 35, 36}. In 2024, there were 1,602 fatalities and nearly 28,000 seriously injured on Britain's roads, with vulnerable road users such as motorcyclists, pedestrians and cyclists most impacted per mile travelled³⁷. While rail remains one of the safest modes, in 2024/25 there was one passenger fatality, 17 trespasser fatalities and 293 suicides or suspected suicides³⁸. There were 1,254 severe injuries over the same period on the railway. Improving safety requires action from local authorities, our arms-length bodies, emergency services, safety partners, operators, infrastructure managers, vehicle manufacturers and mental health organisations.

On our roads, we are supporting this ambition through our new Road Safety Strategy. We want to reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on British roads by 65% by 2035 using a 2022-2024 baseline, and see a 70% reduction in the number of children under 16 killed and seriously injured; as well as a range of measures and interventions to improve safety for all road users, aligned with the Safe System. To build confidence from an early age, we have invested up to £29.8 million funding in the Bikeability programme for 2025/26, equipping children with the skills and awareness they need to cycle safely. We are also investing in improving cycling routes, as set out in our "Create healthier communities" priority.

On rail, we are actively collaborating with Network Rail, train operating companies, and industry bodies to enhance rail safety through innovation, regulation, and strategic investment. We have allocated £5 million to 26 projects that will improve platform safety, reduce bridge strikes and integrate AI technology to enhance safety monitoring and decision-making. We recognise that suicide is a wider societal challenge, and are committed to prioritising suicide prevention, and interventions on the railway form part of a cross-societal effort to save lives. Last year we published new research which set out the most effective measures to prevent railway suicides, building on this, and as rail operators are brought into public ownership, we are requiring all public facing rail staff to regularly complete suicide prevention training in collaboration with the Samaritans, British Transport Police, and the National Suicide Prevention Alliance.



CASE STUDY

Local leadership in reducing road casualties - London and Greater Manchester

Local authorities play a critical role in deciding what works best to reduce deaths and serious injuries on their roads. Areas like London and Greater Manchester have shown how ambitious local policies can deliver real results. In London, key measures delivered by Transport for London, London boroughs, and the police services, include lowering speed limits to 20mph, redesigning streets and introducing higher safety standards for buses and HGVs. These actions have contributed to a 24% overall reduction in people killed or seriously injured on London roads compared to the 2010-2014 baseline which is equivalent to 1,162 fewer death or serious injuries and a steady and sustained reduction in the number of people killed each year³⁹. In Greater Manchester, interventions such as speed camera upgrades, public awareness campaigns and the roll-out of school streets have contributed to a 29% overall reduction in casualties in Greater Manchester compared to a 2017-2019 baseline⁴⁰.



CASE STUDY

Impact of “Your Bus Journey” - East Sussex

In East Sussex, insights from the “Your Bus Journey” passenger survey directly informed local action to improve bus services, enabled by the Department’s Bus Service Improvement Plan funding. Feedback from the survey highlighted concerns around punctuality and waiting times. East Sussex targeted their bus service improvement plan funding at expanding service frequency and weekend coverage, real-time information upgrades at bus stops, improved bus shelters, and a range of fare reductions. In addition, they worked in partnership with the main operator Stagecoach to recruit more drivers. These measures contributed to a significant rise in passenger satisfaction, with East Sussex climbing from 26th to 12th place in the national rankings, and passengers being satisfied with 87% of journeys⁴¹. This highlights the power of using survey insights to guide targeted improvements that deliver tangible results.

Embed user insight in future delivery

Listening to people and acting on their feedback is essential to build trust and confidence in the network. We will strengthen how feedback from users is gathered and acted upon, so the system continually listens, responds, and improves. We will continue to work closely with key delivery partners, including passenger bodies, local transport authorities and industry groups to understand and implement improvements.

We will expand the role of the strengthened rail passenger watchdog, which we are creating from Transport Focus in the Railways Bill, so it can monitor passenger experience and advocate for the rights and interests of passengers across all public transport [SD4]. This will be transformational in creating a system that is more inclusive and responsive to diverse passenger needs.

We will continue using surveys such as the National Travel Survey and the National Transport Attitudes Study to understand how people experience and perceive the transport network across all modes, including in how we are evaluating this strategy. We are also working closely with Transport Focus, whose insight work is driving real improvements across the transport network. Their Strategic Road User Survey has helped National Highways target investment to improve surface quality, journey times and roadworks management. We are working with local transport authorities to support a nationwide rollout of the “Your Bus Journey” survey, enabling a consistent picture of passenger experiences and priorities. We have also partnered with industry to launch the Rail Customer Experience Survey, which aims to speak to 130,000 passengers annually to gather detailed insights into their journeys and identify areas for improvement across the rail network.

Spotlight on: Great British Railways (GBR)

Rail is a vital part of the national transport network. It connects our towns and cities, provides direct access to urban centres, and links people to homes and jobs – underpinning economic growth and the wider prosperity of the UK. For years, services have been fragmented across multiple operators with competing priorities, making it harder to respond to changing travel patterns, integrate timetables, and align rail investment to wider goals.

What is Great British Railways?

Great British Railways (GBR) will be a new publicly owned company, responsible for running and managing the tracks and trains people use every day. It will bring together 14 train operating companies under one operator and unite track and train to allow better coordination of services and network improvements. GBR will create a rail network that is reliable, accessible, and easy to use; support long-term economic growth; and make rail a more attractive option for both passengers and freight. It will be a railway fit for Britain's future, owned by the public, for the public.

What will GBR do differently?

- **Simplify fares:** GBR will bring together rail fares under a single operator, removing fragmentation and making the fare structure for passengers more logical and easier to understand.
- **Better timetabling:** As the guiding mind for the railway, GBR will plan the rail timetable - working with other transport operators, local transport authorities and the devolved Governments, to ensure the best use is being made of the rail network.

- **Ensure services and stations work for the community:** GBR will work in partnership with devolved governments and local transport authorities in England to tailor rail services to regional needs, ensuring the rail network delivers for the communities it serves. GBR will be responsible for the management of most stations, including developing interchange stations to support seamless connections to other forms of public transport, roads, and walking, wheeling and cycling. By working closely with local authorities and transport operators, with opportunities for devolved control, GBR will ensure stations and station precincts work well for passengers and the communities they serve.
- **Improve reliability:** The reliability of the rail network for passengers will be improved by focusing on punctuality and fewer cancellations through better coordination and performance management. By investing in freight interchanges and upgrades, GBR will also support growth in rail freight, taking more freight off the road and reducing congestion.
- **Be future focussed and drive innovation:** GBR will be the directing mind for the railway, ensuring strategic alignment and creating the conditions for innovation to flourish. GBRx, the rail sector's strategic innovation body, is already partnering with private sector innovators and academia to develop and accelerate adoption of new solutions in passenger experience, efficiency, and sustainability. By implementing the Long-Term Rail Strategy, GBR will ensure delivery across the network is aligned with national priorities.





Make travel accessible and affordable

Increasingly accessible and affordable transport will provide people with real choice in how they travel.

Persistent physical, economic and systemic barriers continue to limit equal access to, and confidence in the transport network. We want accessibility to be embedded from the outset as a core principle of designing transport and we are taking action to make transport more affordable, recognising that transport is the second highest household cost after housing⁴². We will partner with local authorities, transport providers, and communities to reduce the systemic barriers across the network, helping more people access work, education and training.

Build a shared framework for accessible and inclusive travel

Many people still face barriers to travel because the system is fragmented, inconsistent and not built on a shared understanding of what people need to travel confidently and independently. The Transport Select Committee's disabled people's access to transport report highlighted how the complex and disjointed nature of the legal and regulatory environment makes it difficult for disabled people and transport providers to understand their rights and obligations⁴³. There is a clear opportunity to create more inclusive transport that reflects the diversity of travel needs and puts accessibility at the heart of how the network is planned and delivered.

We want to establish a shared direction for accessible travel across the transport system building on the existing accessibility legislation, with clearer expectations and stronger alignment between organisations. To achieve this, **we will**

be launching an Accessible Travel Charter

[AA1], working with disabled people, regulators, enforcement bodies, authorities and transport providers, and using collaborative engagement to develop a shared set of principles that will guide both passengers and transport providers.

This shared charter will promote a consistent, system-wide approach to accessible travel, ensuring that disabled people are meaningfully engaged in shaping transport services. We expect transport providers and local authorities to engage with disabled people early and often, through genuine co-production of policy, supported by best practice guidance within the charter. Within government, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee plays a central role, providing expert, independent advice grounded in lived experience of the transport needs of disabled people. Accessibility should be embedded across all types of transport, which is why we are working with the aviation sector to implement the recommendations made by the Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group.

We also want a fair transport system where legal rights, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear, and where these are understood, upheld and enforced. To support this, **we will work with the Law Commission to review the current legal framework for transport accessibility [AA2]**. The review will complement our legislative priorities, including the ongoing review of the law for powered mobility devices. We are aware of the persistent problem of some taxi and private hire vehicle drivers unlawfully discriminating against disabled people, including wheelchair users and assistance dog owners. As part of new national minimum standards in licensing to be introduced, we will ensure all drivers are trained to understand their legal duties and the consequence of failing to comply with them, as well as the impact of discriminatory conduct on disabled passengers.



We recognise that disabled people need the right information to feel confident making their journeys, which is why **we will publish an improvement plan to increase the data available to help those with accessibility needs plan their journeys [AA3]** and work with the sector to ensure this is incorporated to deliver improvements into the tools people use.

Design an accessible travel environment

Too often people face physical barriers within the transport system that significantly impact their ability to travel independently and confidently. Older people and disabled people are particularly affected, reporting lower levels of confidence when physically navigating the transport network, but these challenges are not limited to any one group. Everyday obstructions, like blocked pavements and stations without step-free routes, limit access for everyone, including people with prams or luggage. The street environment plays a critical role, forming the first and last part of most journeys. That is why we are setting a clear expectation that inclusive, safe and accessible environments must be prioritised across the whole network.

We want to see physical barriers to travel reduced as far as possible, so that people can move around their streets and access transport more easily. To support this, we are devolving powers to enable local transport authorities to prohibit pavement parking within their local areas, ensuring the pavement is safe and accessible for everyone. This aligns with our wider efforts to create safer and accessible streets, as set out in our “Create healthier communities” priority, where we are supporting local areas to improve walking, wheeling and cycling routes through better street design. Furthermore, through our Access for All scheme, we are increasing the number of step-free rail stations which means that by 2029, stations with step-free access will cover 71% of all rail journeys, up from 66% today⁴⁴. We are also commissioning a comprehensive study of level boarding to identify and scope practical, cost-effective solutions for achieving level boarding to make getting on and off trains simpler and safer.

CASE STUDY Bus Accessibility - Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove Buses is recognised as a leader in the sector, by listening and learning from the lived experiences of disabled people they have co-designed and co-produced a wide range of measures to make bus travel more welcoming for all. All drivers and frontline staff receive disability awareness training, and buses are equipped with features such as double wheelchair bays, audio-visual announcements, hearing loops, enhanced displays for sight and hearing impairments, and dementia-friendly flooring and design elements. The company also runs travel confidence sessions to help people familiarise themselves with using public transport and have a dedicated accessibility and communities' team. These efforts are part of a wider commitment to helping more people travel independently and confidently across the city.



Building, maintaining and operating travel infrastructure should be informed by evidence on what works for different people. That is why our Roadmap to an accessible railway is clear that new and refurbished trains must be designed to meet the needs of the passengers who use them, which may include families, disabled people and those with sensory or neurological needs. We will also publish guidance for managing shared cycle and e-scooter parking to support the safe use of streets and pavements.



We know that the safety and accessibility of bus stations and stops is critical, which is why we are publishing statutory guidance on bus stops through the Bus Services Act 2025. The Act also introduced a requirement for certain authorities to pay regard to new statutory guidance on the safety and accessibility of bus stations and stops. We want the guidance to help authorities to make better use of limited resources, embedding safety and accessibility principles in infrastructure design from the start, and helping to ensure that passengers are both enabled and encouraged to use related services including other connecting transport options that rely on the same stops and stations. The guidance will be developed collaboratively with key stakeholders, including disabled people, during 2026.

We have also published [guidance on the design and provision of floating bus stops](#), which were originally developed to allow cycle routes to continue past bus stops and reduce the risk of collisions between buses and cyclists. When poorly designed, they can be difficult to navigate and fail to work for all user groups, particularly vision impaired people. Active Travel England are carrying out further research focussed on their safety, accessibility and suitability across different contexts and exploring potential enhancements that could be made to ensure they better meet the needs of all users. The results of this will be used in further versions of the guidance.

Ensure people feel safe and supported throughout their journeys

Everyone should feel, and be, safe while travelling on public transport, but too often people face harassment, intimidation or a lack of support when incidents happen. Recent research found that 14% of public transport users had experiences or threats of force, violence, harm, physical intimidation, verbal abuse, theft or attempted theft in the past 12 months⁴⁵. Personal safety on transport is shaped by factors including lighting, street design, visible CCTV, staff capability and the ability to get help when needed. Feeling 'safe' was the most frequent answer during our engagement when asking how transport should make people feel. Whilst most

adults feel fairly safe (69%) on public transport, 19% of all adults and only 14% of women report feeling very safe⁴⁶. To support Government's aim to reduce Violence Against Women and Girls by half over the next decade, the Department for Transport has an ambitious programme of work outlined in the [Freedom from Violence and Abuse Action Plan](#). Measures that provide support for people most at risk help create a safer and more welcoming transport system for everyone, giving people peace of mind while going about their day.

We want passengers to feel confident that if an incident takes place during their journey, they will know how to report it and trust that action will be taken quickly. That is why for the first time we are scoping the feasibility of a single reporting system for passengers to use across all types of public transport to increase reporting and feelings of safety, learning from the success of the British Transport Police 61016 free text reporting service. We are also making more CCTV images from rail stations remotely accessible for authorities, initially connecting the cameras at the stations with the highest footfall, before being expanded to other stations so that 98% of passenger station footfall is captured. Across the wider transport system, we are exploring expanding the provision and use of CCTV on the bus network to increase feelings of safety and reduce the length of investigations.

In addition, we are giving local authorities the power to introduce byelaws to tackle anti-social behaviour on the bus network and improve local journeys across the country. We know that strong safeguarding standards are essential to protect passengers and ensure confidence in transport. To support this, we are requiring operators to carry out enhanced [criminal record checks](#) of their drivers on closed school bus services to ensure children are safe on all services, not just those organised by schools and local authorities. All passengers should feel confident travelling by taxi or private hire vehicle wherever they are, and that is why we are introducing [national minimum standards in licensing](#) so robust standards on safety and accessibility are applied across England. This builds on the existing requirements for enhanced criminal record and

barred list checks for licensed drivers, helping to deliver the best outcomes for passenger safety. To ensure people receive the support they need, staff should be equipped to respond effectively to passengers' diverse needs. Safety for passengers and staff is essential, and equipping staff with the right training helps protect everyone. To support this, we are mandating training for staff in the bus industry, including drivers, on how to recognise and respond to incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime, including violence against women and girls. Additionally, bus drivers will need to undertake both disability-assistance and disability-awareness training.

We are also strengthening promotion of our [Disability Equality Training](#) programme to build confidence and skills across the transport sector. On rail, we are making improvements to [Passenger Assist](#), a free service for people who need extra support when travelling by train, introducing new features to make travel more reliable, consistent and accessible – including simpler booking, better communication with staff, and more control for passengers.

Making transport more affordable

We know that cost is one of the biggest obstacles to people accessing public transport, preventing people from reaching jobs, school, shops and loved ones, particularly people on lower incomes, young people and those without access to a car.

Reducing the cost of public transport relies first and foremost on ensuring a good quality of service, so more people choose to use it. More people using public transport boosts the amount of fare revenue and can reduce the per-passenger costs, providing operators with the ability to reduce fares by reinvesting the increase in revenue. Lower fares can then make public transport more appealing to a wider range of passengers, increasing the amount of people using the services, driving revenue and further reinvestment. Through this virtuous circle, we can ease the pressure on household budgets and keep public transport within reach, while ensuring services deliver good value for public money.



CASE STUDY

Mobility Credits Scheme - Solent

The [Solent Mobility Credits](#) scheme, initially funded by the Department for Transport, is helping people on low incomes access jobs, education and essential services. Participants receive £50 a month in travel credits to use on buses, ferries, and other local transport. Early results show powerful outcomes: 97% of the participants surveyed said the scheme improved their wellbeing, and over half said it helped them find or stay in a job. The trial was expanded in 2025 to support more groups, including jobseekers, foodbank users and those living in areas where new transport infrastructure has been installed (such as mobility hubs or a bus gate).

On the rail network, we are [freezing rail fares until March 2027](#) – the first freeze in 30 years, putting money back in the pockets of hardworking people. Passengers will benefit from savings on over a billion journeys with season tickets, peak return tickets on commuter routes and off-peak return tickets on longer-distance routes all protected.

We are also working to increase awareness and availability of discount railcards by [expanding eligibility to the Disabled Persons Railcard](#) to include a wider range of physical disabilities and neurodiverse conditions, meaning more

Better Connected

people are supported in their travel needs and can benefit from discounted rail fares. And we are enabling more retailers of rail tickets and products to sell these railcards, providing people with more flexibility and choice in how and where they buy their railcard and improving awareness of its benefits.

For bus travel we are capping single bus fares at £3 until at least March 2027 and continuing to provide funding and new powers to local authorities to support locally-designed affordable services. We are making it easier for all local authorities to introduce bus franchising, giving them the power to design their own local grants to support bus services, and lifting the ban on new local authority bus companies.

Giving local areas tools to shape the transport services that work for their communities also ensures the virtuous circle exists at a local level. With greater flexibility and control, local authorities can design more efficient, joined-up transport that delivers better value for money, helping to keep passenger fares down. We want to see local transport authorities use this new flexibility to deliver targeted fare reductions for bus services and help residents to have better awareness of the available support.

We are also supporting drivers with record funding to fix potholes and improve road conditions, lowering vehicle repair bills for households. And we are tackling fuel costs by freezing fuel duty to August 2026 and enabling drivers to compare fuel prices more easily using

the Fuel Finder Scheme. This new government service powered by open data will mean drivers can easily find the cheapest fuel in their area.

Unlocking opportunities for everyone

Good transport enables people to get to work, education and leisure events and travel from and between urban and rural areas. We recognise that an inclusive network that serves everyone must include taxis and private hire vehicles, community transport operators, coach companies, and demand responsive transport providers that fill critical gaps in the network. We expect local authorities to engage with service providers to ensure that these services are integrated into the wider transport network and prioritised, especially for those who rely on tailored transport to access jobs and essential services. Coaches can be particularly overlooked in transport planning yet provide essential links between many towns, cities, airports and other destinations – with a reach greater than the rail network. They also connect people to education through home to school services, get people to their destination when trains stop running, and make significant contributions to the visitor economy. Towns and destinations that welcome just one extra 49-seater coach a day can bring up to £1 million a year into their local economy. In future, local authorities will be expected to recognise the role and contribution of coach services and plan appropriate provision for them and their passengers. These expectations will be reflected in government guidance, including Local Transport Plan guidance.



CASE STUDY

Free Travel Care Experienced Scheme - Newcastle

Delivered in partnership with North East Combined Authority, Nexus and bus operators, the Young People's transport scheme offers care experienced young people and young carers in Newcastle free travel across the region via metro, bus, ferry, and rail. The free travel scheme removes the travel cost barrier opportunities for education and employment and to socialise with friends and family.

We are also considering whether all local transport authorities should be responsible for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing to enable the sector to be fully considered and integrated in Local Transport Plans.

As the government continues to prioritise education and skills, local transport authorities play a vital role in making transport work for education, from school journeys to post-16 training. We have outlined how the Bus Services Act will empower local transport authorities to better protect services which are considered socially necessary and repeal the ban on new local authority-owned bus companies. This supports better integration of home-to-school transport with wider public transport networks, reducing costs and improving service provision and frequency. We encourage local transport authorities to consider transport to schools and education settings in their Local Transport Plans, and work with local authority education departments to ensure joined-up planning locally. Our investment in walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, including safer routes to schools, will promote healthier lifestyles and provide low-

cost, accessible travel options for pupils and staff, increasing the amount of choice in how journeys to school are made.

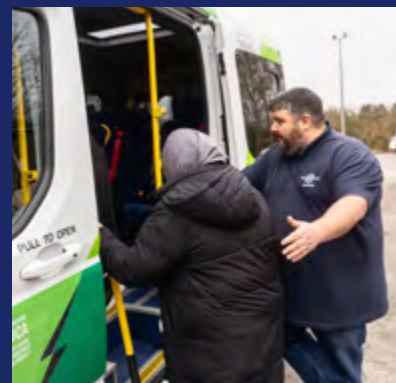
We are also developing a measure to better identify where poor transport connectivity and affordability can most affect people's access to employment, education, healthcare and key services, helping to deliver inclusive economic growth across the country. We are making it easier for decision-makers to evidence the social value of transport by improving the evidence base, especially in areas where existing evidence is more limited and **we will explore how we can embed a new transport poverty measure into our decision-making [AA4].**

Alongside this, **we will publish an opportunity mission toolkit [AA5].** This will help local decision-makers evidence the social value of transport which will support the delivery of improved outcomes and better access to opportunities in their communities. The toolkit will provide both guidance and case studies to help support delivery of the mission through transport.

CASE STUDY Community Transport - South Yorkshire

Community transport has been a cornerstone of inclusive mobility in South Yorkshire for over 30 years, ensuring that people who find mainstream public transport difficult can still access essential services and opportunities. Supported by South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority funding, providers across the region deliver fully accessible Door 2 Door services, including ShopperBus, Dial-a-Ride, and Group Travel. These services are vital for older residents, disabled people, and those in isolated communities, reducing social exclusion and improving quality of life.

South Yorkshire community transport operators also supports community resilience through volunteer opportunities and accredited driver training schemes enhancing safety and skills in the sector. By bridging gaps in the transport network, community transport contributes to regional priorities on equity, health, and sustainability, aligning with South Yorkshire's ambition for a connected, low-carbon transport system. Annually, over 150,000 community transport passenger trips are completed in South Yorkshire, demonstrating its significant social impact.





Create healthier communities

Making healthy travel choices will be easy and convenient, supporting cleaner, quieter and more liveable places.

Although cleaner technologies are increasingly available in new vehicles, many types of transport continue to create air and noise pollution. We want to harness the power of transport as a lever for better public health by improving walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure to enable everyday physical activity. We are also growing our fleet of cleaner, quieter vehicles to improve air quality and reduce noise. Collectively, this can reduce exposure to risk factors associated with conditions such as asthma, cardiovascular disease, dementia and type 2 diabetes – helping people live healthier, longer, and happier lives, as well as easing pressure on the NHS and supporting the [10-year health plan](#).

Improve walking, wheeling and cycling routes

Every journey begins and ends with a walk or wheel, whether to a bus stop, rail station, parked car, or as the whole trip. Yet pavements are often uneven, cluttered or have too few safe crossing points, discouraging even short walking or wheeling trips and creating barriers to accessing public transport⁴⁷. For cycling, a lack of safe routes remains a major barrier to uptake⁴⁸. Our People's Panels echoed this, with several panels raising concerns about pavement conditions, in particular that broken pavements and unsafe cycle routes make walking, wheeling and cycling impractical. These are low and no cost ways to travel, and we want them to be easy, enjoyable and realistic choices for more people – both as ways of accessing public transport and as journeys in their own right – helping more people to incorporate activity into their daily lives.

This helps people stay active and reduces the risk of over 20 chronic health conditions⁴⁹. That is why we are supporting local areas to improve street design and deliver safe and higher-quality walking, wheeling and cycling routes. This could also help to address inequalities in physical inactivity, which are highest in more deprived communities, contributing to preventable ill health and reduced life expectancy⁵⁰. Local transport plans should consider how transport interventions contribute to improved health outcomes and reduce inequalities, working in partnership with Directors of Public Health and Integrated Care Systems.

To support this aim, we are investing £616 million in dedicated funding for walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, the details of which will be set out in the upcoming [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 3](#). We are also providing long-term funding settlements to England's local transport authorities (set out in our "[Empower local leaders](#)" priority), some of which we expect them to use to expand and improve walking, wheeling and cycling routes – particularly to create safer routes to schools. Further, we are working with a coalition of 12 of England's mayoral strategic authorities to create a national walking, wheeling and cycling network. In addition, upcoming guidance on walking, wheeling and cycling in rural areas will sit alongside our collaboration with English National Park Authorities to develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, which will further enhance local routes and promote greater access to nature. As High Speed Two is built, traffic-free paths will be made available for public use alongside the railway, and we are working with local authorities to enable these to be used for walking, wheeling, and cycling, subject to local funding priorities.

Highway maintenance funding should be used by local highway authorities to maintain all parts of the highway network – including maintaining and upgrading pavements with dropped kerbs, safer crossings and keeping them clear of obstructions.





CASE STUDY Creating a Healthier City - Bradford

Bradford's [Future Bradford](#) strategy is reshaping the city into a cleaner, healthier and more inclusive place to live and travel through. Since 2021, continued investment in walking, wheeling and cycling has transformed the city centre, with major improvements completed in 2025 — including pedestrianised streets, safer crossings, and enhanced walking and cycling routes. These upgrades are designed to improve access to Bradford Interchange and Forster Square stations, with further improvements under development as part of wider station and hub proposals. A new public transport corridor and eight bus hubs, featuring real-time information and improved facilities, are also planned to support more reliable and inclusive bus services. Alongside this, the Clean Air Zone, launched in 2022, has already cut NO₂ levels by 6%, with early evidence showing a 25% drop in GP visits for respiratory issues — saving the NHS over £30,000 a month in GP appointments⁵¹.

We recognise that poor pavement conditions, such as uneven or crumbling surfaces, narrow widths, pooling water, and obstructed routes can make walking and wheeling uncomfortable or unsafe, particularly those with mobility challenges, pushchairs or visual impairments. To address this, we are revising the Well-Managed Highways Infrastructure Code of Practice to ensure pavements are inclusive, fit-for-purpose, safe and well-maintained.

As well as maintenance, streets should be designed in a way that create safe and attractive places for people. To guide best practice in delivering safer and more inclusive street design, we are publishing an updated Manual for Streets.

This will reflect developments in planning law and policy and research evidence to ensure practitioners have the latest advice on how to design streets for sustainable, healthy and economically vibrant communities. We expect all those involved in street design to adopt the advice within the Manual in their work and in setting local design standards for existing streets, and we will ensure training is provided to support this. For new developments we are working to ensure the Manual is appropriately referenced in the national planning policy, including through consultation, and associated design guidance to support better outcomes across the planning system.





Mayoral strategic authorities and strategic planning boards also have a role to play in embedding the guidance, including through spatial development strategies and funding agreements that set clear expectations for following the Manual in projects and schemes within their areas.

To support higher-quality streets, we are building on the measures to reduce pavement obstructions, including pavement parking. We have committed to update the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, the legislation for traffic signs and road markings, which will

include changes such as new, simpler zebra crossings that will make walking and wheeling easier, safer and more accessible. In addition, **we will update the Network Management Duty Guidance [HC1]** which sets out how local traffic authorities should manage traffic on their network. This means treating all road users fairly by ensuring that footways (including pavements) and cycle paths are treated in the same way as the road infrastructure and recognising that every driver is also a pedestrian at some point – so places that work for pedestrians tend to work for everyone.

Seamless cycle and rail integration

Switching between different types of transport can be difficult, and a consistent theme in our engagement was the particular challenges people face when transitioning between cycling and using the train⁵². We want to make this transition easier by improving the necessary infrastructure, such as cycle parking, so more people can choose using both a cycle and a train for a journey as a convenient and healthy option for getting around. These improvements should be delivered in line with our priority to Make travel accessible and affordable and not reduce access for other people – particularly disabled people, older people and those using mobility aids. Driving this change will require close collaboration between rail operators and local authorities, supported by Great British Railways single-point accountability and new partnership agreements, which will make it easier for local government to act as delivery partners on the railways.

As we bring our railways back into public ownership, Great British Railways will ensure that cycle parking is maintained, and where demand exists new cycle parking or new security features are actively considered when it develops its business plans. To support this, **Active Travel England will develop a framework for assessing the quality and connectivity of walking, wheeling and cycling routes to rail stations, as well as cycle parking provision, in line with best practice approaches for safety and accessibility [HC2]**. We expect local transport authorities, Network Rail, train operating companies, and when established, Great British Railways, to use this framework to improve integration between rail and walking, wheeling and cycling with Active Travel England providing support for implementing these improvements. Where cycle use is high, we will make more space available for cycles on trains whenever trains are bought or refurbished. In addition, when Great British Railways is established, it will bring together individual train operators' ticket websites and apps. As part of this, we will consider the interaction with other forms of transport, such as cycles.

Scale-up shared mobility

Some shared mobility options like car clubs, cycle and e-bike hire are relatively underutilised, especially outside London, due to limited availability and a lack of integration with public transport⁵³. Germany's growing car sharing market and the Netherlands' eHUBS pilots demonstrate the potential benefits of these options, including improved accessibility, lower travel costs, and reduced emissions^{54,55}. Our goal is to expand access, improve integration and raise awareness so more people can use shared mobility as an affordable, healthy and lower-emission travel choice, while recognising the need for them to be introduced safely and considering the needs of everyone – particularly individuals with access requirements, such as those with visual impairments or wheelchair users. We want local authorities and private operators to work together to sustainably and safely scale-up local shared cycle and car club options and establish more high-quality "mobility hubs" that join-up public transport, shared transport and walking, wheeling and cycling routes to provide more options for onward travel.

We are learning how to support shared mobility through the ongoing e-scooter trials, which are demonstrating how locally managed shared mobility schemes can be successfully delivered. By extending the trials to May 2028 and opening them up to new areas, we are strengthening the evidence base needed ahead of legalising e-scooters and shaping the new licensing framework for shared micromobility being delivered through the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.

We have already committed to legislate for a new low-speed zero emission vehicle category when parliamentary time allows, that will make it quicker and easier to regulate and deploy new types of micromobility vehicle, expanding the range of sustainable transport options for individuals and businesses. Creating a clear route to market will drive investment and usage in these new vehicles, unleashing businesses from the current regulatory burdens and supporting growth.

Importantly, it will create safe, legal ways for people to use new transport technology and allow us to crack down on those who use it in an irresponsible and anti-social way. This will dovetail with measures to license the shared on-street deployment of these types of vehicles to ensure they work for whole communities and are not obstructively parked. To support this, as part of the [Crime and Policing Bill](#), we are removing the requirement for police to give a warning before seizing a vehicle which is being used anti-socially in communities. We are also taking forward proposals to allow the police to more quickly dispose of seized vehicles. Furthermore, the Home Office is advancing research into a novel technology to safely stop e-bikes and enhance the ability of police to prevent them from being used to commit crime.

To further develop other types of shared mobility, as part of updating the legislation for traffic signs and road markings, we will consider whether there are changes that could make it easier for local authorities to create dedicated parking bays for car clubs. In addition, **we will publish guidance for local authorities on car clubs [HC3]**. We recognise that demand responsive transport is an important part of the shared mobility suite, offering flexible, shared journeys where users specify their desired location and time of pick-up and drop off. We have published [demand responsive transport best practice guidance](#) which provides local authorities with a comprehensive guide to setting up and deploying demand responsive transport schemes. Further, Great British Railways will work to improve integration between rail and other modes of transport, including working with local authorities to support integrated transport.

Deliver cleaner transport to improve air quality

Air pollution from transport has decreased significantly since 1990, however transport remains the largest and second largest source of nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter pollution in England, respectively⁵⁶. Living in a place where you breathe in polluted air increases the risk of developing conditions such as dementia, cardiovascular disease, heart disease, asthma and lung cancer, reduces life expectancy,

and costs our society billions of pounds each year. Poor air quality also disproportionately affects children, older people and deprived communities. Cleaner transport will help reduce these inequalities which is why we will continue to implement measures at a national level to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions from all forms of transport to improve public health and the environment⁵⁷. We are giving local authorities long-term funding certainty, and emboldening them to use this to implement the most appropriate measures in their areas by investing in cleaner public transport and encouraging the use of sustainable transport to cut air pollution.

We are already supporting action to reduce carbon emissions and air pollution through measures outlined in the recently published [Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan](#) and the [Environmental Improvement Plan](#). These efforts are a vital part of the UK's legally binding commitment to achieve net zero by 2050 and ensuring that transport plays its role in delivering improved quality of life and health. Our ambitious plans to electrify the road transport fleet will deliver significant improvements for air quality and reduce carbon emissions – which is why we are investing over £7.5 billion in supporting the transition to electric vehicles. This is underpinned by £2 billion funding for the [Electric Car Grant](#), including giving drivers up to £3,750 off popular models to make it cheaper and easier to switch to electric vehicles.

We recognise that a reliable, accessible public charging network to support electric vehicle drivers on long journeys is essential. We are funding a further £600 million for charging infrastructure rollout between 2026-2030 and consulting on changes to make it easier for households without driveways to access to electric vehicle charging.

This includes an additional £100 million in electric vehicle charging infrastructure and £100 million of resource funding for local authorities and public bodies to support the training and deployment of specialist staff, accelerating the rollout of public chargepoints. We are also reviewing the cost of public electric vehicle charging, looking at the impact of energy prices, wider cost contributors, and options for lowering these costs for consumers.



smart

CASE STUDY Workplace Parking Levy - Nottingham

In 2012, Nottingham City Council became the first in Europe to introduce a Workplace Parking Levy, requiring employers with more than ten commuter parking spaces to pay an annual charge. This scheme generates approximately £10 million per year, which is ringfenced for sustainable transport investment. This funding has enabled transformative improvements, including the expansion of the Nottingham Express Transit tram network (doubling its reach to 50 stops),



the development of Nottingham Station, and the electrification of 15 buses. The Workplace Parking Levy has contributed to a 47% reduction in congestion growth compared to forecasted levels, with over 40% of city centre journeys now made by public transport⁵⁸. Levels of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter emissions have reduced, leading to fewer cases of respiratory illness, and the levy has also contributed to a 33% fall in carbon emissions in Nottingham since 2005⁵⁹. The Workplace Parking Levy stands as a compelling example of how locally raised, ring-fenced levies can deliver strategic transport outcomes, reduce emissions and support inclusive urban growth.

In line with our ambitions for a fleet of zero emission cars, vans, and heavy goods vehicles, we are working with industry to make charging at motorway service areas easy, fast and reliable. In addition, Great British Railways will continue the rollout of electric vehicle charging points at rail stations. We recognise that as we successfully reduce exhaust emissions, particulate pollution from brake, tyre and road wear will make up an increasing share of the total particulate pollution generated from road vehicles.

To address this, **we will consult on regulatory interventions, working with international partners to address brake and tyre wear emissions from road vehicles [HC4].**

We have announced nearly £74 million funding to deliver 319 new zero emission buses, and legislated to ultimately end the use of new diesel buses on local bus services in England

by no earlier than 2030 – bringing cleaner air to communities across England. Further, while rail is one of the lowest contributors to air pollution overall, localised levels can still be high – particularly in enclosed spaces such as stations and on-board trains, where emissions from diesel engines and particulate matter from braking and track wear can build up. We recognise the importance of tackling this, so we have committed to monitor air quality in up to 72 stations across Great Britain until March 2030, and will carry out a study to assess on-board air quality.

Our recently published [Local Transport Quantifiable Carbon Guidance](#) will help local authorities assess the carbon impacts of their transport strategies and schemes. We will expect local authorities to consider how they can reduce emissions as they develop their Local Transport

Plans and to report on the expected impacts on carbon emissions of their longer-term funding. This guidance will be an integral tool for local authorities as they deliver their plans to enhance sustainable transport networks, and improve air quality.

Reduce noise pollution from transport

In England, 40% of adults are exposed to high levels of road traffic noise in their homes, and 5% to high levels of aircraft or railway noise, which contributes to conditions like sleep disturbance, heart disease and diabetes, alongside potential long-term reductions in cognitive performance of children^{60, 61}. The transition to electric vehicles will reduce some noise, but it will be important to continue our work with local authorities, regulators, other government departments and our national delivery bodies to mitigate noise pollution from the whole transport network⁶².

We have supported this ambition through the work carried out by National Highways in the second Road Investment Strategy period (2020-2025) which delivered noise mitigation in Noise Important Areas and addressed impacts for thousands of households. Building on this, the third Road Investment Strategy continues to prioritise targeted noise mitigation through a risk- and evidence-based approach, focusing on locations of greatest need and integrating noise reduction within wider scheme delivery up to 2030/31. We are working with Network Rail and train operating companies to strengthen noise management, including rolling out noise reduction measures and delivering noise improvement plans⁶³. We continue to set noise controls at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, and require all major airports to produce noise action plans, with the next update due in 2028. We will publish updated Noise Action Plans for road, rail and urban areas for consultation in 2026. These will help us consider our priorities for noise reduction efforts across the transport network.

In addition to targeted mitigation, we are continuing to support the effective regulatory and enforcement framework that underpins action at a local level to tackle noise pollution.

Local authorities and police forces should work in partnership to determine appropriate enforcement responses to local issues, based on their understanding and community needs, which may include using innovative technologies or Public Space Protection Orders.



CASE STUDY

Andrew Road Mobility Hub - Halesowen

Opened in August 2024, the Andrew Road Mobility Hub in Halesowen, West Midlands was delivered by Transport for West Midlands in partnership with Dudley Council and Black Country Transport. Located adjacent to Halesowen bus station, the hub includes a car club vehicle, location for public electric vehicle charging, West Midlands Cycle Hire bikes, and improved travel information. It also features covered seating, planting and public cycle storage for the community. The hub was designed to fit within existing parking bays and small public spaces, enabling flexible rollout. It is an [award-winning scheme](#), recognised for its high standard of integration, accessibility, and sustainable transport provision.

Spotlight on: Buses

Buses are the most used form of public transport in England and play a vital role in our transport system. Since 1986, buses have been provided on a predominantly commercial basis in England outside London, with operators deciding where routes are run and how much tickets cost – with little or no integration with other types of transport. While local authorities have funded additional services, they have had limited incentives to do so, and worsening road congestion has meant that bus services cost more to run and have been less attractive to passengers.

This contributed to a continued decline in bus patronage over the past several decades in the majority of places in England outside of London. Many communities have seen services reduced or withdrawn and ticket prices rise.

Our vision

Buses are a public service and must be developed in partnership around the needs of the communities they serve, with local leaders and residents playing a central role in ensuring that the bus networks meet people's needs. Places like Norfolk, Portsmouth and York show how joint working and targeted investment can transform local bus services. Transport for Greater Manchester has shown the positive impact bus franchising can have, with bus patronage increasing and improvements to punctuality. Across the country, further bus franchising pilots are helping other local areas, including rural areas, to test the viability of other franchising models.

This demonstrates our commitment to working with local authorities and bus operators to grow bus usage by improving services, to make sure that people have the connections they need to get to work or education, to access healthcare and to get to the shops.

What we are doing:

- Empowering local leaders to deliver better bus services in the way that best suits their area – whether that is through bus franchising enabling local leaders to take control over routes, timetables, fares and connections, or strengthening local partnerships with bus operators through our Bus Services Act.
- Investing over £1 billion per year in bus services from 2026/27 to 2028/29, with local leaders given flexibility to spend funding according to local priorities, whether that is through new services, lower fares, more accessible bus stops or interchanges with other types of transport, and keeping services affordable by extending the £3 National Bus Fare Cap to the end of March 2027.
- Setting improved statutory standards for accessibility, safety and inclusion at bus stops and on board.
- Improving data to give more passengers access to real-time information about when their bus will turn up.
- Driving transparency and accountability through a new performance framework, showing how local authorities are delivering against priority outcomes.
- Driving the transition to zero-emission buses, by legislating to ultimately end the use of new diesel buses on local bus services in England, bringing cleaner air to millions.





Align transport and development

Decisions on transport, housing and wider development will be integrated, creating better-connected places.

Currently transport, housing and wider land use planning are often considered in isolation, leading to developments that lack good public transport and safe walking, wheeling and cycling routes. A joined-up approach will lead to better places where people want to live and can travel how they choose. We will use transport to unlock development, taking a vision-led approach to planning, building at higher densities around public transport, and ensuring join-up across the system.

Use transport to unlock new development

The government's ambition to build more new homes in this Parliament provides a significant opportunity to deliver homes served by a better transport network. When constructed in the right place at the right time, transport infrastructure can catalyse and support significant housing and economic regeneration. We are investing billions of pounds in existing and new transport infrastructure over the coming decades, with information gathered from transport infrastructure proposals and business cases showing that the current capital transport infrastructure pipeline will directly support the construction of hundreds of thousands of new homes. Recent examples include tens of thousands of new homes unlocked by [East West Rail](#) and 3,000 new homes with planning consent reliant on the [A47 Thickthorn junction scheme](#) near Norwich.

Working in close partnership across government, **we will embed the alignment of transport and housing into local and national capital investment programmes [TD1]**, such as the National Housing Delivery Fund, Transport for City Regions funding, and rail and road programmes including the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline and third Road Investment Strategy. Alignment also means close collaboration and stronger partnerships across public bodies such as National Highways, Network Rail and Great British Railways, with housing outcomes becoming a routine part of their delivery and ways of working. The management of transport land is often technically complex and challenging, underlining the importance of partnership working across the public sector. This will be essential both to make surplus public sector land more attractive to private developers and to support the delivery of large-scale developments, such as those identified through the [New Homes Accelerator programme](#).

We will maximise the opportunities from Platform4, a new publicly-owned property company that will seek to unlock 40,000 new homes and millions of square feet of commercial and public space through the release and high-impact regeneration of surplus railway land [TD2]. This will attract public and private investment to develop brownfield sites, including new developments in Newcastle, Cambridge, Manchester, and Nottingham. Platform4 will bring regeneration skills and expertise, working closely with Network Rail and other public and private sector partners to deliver regeneration projects at scale, including on complex sites adjacent to stations. It will partner with local government bodies to align efforts across transport and housing, ensuring that new homes are well served by public transport.





CASE STUDY Transpennine Route Upgrade - Manchester to York

The Transpennine Route Upgrade will transform rail capacity, reliability and connectivity between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York. It will deliver faster, greener and more reliable services that drive economic, social and sustainable growth across the North, including new homes and jobs.

Upgrades along the route to York will support one of the biggest city centre regeneration schemes in the UK - York Central, a 45 hectare site west of York rail station. The redevelopment will deliver up to 2,500 homes (at least 20% affordable), 1,000,000+ square feet of office, leisure and retail space, plus extensive parkland and public realm.

The upgrade will also catalyse the development of 4,000 new homes and community facilities at Dewsbury Riverside through a new rail station at Ravensthorpe, improving connectivity for the wider area. Private investment will follow with the National Health Innovation Campus/ Investment Zone in Huddersfield (part of the wider Station to Stadium Enterprise Corridor), supported by partners including the University of Huddersfield and Syngenta.

We know that stations are important community hubs and drivers of local economies and opportunities, connecting people not only to rail but also to buses, walking, wheeling and cycling routes and private transport. When done well, stations act as gateways to an area, attract investment and regeneration and enable housing and commercial development. Car parks around stations play an important role as interchange

points. In some cases, reconfiguring or resizing them can help unlock brownfield land for development while maintaining essential parking. To support this, Network Rail are updating previous analysis to identify opportunities for housing and redevelopment around rail station car parks, where land can be released and parking can instead be provided in new multi-storey car parks or where existing car parking is underutilised.



Embed vision-led transport planning

Vision-led transport planning sets clear outcomes for people and places from the outset of housing or infrastructure projects. By starting with a vision, we can connect communities to key services and ensure they are served by sustainable transport rather than development driven by land availability alone. The benefits are clear: more housing, greater travel choices, better designed and connected places and investment shifted towards sustainable infrastructure.

The National Planning Policy Framework already sets out that a vision-led approach should be used to consider transport issues from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals. We will be publishing updated Planning Practice Guidance for Transport outlining how we expect local authorities and developers to

implement a vision-led approach. This represents an important step in progressing our ambition for developments to be truly vision-led in practice.

We will work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure vision-led principles are adopted at every tier of government [TD3], to shape our new towns and better align the spatial and transport planning systems. We will do this by delivering training to build the capability of planners across England and develop an appropriate data-led monitoring platform to support local authorities in implementing this approach effectively.

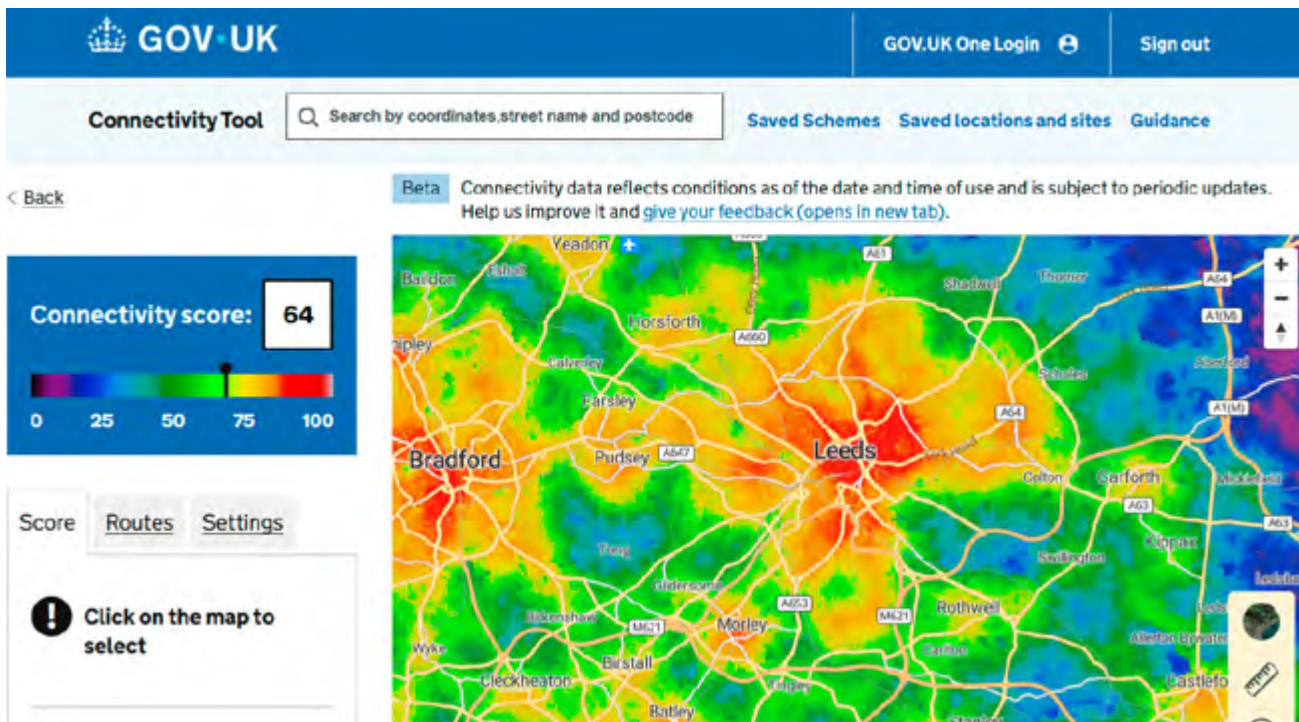
We will work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to consider the role of the Connectivity Tool in national planning policy and guidance, taking account of responses to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation [TD4].



CASE STUDY Bristol Temple Quarter Regeneration - Bristol

The Bristol Temple Quarter Regeneration programme aims to deliver 10,000 new homes, generate thousands of jobs and develop critical infrastructure across Bristol. At its heart is the Bristol Temple Meads rail station. The station's surrounding area is currently dominated by car parking, but has potential for new homes, commercial space and public realm. The first step to unlock this opportunity is to deliver the Southern Gateway, a new transport hub for the station.

The Southern Gateway will feature a new pedestrian access route into the station, a high-quality cycle hub, including provision for cargo and accessible cycles, as well as a multi-storey car park that will consolidate existing rail passenger and staff parking into a single site. By reconfiguring station parking, building new entrances and infrastructure improvements, Bristol Temple Quarter will help transform the station into a gateway to the city-region.



Alongside this, we will support ambitious levels of density for new housing developments in appropriate locations, including around rail stations, to promote a more effective use of land.

Roads are essential growth corridors, but when planning transport for new developments, increasing road capacity alone is often the default choice which increases car dependence, leading to congestion and poor health outcomes⁶⁴. Evidence in England shows that car dependency in new developments has risen or stayed the same largely due to homes being built without the provision of sustainable and affordable transport services^{65, 66}. Through proposed changes to national planning policy and a future update to the Planning Practice Guidance and the associated Circular on the Strategic Road Network, we will consider how we set clear expectations that local authorities and developers should maximise sustainable transport interventions before considering any increase in road capacity. Working with the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority, we are strengthening transport infrastructure planning at a strategic and local level through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan guidance to deliver greater collaboration between local authorities and infrastructure and service providers.

Connectivity to airports is crucial; airports connect our regions to the world. As airports such as Luton, Gatwick and Heathrow progress with expansion we need these gateways to be even better connected and integrated with the wider public transport system. Public transport should be the natural choice for passengers and staff, with high-quality links that make journeys simple, seamless and sustainable. We are already delivering on this approach. Our plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail include a predominantly new line from Liverpool to Manchester routed via Manchester Airport and will show what modern airport connectivity looks like: strategic rail links that strengthen regional economies while reducing road congestion and emissions.

Maximise the density of developments around public transport

The New Towns Taskforce's placemaking principles provide a clear framework for creating thriving places, through vision-led planning and building at an ambitious density, which we intend to apply across both the next generation of new towns and the development system

Better Connected

wherever possible. We know that the location and density of developments are crucial to realising vibrant, sustainable and well-connected homes and places, as well as supporting the financial viability of local transport services by boosting footfall and this view was reflected during our Regional Roadshow.

By delivering mixed use development that concentrates housing, employment and services together within a smaller geographic footprint, we will support a more efficient use of land with additional agglomeration and economic benefits. This 'densification' combined with high-quality walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport infrastructure can increase the number of trips taken within developments, support healthier lifestyles, improve access to jobs and services and increase the viability of transport choices that can be sustainably afforded in the long term. Scenario modelling shows that well-connected, accessible developments can generate up to 50% greater positive economic impact in terms of employment and productivity compared to less accessible developments⁶⁷.

To achieve these positive impacts, **we will work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, informed by the outcome of the National Planning Policy Framework consultation, to consider how national planning policy and guidance can best support higher densities for development in highly connected locations, including around well-connected rail stations, and other sustainable transport infrastructure [TD5].**

The consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework proposes to set an expectation that local planning authorities and developers make efficient use of land by taking account of a site's connectivity when setting density standards and determining applications. Tools and evidence that support an understanding of connectivity, including the Connectivity Tool, can play an important role in informing these decisions. This will maximise the benefits of investment in transport and support the provision of appropriate infrastructure and services.

We are also exploring how to use the Connectivity Tool to guide maximum car parking standards for new developments, including the new towns programme, similar to the approach taken in London. This would reflect good placemaking principles by optimising the use of land, increasing housing numbers and giving communities genuine choice in how they travel.

Join up our approach across the system

The Planning and Infrastructure Act gives more certainty about planning outcomes and accelerates the delivery of high-quality infrastructure. The National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority will set the overall strategic direction for infrastructure planning and decisions in England. It will work closely with government departments, regulators, public bodies and local delivery partners to identify opportunities to strengthen alignment between housing, transport and other services. The Act's introduction of Spatial Development Strategies, which set out the overall approach to development at a sub-regional scale, is a key opportunity for coordinating the delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure.

Better alignment across national and local government is essential to ensuring that decisions on transport, development and growth are coordinated. The [10 Year Infrastructure Strategy](#) sets out how transport and housing will be considered more closely at a national level, using a spatial approach to infrastructure planning and new place-based business cases. These place-based business cases, similar to programme business cases, will ensure that government considers the co-benefits of different projects that contribute to the objectives of a particular place. The approach will be tested by early adopters in Plymouth, Liverpool, Birmingham Sports Quarter and Port Talbot. **We will put the alignment and integration of transport and complementary interventions at the heart of place-based business cases [TD6].**





Champion data and technology

Data and technology will drive the integrated, innovative and accessible transport system of the future.

Transport data remains fragmented and siloed, whilst technology is often not used to its full potential creating barriers to innovation, real-time decision-making and user-focussed services. We want data to flow easily across different systems and stakeholders, ensuring those who need to can access it. This will support better decision-making and drive innovation, moving beyond short-term trials to see impactful technologies embedded in business as usual. We will achieve this by championing open data principles, including making data open, interoperable, discoverable and accessible.

Embed technology and innovation in transport

The UK is a leader in transport technology and innovation, supporting entrepreneurs to make our transport system more responsive, more resilient and more sustainable⁶⁸. We have a key role to play in setting the conditions to support this ecosystem and have a strong track record of supporting early-stage innovation through our Transport Research Innovation Grant programme which has secured £89 million of private investment since its inception.

We know that organisations want to test, trial and procure new technologies but often face barriers due to policy and regulatory uncertainty, high upfront costs and limited access to the necessary infrastructure. That is why **we will deliver a Transport Innovation Procurement Pathway [DT1]** to help strategic authorities and

local transport authorities procure innovative solutions and technology, including evidence bases that showcase the increased flexibility within the Procurement Act, giving buyers in the public sector more confidence to purchase new, innovative technologies and services⁶⁹. We will also encourage collaborative procurement, including co-investing in shared access to software licences, digital tools, and physical sites to help pioneer new technologies, reduce overhead costs and red tape that stifles growth.

A further barrier to scaling and adopting new transport technologies is the lack of practical knowledge and skills, both in understanding how the technologies work and in integrating them into existing operations⁷⁰. This can slow progress and increase risk for local authorities and delivery partners. To address this, **we will explore options to support knowledge exchanges for local authorities and other practitioners [DT2]**. These could help share practical insights and lessons learned from areas that have already trialled technologies such as connected vehicles and intelligent traffic junction controls. They could also provide support with testing, procurement and implementation to de-risk adoption and accelerate rollout, building on existing initiatives such as the Transport Technology Forum and ADEPT LiveLabs 2 programme.

Partnerships with universities, academia and local places bring vital technical expertise, research capability and local insight into the innovation process. We want to encourage and support local authorities to adopt innovation and drive change through working with these experts. We are bringing together local authorities and the transport sector to focus innovation efforts, identifying priority technologies for local adoption to build confidence and working in partnership to pool resources. As part of the Transport Innovation Procurement Pathway [DT1] we will



publish a list of innovation priorities, developed in partnership with stakeholders to signal our intentions to the market.

Strengthen transport's digital and data foundation

Data and digital connectivity are fundamental to the delivery of an integrated transport network that supports growth, enables safe journeys and optimises the performance of the transport network. Fast, reliable mobile connectivity will unlock the benefits of new technology, with emerging telecoms like 6G accelerating real-time data transfer, improving access to up-to-date information and enabling system operators to ease congestion through tools such as variable speed limits and timing of traffic lights. **We will set out a plan for improving and investing in digital connectivity on the transport network [DT3]** to ensure we maximise the benefits of this technology.

Data powers the tools that are used every day by travellers and transport operators to plan and make trips. We have published our [Transport Data Action Plan](#), building on the [Transport Data Strategy](#) outlining how we are unlocking the opportunities that data can provide to the UK's transport network. It is designed for everyone who uses transport data, from local government to operators to the public, and is shaped by their needs. It will set out our approach to a transport system where data is interoperable, discoverable and accessible to deliver maximum value.

When used well, data improves services, empowers local decision-making, and unlocks innovation. As data is generated through different organisations and by different means, it is vital that we have the right principles and practices that ensure data is discoverable and interoperable, meaning it can be put to good use for the benefit of all. We will do this by working with the sector to ensure that clear, consistent and user-focussed data standards are in place, enabling flexibility within a framework that supports free flowing of data seamlessly across systems.



CASE STUDY Coventry Very Light Rail - Coventry

Coventry Very Light Rail is a research and development project funded through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and led by Transport for West Midlands and Coventry City Council. A wide coalition of partners including Warwick Manufacturing Group, Dudley Council and private sector firms are working together to successfully demonstrate the low-cost light rail system in Coventry City Centre on a 220m test track. The team are now progressing the project with partners to deliver a City Centre Demonstrator by March 2027. We have helped to de-risk the innovation by retaining oversight, controlling funding release via bespoke stage gate approval and an Independent Review Panel to provide detailed technical independent assurance. The retained oversight and research and development nature of this project has enabled streamlined procurement options and has supported integration with broader investment and innovation agendas. Other places across the UK have since expressed informal interest in potential use cases for very light rail.



CASE STUDY Digital-Demand Responsive Transport - Lincolnshire

Lincolnshire is England's third-largest county by area, with a rural geography that can mean traditional fixed-route bus services are challenging to deliver in many regions of the county. Lincolnshire County Council developed the Callconnect demand responsive transport service to provide a flexible, responsive service tailored to local people's needs. There are several software providers and recently Lincolnshire County Council (now part of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority) partnered with one of them, VIA, to deliver a digital-demand responsive transport service, supporting smarter and more efficient service delivery without compromising on the level of service provided.

The software integrates rich data sources, including traffic data, historical performance and predictive modelling to deliver more accurate journey times and expectations, improving the driver and passenger experience. This has improved the punctuality of services significantly and enabled passengers to access real-time tracking and information through the app-based platform, increasing their confidence in the service.

We have already made significant steps in removing the barriers to open data in the transport sector, enabling real-time locations tracking data, new and improved journey-planning apps and innovative products and services. **We will go further by developing a Transport Data Marketplace [DT4]** bringing together data about different types of transport to make it easier to access for the people who need it, such as local authorities and private sector app developers. We are continuing to deliver improvements to mode-specific and cross-modal data, building on the positive steps already taken on bus and rail data through the [Bus Open Data Service](#) and [Rail Data Marketplace](#). Where transport is delivered by the private sector, such as licensed cycle and e-scooter hire, we are exploring how sharing data more openly can help people plan journeys better and fully integrate these types of transport into the wider network.

Our "Simple payments and information" priority outlines how people should be able to access the information they need to make their journeys. Data is critical to delivering better information for passengers, which is why we are making data more responsive, inclusive and user informed, enabling feedback when data is missing, investing in new and existing data sources, and encouraging public engagement with digital tools.

Improving how data is used and embedding open data principles across transport requires a whole system approach. That is why we are helping central and local government leaders learn from each other, through groups like the Mayoral Data Council, and bringing in experts to support smarter use of data. We will continue to collaborate with the private sector, who hold valuable datasets, to support the creation of better public-facing tools and insights.

Invest in digital technology

To maximise the benefits of data and the digital technology which relies on it, data and its infrastructure must be seen as a key strategic asset. Digital infrastructure often involves sizeable up-front investment, with benefits that

can be hard to predict or take longer to realise, posing a barrier to progress. The Industrial Strategy committed to creating a framework for valuing data and recognising its importance as an asset. We will share evidence to support economic analysis for business cases, helping local partners build stronger investment cases and unlock funding opportunities for digital infrastructure, as well as providing supplementary materials to help local leaders implement the framework for valuing data in their own contexts.

We will harness the power of data across the transport system and utilise digital technologies to deliver seamless integration across different types of transport and place. **We will support local authorities to realise this vision by committing £10 million to pilot an Integration Innovation Fund [DT5]** that will allow a number of local authorities to trial digital integration technologies to improve their local transport system. A key requirement of this fund will be taking part in a training and knowledge sharing programme to lay the path for other areas to be fast followers, supporting a rapid uptake of technology proven to deliver benefits.

By fully embracing a digital approach we can make better use of the available network and optimise our existing infrastructure. On the road network, traffic regulation orders are being updated, moving from a paper-based system to digital-traffic regulation orders. These digital 'rules of the road' are providing real-time traffic regulation data, enabling a more responsive system that can reduce congestion and improve routing for drivers. This lays the foundation for connected vehicles, and we are delivering a Connected Vehicles Services Framework to set the structure for how infrastructure and vehicles will deliver an integrated and connected system and enhance data-sharing capabilities across the transport ecosystem.

Digital twins, which act as live representations of the real world, are enabling transport operators to understand and control how the whole transport system is operating. **We will support local authorities to maximise the benefits they can provide by investing £30 million**

into Integrated Transport Digital Twins [DT6] enabling them to model the impact of decisions and coordinate better, more timely responses to disruption.

By implementing AI, we can shape the future of transport and mobility across the country. Predictive models can help operators anticipate how weather conditions will affect services, allowing them to adjust timetables and share updates with passengers in real time. AI is also being used to spot faults before they happen, helping rail and road operators carry out maintenance earlier and avoid disruption. Realising the full potential of AI in transport depends on access to high-quality, machine-readable and well-structured datasets. The Transport AI Action Plan sets out the step-change we want to see in how data is used across the sector, recognising the critical role AI can play in making transport data more impactful, whilst embedding ethical safeguards to prevent bias and exclusion. Responsible and transparent use of data and AI is essential. That is why we are strengthening governance frameworks, protecting personal data and promoting ethical standards to build public trust and enable innovators to use data with confidence.

Integrate data and technology in our vision for the future

New transport technologies like self-driving vehicles offer exciting potential but must be introduced safely. New regulations will allow trials of automated passenger services without a safety driver, helping us understand how they can complement existing public transport and meet different user needs. Full regulations will follow, and we are finalising regulations for self-driving vehicles. We are already investing £150 million to create Europe's earliest market for automated transport through the Connected and Automated Mobility Pathfinder programme. We intend to fast track the launch of a new permitting scheme for automated passenger services, helping shape the evolving regulatory framework and deliver more transport options on the ground sooner⁷¹.

How we think about transport is also changing. Mobility as a Service is a digital transport model which can integrate all forms of transport, from public transport to private vehicle hire, into a single service. This model has already shown success abroad, such as Dijon's DiviaMobilités app in France, and small-scale pilots have seen some success in England, such as the Solent Breeze app. **We will commission research into the barriers to, and benefits of, Mobility as a Service deployment in England [DT7],** including coordinating monitoring and evaluation from previously trialled apps to develop an evidence base. This will help us to explore steps towards its future delivery.

New market opportunities are arising too, with the Industrial Strategy recognising the importance of Smart Data, the secure, consented sharing of customer data with authorised third-party providers, to ensure businesses get more for their money and empower customers to make better use of the data that belongs to them. We will work with other government departments to utilise the £36 million investment set out in the Industrial Strategy to showcase the potential of Smart Data in transport.

We are entering a period of accelerated technology-driven change across many sectors of the economy as recent advances in digital technology mature and drive new benefits, including for those travelling. Scenario planning can support policymakers to develop strategies that are resilient to uncertainty and long-term change. We plan to develop and publish a set of digitalisation scenarios to help transport planners and other stakeholders understand the range of possible futures which their strategy setting may need to respond to.



CASE STUDY

Urban Traffic Management and Control - Tees Valley

The Tees Valley urban traffic management and control system is the operational hub for the region's road network, coordinating signals, CCTV, electronic traffic signs and data from hundreds of roadside sensors. By embedding real-time data and intelligent transport systems, the region has strengthened visibility, coordination, and responsiveness, improving the efficiency and reliability of the network.

A key innovation is the delivery of the UK's first region-wide automated traffic digital twin. Using live data from sensors, inductive loops, and the Bus Open Data Service, it detects incidents, predicts congestion, and supports targeted interventions. Initial evaluation shows bus journey speeds improving by an average of 11.6mph within 15 minutes of activation, with delays for general traffic reduced by 13.7% at defined hotspots⁷².

Additionally, Tees Valley are deploying a real-time adaptive traffic control system known as FUSION. Early monitoring shows delays reduced by up to 54% at the A66/A135 junction compared with traditional adaptive traffic control, helping drivers get where they need to go more reliably⁷³.



Spotlight on: Roles and responsibilities

The transport system is complex and how decisions are made is evolving, particularly in the context of increased devolution. The below sets out the relationships between and key responsibilities of different tiers of government.

Transport at the national level

UK Government

We provide funding and set UK-wide policy, regulation and guidance in alignment with wider UK government priorities, including for international travel, aviation and maritime.

← →
**Close
collaboration**

Devolved Governments

Transport is largely a devolved responsibility of the governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with each having their own transport plans and strategies.



We provide tools and guidance to support local authorities, such as Local Transport Plan guidance, and work with local areas to increase capability and capacity.

We provide funding to local transport authorities and Transport for London. This is provided in an increasingly consolidated way, with more autonomy to local places. The department's Accounting Officer remains accountable for ensuring taxpayers' money is spent well and national priorities are delivered.



Transport at the local level

In England, local transport authorities are the primary bodies responsible for shaping and integrating local transport, including the local road network, buses, light rail and walking, wheeling and cycling. We expect them to collaborate where necessary to tackle cross-boundary issues.

Strategic authorities: Outside of London, England's biggest city regions (and, increasingly, other areas) have a strategic authority which is the local transport authority. They take a leading role in coordinating how local transport is delivered across their area. In these areas, the local councils (either a county council or a unitary authority) are the local highway and traffic authorities, with responsibility for managing and maintaining local roads.

The majority of strategic authorities are led by elected mayors. Mayors are accountable to their residents and can convene local partners and tackle problems from a place-based perspective. Mayors are ultimately responsible for the Local Transport Plan in their areas, will hold a Power of Direction over their Key Route Network (the most important local roads in the area) and will be given a statutory role in governing, managing, planning, and developing the rail network through the Railways Bill.

County council and unitary authorities: In areas of England without a strategic authority, the local council is the local transport authority and is responsible for local transport, and as the local highway and traffic authority is also responsible for maintaining the local road network. Currently this is the county council or a unitary authority; for areas going through local government reorganisation, we are carefully considering future local transport authority boundaries.

London: There are different arrangements under the Greater London Authority Act. The Mayor of London is responsible for transport planning and policy and publishing a Transport Strategy which is primarily delivered by Transport for London and the London boroughs. Transport for London manages all of London's local transport (e.g. buses and London Underground) and 5% of London roads. All other roads are managed by the London boroughs and the City of London Corporation as local highway authorities.

In more detail: Department for Transport



Vision setting

We provide a clear transport narrative and framework and set national policy on transport matters, particularly on priorities that go beyond the boundaries of local bodies.



Legal framework

We are responsible for presenting to Parliament new legislation or amendments to existing legislation related to the transport network, and for setting standards across the transport network.



Funding

We provide investment governance, business case approvals and assurance for large-scale capital funding projects, and the vast majority of funding for the national road and rail network.



Convening

We have a strong convening power which we use to bring together different organisations to tackle shared issues, including issues that cut across local authorities or across different types of transport.



National network management

Some elements of the transport network must be considered at a national level. This includes whole network security and resilience and the national road and rail networks, which require dedicated expertise to manage their day to day operation.



Supporting devolution

Devolution is central to local delivery and we manage the devolution of certain transport powers and functions to local authorities, whilst setting clear expectations and outcomes.



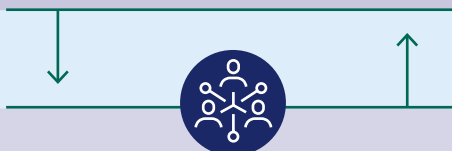
International role

We represent the UK government's transport interests on the global stage, and work with international partners to both improve our own transport system and support UK firms to trade globally.



Intervention as a last resort

The Transport Secretary is ultimately responsible for the safe running of the transport network and on occasion will need to intervene directly, particularly in times of crisis.



Agencies and public bodies

We work with a number of agencies and public bodies. For example, National Highways and Network Rail (and in future Great British Railways) are custodians for the strategic road and national rail network. We also sponsor a number of executive agencies which carry out specific functions at a national level, including carrying out inspections to ensure our standards are met. For example, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency carries out roadside checks on commercial drivers and vehicles.



Empower local leaders

Local leaders will be empowered and supported to deliver better local transport for their communities.

There is potential in every corner of the country, but too often opportunities and new developments are not shared evenly because power is so centralised. Local leaders are best placed to understand the barriers and opportunities in their areas, including the wider factors needed to deliver place-based economic growth. That is why we will put power in the hands of local leaders to deliver local transport, provide integrated and long-term funding and support the capability and capacity of local places.

Put power in the hands of local leaders

Although devolution of local transport delivery is not new, responsibility and decision-making for transport is being increasingly moved out of central government and into local places. The [English Devolution White Paper](#) set out the ambition for universal coverage across England of strategic authorities which will become the local transport authority for their area. This will help ensure that transport is planned and delivered across the right geographies and better integrated across local authority boundaries.

We will support mayors and elected representatives in leading collaboration at a pan-regional level and creating convening bodies whose purpose, priorities and membership are decided at a regional level. This could take the form of a locally driven sub-national transport body or other mechanisms for collaboration.

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill supports our ambition to move more power and decision-making into the hands of local leaders who know their areas best. The Bill will provide strategic authorities with an enhanced framework of transport powers and functions – with standardised governance arrangements –

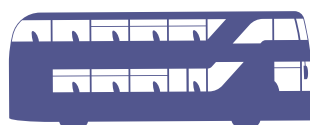
so that they are better able to coordinate, plan and deliver improved transport across their area, and make strategic decisions that are aligned with other growth initiatives.

As set out in our “[Provide safe and dependable journeys](#)” priority, mayoral strategic authorities will be required to set up a Key Route Network, allowing the most important local roads to be strategically managed to facilitate better integration. Mayors will hold a Power of Direction over this network, supporting delivery of their Local Transport Plan, enabling mayors to direct their local authorities to take forward measures on their Key Route Network.

A series of other measures have already been taken to put powers over local transport networks into the hands of local leaders, including the [Bus Services Act](#) that empowers local areas to choose the model that works best for their area and increases flexibility for managing the Local Authority Bus Grant.

We are also committed to giving mayors a statutory role in governing, managing, planning and developing the rail network through Great British Railways. We also intend to go further through tailored mayoral partnerships, enabling mayoral strategic authorities to co-design and, where appropriate, commission services with Great British Railways. Through mayoral partnerships, Great British Railways will work collaboratively with mayoral strategic authorities to support closer collaboration on local rail priorities, such as service planning, station improvements and better integration with other transport modes. These partnerships will reflect the ambition and capacity of each mayoral strategic authority.

The views of experienced local leaders will also help shape future transport devolution opportunities. We have recently published the [English Rail Devolution Applications guidance](#) that outlines the process for established mayoral strategic authorities to request full rail devolution, and the criteria that will be considered such as wider network implications, alongside a clear process for government to respond within a reasonable timeframe.



It is not just strategic authorities that will benefit; the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill will also deliver new powers for all local transport authorities, such as the on-street micromobility regulation framework. This will include powers in England for local government and the UK government to require data sharing from the operators of shared micromobility schemes, as well as the power to require technical integration of schemes into transport networks, for example through Mobility as a Service apps.

Provide integrated and long-term funding

We know that devolved powers are not enough on their own. As part of our Regional Roadshow, we heard that places need long-term funding with greater devolution of transport budgets to deliver effective, integrated solutions tailored to local needs. That is why we are providing consolidated, long-term funding, offering more flexibility for all local transport authorities, giving places the resource and certainty to develop, prioritise and deliver their plans and projects.

Through Integrated Settlements, we are consolidating just under £8 billion in transport funding over the Spending Review period for established mayoral strategic authorities. Integrated Settlements consolidate central government funding for transport and local infrastructure alongside other functions, allowing mayors to move money flexibly between functions future and years and spend money in a way that better reflects their local priorities, with a focus on delivery.

This empowers mayors to make the strategic policy decisions necessary to foster growth and deliver better outcomes for their residents. Mayoral strategic authorities that meet the published criteria, which include having had a directly elected mayor in place for at least 18 months, will be able to apply to the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government for established mayoral strategic authority status and become eligible for an Integrated Settlement. West Midlands Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Combined Authority already receive Integrated Settlements, and this will be extended to more authorities from March 2027, including Liverpool City Region, the North East, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Greater London.



CASE STUDY Bee Network - Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester's Bee Network is leading the way in developing a locally led joined up transport network which integrates fares, ticketing, and customer information under a single, trusted brand. The Bee Network is making it quicker, easier and cheaper for those living in Greater Manchester to pay for their journeys and get around using different modes of travel, showcasing what can be achieved through a place-based approach to local transport.

As part of this initiative, Greater Manchester became the first area outside of London to bring all local bus services under local control. Alongside control of their Metrolink tram system (with 99 stops and a network of lines across the area), this means all local bus and tram services are now part of the Bee Network and passengers can pay for their journeys across bus and tram via contactless tap and go. Greater Manchester is also making it easier to walk, wheel and cycle by building the country's largest active travel network.

In conjunction with the rail industry, Greater Manchester is also working to integrate eight local commuter train lines into the Bee Network by 2028. This would operate in partnership with Great British Railways and would enable pay as you go across all modes, paving the way for fully integrated fares and breaking ground on modernising ticketing.



Better Connected

The Transport and Local Infrastructure functions do not apply in respect of the Greater London Authority as transport funds are administered and delivered outside of the Greater London Authority's Integrated Settlement.

For all other mayoral strategic authorities, we have committed to consolidating all local transport funding into a single pot. This will include the relevant shares of the £15.6 billion in funding for Transport for City Regions settlements for nine mayoral strategic authorities to March 2032, or some of the £2.3 billion funding for the Local Transport Grant to March 2030. All other local transport authorities, including county and unitary councils, will also benefit from consolidated and simplified local transport funding, including a share of the Local Transport Grant, with long-term certainty over their allocations. A multi-year capital settlement for transport is also being provided to Transport for London.

Empower local leaders to deliver local transport

We want national and local government to work in partnership to deliver for communities, which is why we are moving towards an outcomes-focussed approach to monitoring local transport delivery. Greater simplification and consolidation of local transport funding provides flexibility and autonomy in how local leaders deploy their resources, however national government is ultimately accountable to Parliament for the funding it provides. All authorities have a role in making and demonstrating best use of taxpayer money while supporting overall delivery of an integrated, national vision.

To strike the right balance, we have agreed the key transport outcomes to be delivered with each established mayoral strategic authority via Integrated Settlement outcomes frameworks.

Outcomes reflect local and national priorities, including the principles set out in this strategy, as a guiding vision for delivering better integrated transport [ELL1]. Delivery of the agreed outcomes will be overseen through the single cross-government Integrated Settlement monitoring arrangements.

A single accountability framework gives places more freedom and flexibility over which schemes they choose to take forward and how they are delivered. For mayoral strategic authorities with

an Integrated Settlement, there will no longer be a requirement for us to approve transport business cases, except for the largest schemes and those with national network impacts (such as national rail connectivity). Instead, they will be empowered to manage these processes on their own, with guidance and support where needed to enable a trusted partnership.

Simplified transport funding for all local transport authorities that do not receive an Integrated Settlement will similarly be governed by a new transport-specific accountability framework. This includes a local transport outcome framework, which will also be aligned with the principles of this strategy [ELL1].

We will continue to oversee delivery across the country so that we can understand what is influencing the delivery of successful transport outcomes. This will enable us to meet ministerial accountabilities to the public and Parliament, identify and share best practice and quickly address any issues that arise over the course of a spending review period.

Support the capability and capacity of local leaders

We know that local authorities continue to face capacity and capability challenges that directly impact transport delivery, including a lack of specialist transport skills. As responsibilities devolve, it is vital that local authorities are equipped to succeed, and our role is to equip local places and their leaders for success. We want local authorities to be empowered, skilled and have better access to resources to enable them to deliver confidently, plan strategically and reduce dependency on costly consultancies.

We are already taking action to address this by providing long-term resource funding to places for the first time. This includes three-year resource settlements for those in receipt of the Local Transport Grant and even longer term resource settlements up to March 2032 for those in receipt of Transport for City Regions settlements. This certainty over longer term resource funding is a wholesale change in approach, enabling places to invest with confidence in their skills, enhancing their capability and capacity.

We are also supporting a number of other initiatives, such as running skills workshops on a

range of topics, supporting Centres of Excellence designed to improve local transport authorities' capability and using Active Travel England's capability ratings to offer targeted support. Pan-regional collaboration, as referred to earlier, is a further way of supporting local authority capacity and capability in an efficient manner.

In addition, we are in the process of developing an evidence base on mass transit systems to support local transport authorities with their business cases. Further information can be found in our "Optimise decision-making and appraisal" priority. **We will also develop a Transport Evaluation Support for Trials programme [ELL2]** to provide professional evaluation support to local authorities to help them to trial new approaches to transport delivery and learn about their effectiveness. This will help authorities who may currently lack the capability to get robust evidence about the effectiveness of their

innovations. Publication and dissemination of trial findings will share learning across authorities.

However, we know there is still some way to go in ensuring local places have the right capability and capacity to ensure they are able to deliver effectively. That is why **we will continue to explore further ways to enhance capability and capacity including through targeted discussions with places [ELL3]** to understand work already ongoing in this area and what we can do to provide further support.

To further support local transport authorities, **we will publish updated Local Transport Plan guidance, aligned with the principles of this strategy [ELL4]**. This guidance will set out in more detail the approach that we expect local transport authorities to follow when developing their plans for local transport.

CASE STUDY Devolution in action - Liverpool City Region

Liverpool City Region showcases what can be achieved through the local devolution of transport responsibilities, with significant progress being made on building a sustainable, fully integrated network, underpinned by an affordable and easy-to-use smart ticketing system.

The Merseyrail network thrives due to strong local decision-making and consistent government support, resulting in reliable and punctual services. The publicly funded fleet features new trains with improved accessibility and level boarding.

Alongside direct control of Mersey Ferries and Mersey Tunnels, the strategic authority is moving forward at pace with bus franchising, bringing local services under public control for integration. Franchising will begin in Autumn 2026, allowing greater control over fares, routes, and timetables. This transition includes a significant fleet modernisation, purchasing over a hundred new fully electric buses with support from Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas funding, City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements, and Transport for City Regions funding.

Smart, contactless ticketing launched on Merseyrail in August 2025. This is being expanded to enable passengers to pay using contactless bank cards and mobile devices and, following the franchising of the bus network, will result in a single, integrated tap-and-go network across rail, bus and ferry services.

There is also major ongoing investment in new transport hubs, notably a new rail station at Liverpool Baltic and a transport interchange in St Helens town centre, the nucleus of a multimillion-pound regeneration project. Additionally, the strategic authority is delivering hundreds of kilometres of new, best-in-class active travel infrastructure.



Optimise decision-making and appraisal

Transport investment decisions will prioritise our principles of people and place, underpinned by high quality analysis.

We know we need to approach investment differently to ensure that we consider all available options before decisions are made, reflect the need for end-to-end journeys, and meet the different needs of different places. We will continue to develop our modelling tools, appraisal methods and evidence base to better capture the ways in which transport investment impacts people, and ensure our guidance and evidence is easily available to support excellent decision making in local government and the wider transport sector.

Deliver cross-modal, integrated and transparent decision-making

We want to ensure that when ministers and local leaders make decisions on transport investments, these are informed by the highest quality, objective and transparent advice, to ensure that investment decisions in all regions are given a fair assessment. This advice also needs to be ‘cross-modal’ meaning it considers all different transport types as possible solutions, for example whether enhancements to bus routes or other new infrastructure is required.

We know that some projects and funding programmes have historically been developed without proper consideration of a range of transport modes and limited early-stage exploration of alternative solutions. This can lead to premature commitment to specific options, with appraisal used to refine design rather than evaluate a range of approaches. Such practices can increase opportunity costs,

delay delivery, and lead to mid-project changes or cancellations, as reflected in the [Stewart Review of High Speed Two](#).

We will enhance the cross-modal approach to investments by improving how transport and connectivity challenges are identified, promoting earlier optioneering, and learning lessons from past investments. We will do this by bringing in transport analysis at the early-options stage, when key decisions are made, which will be crucial to enabling the vision-led planning approach detailed in the [“Aligning transport and development”](#) priority.

HM Treasury’s Green Book is the government’s guidance on appraisal, the process of assessing the costs, benefits and risks for achieving government objectives. We will continue to implement the recommendations of the [Green Book Review](#), to address poor strategic cases underpinning projects, over-emphasis on benefit-cost ratios, and a lack of clarity on how to appraise ‘transformational’ schemes. As part of this, we will be building on our collaboration with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government and HM Treasury on place-based business cases.

We will also review our internal investment approvals structures to ensure that the boards and committees that provide assurance are well equipped and organised effectively, further improving our approach to cross-modal thinking.

We will also embed the new Project and Programme Initiation Framework within the department [DMA1], which ensures that the rationale for change, the range of options, and resources required are considered from the outset. And to further improve transparency, accountability and scrutiny over our decision-making, we are committing to publishing [more business cases](#) as part of a Treasury-led initiative.



Strengthen our people-focussed evidence base

Both national and local government need to make evidence-based decisions about transport using the best data available. This is particularly important when considering the full range of impacts for people where the evidence is newer and still developing. We also need a better understanding of who is using the transport network and why to design interventions that work effectively for people.

The UK has strong transport modelling methods for investigating the changes within different types of transport, and we are now creating greater capability to look cross-modally more effectively. **We will enhance our strategic modelling capability [DMA2]**, by speeding up our existing National Transport Model to make it easier to use and we are creating a National Activity-Based Model which will allow a wider range of policies to be modelled. We also want to see more people across the transport industry use these modelling approaches and the outputs they create.

CASE STUDY

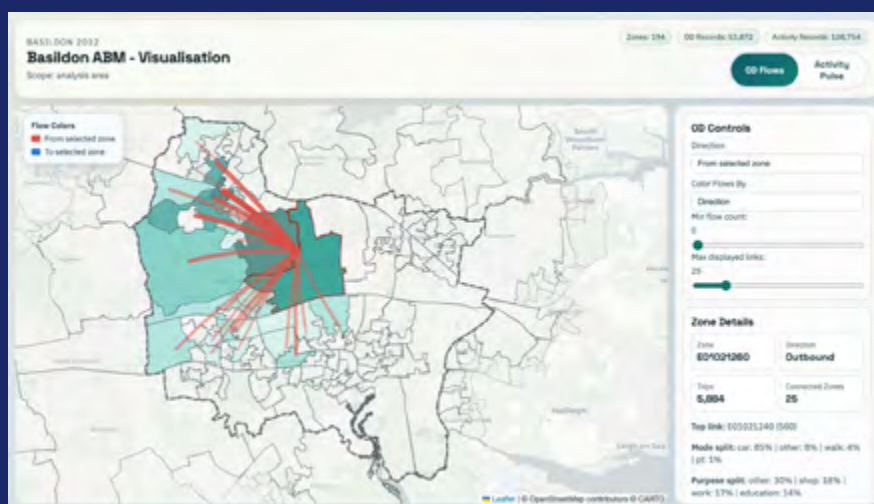
People-focussed modelling with BERTIE - East of England

BERTIE (BEhaviour & Transport: Impact & Equity) is an agent and activity based model, developed for the Transport East region. An agent and activity based model

estimates how individuals complete their daily activities in the most effective way, reflecting the complications of daily lives and the transport choices available. The model enables us to more accurately assess how new policies and investments would affect people's travel behaviour by taking account of different modes of transport and individuals' characteristics.

Basildon Council is using BERTIE to support their Local Plan development by analysing existing movement patterns across place types, their different purposes, the characteristics of people making those movements and the challenges they have with accessing jobs and services. BERTIE has supported the assessment of different spatial plan options by looking at the characteristics of new residents by place and providing insights into travel needs. This will enable more housing to be aligned with access to jobs and facilities with more choice over how people travel between these places. The image above shows a visualisation of Basildon using BERTIE, demonstrating how travel flows between zones can be explored by mode, purpose and traveller characteristics.

The work underpinning BERTIE is now supporting our work in exploring the development of an Agent and Activity Based Model to cover all of England.





CASE STUDY Options assessment for third Road Investment Strategy - Nationwide

National Highways continues to strengthen the way it develops early options by working more closely with other organisations, allowing it to better understand how people’s connectivity needs can be met across different types of transport, not just roads.

As part of the analysis to inform the third Road Investment Strategy, options were assessed at the early stages of development work by looking at how different interventions support the Government’s strategic objectives, alongside traditional value for money analysis. This was achieved through objective impact analysis, which shows the marginal impact on key strategic objectives as set out in previous publications.

The updated approach helps policymakers more clearly understand the trade-offs between different choices and see how proposed investments translate into real-world benefits for users, for example through reduced congestion and time savings.

We are working to better embed the Connectivity Tool into policy development and we are improving our capability in data collection and using new data, as set out in our “Champion data and technology” priority, to construct metrics that will be useful to provide more detailed insights for policy development.

We will also establish a Mass Transit Taskforce [DMA3]. The Taskforce will assess the wider economic, spatial and social benefits of integrated mass transit systems, and examine the funding, governance and delivery barriers that can impede their development, in line with the recommendation of the New Towns Taskforce Report on mass transit.

Furthermore, we are developing a measure of transport poverty and will publish an Opportunity Mission toolkit as set out in our “Make travel accessible and affordable” priority. We are also updating our Areas of Research Interest, to align the wider research community’s focus with our approach to future decision-making.

We will publish our new Appraisal, Modelling and Evaluation Strategy (AMES), aligned to the vision in Better Connected [DMA4]. Implementing the recommendations of the Green Book Review, AMES will set out our strategic approach to appraisal, modelling and evaluation in transport, guiding future improvements to Transport Analysis Guidance and setting out best practice for its use. AMES will develop our appraisal methods to better evidence the things that really matter to people including:

- The quality of journeys and equitable access to services,
- Employment opportunities that better accessibility can unlock,
- How good planning of transport and land use can provide transformative outcomes for local areas and national growth,
- Better health outcomes and improvements to quality of life arising through increased walking, wheeling and cycling,


Segment 2
Young Urban Families



Farah

My husband and I share our car, and between commuting and school runs – a second car would be very handy!

Segment 9
Young Low Income Without Cars



Zahir

I'm out of work and struggling financially – so I walk and cycle whenever I can to save money for essentials.

Segment 7
Elderly And Low Income Without Cars



Pippa

My spinal condition means that bus journeys are just too uncomfortable, so I am more reliant on lifts from my daughter.

CASE STUDY Transport Personas – Nationwide

We have developed twelve evidence-based “Transport User Personas” using large-scale surveys and ethnographic research to capture the needs, preferences and behaviours of people across the country. These personas turn complex data into relatable profiles, enabling decision-makers to understand how different groups experience the transport system and assess the real-life impact of policies. We use these personas, alongside stakeholder engagement, to shape and test strategies such as Better Connected, to ensure the approach is grounded in lived experience. We encourage local authorities, delivery partners, and industry stakeholders to embed these personas when designing strategies, policies, and services, so every decision reflects the diverse realities of transport users. To support this, we have produced [a suite of resources](#), including a summary pack for all the personas and a detailed pack for each persona to help integrate personas into planning and decision-making.

- How people value place and the environment around them beyond transport efficiency concerns,
- Adjusting the value of benefits or costs based on income levels.

Support excellent local decision-making and appraisal

Our research shows that limited local transport authority capacity in transport analysis and appraisal affects their ability to plan and bid for funding, with 80% of local transport authorities outsourcing these tasks. We know that while our guidance is generally well-regarded, some local transport authorities have expressed a need for additional support, such as access to

shared data, templates, specialist resources, and feedback on funding bids⁷⁴.

We want local transport authorities to be able to use their capacity as efficiently as possible and easily be able to find the resources we provide to undertake their work. This will also enable them to work more effectively with consultants and experts who often help to deliver analysis, becoming more intelligent clients who are able to confidently commission, explore and quality assure work as they need to. So, **we will improve the Analytical Library for local transport authorities [DMA5]**, to provide a central repository of guidance, templates, tools and best practice, including those mentioned in this priority.

Better Connected

We will also continue the local transport authority analytical workshops which have covered business case preparation; analytical topics such as wider economic impacts, carbon analysis; monitoring and evaluation and working with consultants. Additionally, we will continue funding the Bus Centre of Excellence a place of resources, guidance and support for all those working within and around the bus sector.

We also want to enable better understanding of Transport Analysis Guidance and support high quality transport analysis in different applications. Through AMES [DMA4], we will support the development of capability and improving analysis in the sector, including:

Strengthening strategic and economic case links and supporting the use of vision-led planning in appraisal analysis.

- Encouraging more strategic analysis earlier in the process where it is of most use in shortlisting investment options.
- Promoting greater transparency and making better use of the appraisal framework, presenting impacts in a clearer narrative than simple benefit cost ratios.
- Rationalising and improving accessibility of guidance to improve understanding of the process and accommodate different needs, including considering using alternative media and providing sufficient opportunities for learning and engagement.





Monitoring and evaluation

Making progress on the vision and priorities in Better Connected will require more than the efforts of government. Success will depend on all aspects of the domestic transport system in England working together, including all tiers of government, transport providers, private operators and wider partners to deliver for people and places.

In this strategy we have set out our theory of change, starting with our national vision for transport, and our three guiding principles that will underpin everything we do. We have then identified our eight priorities where we want to make the biggest difference, and for each of them we set out what we want to achieve, what we are doing to achieve it, and the role of others in the transport system in supporting delivery.



To reflect the increasingly devolved ways of working set out in our “Empower local leaders” priority, we are already streamlining how we monitor the delivery of local transport outcomes. Through this new governance process every local transport authority will be accountable through a new outcome framework, designed to align with the vision set out in this strategy, that defines the progress we expect to see. Longer term assessment of transport trends are captured through our statistical reporting and surveys of the public including through our official statistics such as the National Travel Survey, and Transport Focus Surveys.

In addition, we have existing governance processes for monitoring and evaluating the delivery of all the department’s activities. Internal scrutiny is overseen by our Board and Executive Committee, and is measured by the metrics set out in the department’s Strategic Plan, which will be aligned to this strategy when published. External accountability is provided through the department’s Annual Report and Accounts, which are laid in Parliament and scrutinised in forums such as the Transport Select Committee and Public Accounts Committee.

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating delivery of this strategy and will publish a progress update this Parliament. We will:

- Monitor the delivery of our commitments using the department’s established internal governance processes, as outlined above.
- Understand what our commitments and the overall strategy have enabled, by working with our delivery partners. This will capture their views on the strategy’s vision, priorities and commitments, how the strategy is being used and what it has enabled.
- Monitor key metrics to understand progress towards our vision and priorities.

Our metrics

We will monitor a series of metrics relating to each of our priority areas to assess our impact on the transport system. These include those set out below, which may be reported at differing levels of granularity to explore sub-topics and impacts for different regions, geographies and demographic groups.

Transport is an enabler of the wider social and economic ecosystem, and we are aware that successes in the transport sector may enable success in other sectors. As such, as well as considering changes in connectivity scores, we will also consider metrics in other sectors, including investigating impacts on growth, productivity, housing, health, education and more.

Our headline metrics are aligned with the indicators set out in local transport authority outcome frameworks, including those for Integrated Settlements, where possible. Where they differ, this is to enable us to capture the additional areas Better Connected is concerned with. The data for these metrics will come from national data sources, including the National Travel Survey, Your Bus Journey, the Rail Customer Experience Survey and through engagement on the success of the strategy.



Metrics

Priority	Headline metrics	
Simplify payments and information	<p>Journeys across different kinds of transport will be easy to plan, pay for, and navigate – with integrated ticketing wherever possible.</p>	<p>Passenger confidence in the trustworthiness of travel information.</p> <hr/> <p>Satisfaction with travel payment options across transport services in their region.</p>
Provide safe and dependable journeys	<p>We will provide safe and dependable transport so people can travel with confidence.</p>	<p>Average user satisfaction score across the transport network.</p>
Make travel accessible and affordable	<p>Increasingly accessible and affordable transport will provide people with real choice in how they travel.</p>	<p>Confidence reported by disabled people when travelling.</p> <hr/> <p>Passenger reporting on feelings of safety when using public transport.</p> <hr/> <p>The Transport Poverty Tool (AA4) will be used to develop a new metric to more accurately measure affordability, focussing on low income households.</p>
Create healthier communities	<p>Making healthy travel choices will be easy and convenient, supporting cleaner, quieter and more liveable places.</p>	<p>Average number of walking, wheeling and cycling journey stages per year.</p> <hr/> <p>Concentration of annual NO2, PM2.5 and PM10 emission from transport.</p>
Align transport and development	<p>Decisions on transport, housing and wider development will be integrated, creating better-connected places.</p>	<p>Public transport, walking and cycling connectivity score to key destinations (education, leisure and community, health, shopping, residential and workplaces).</p>
Champion data and technology	<p>Data and technology will drive the integrated, innovative and accessible transport system of the future.</p>	<p>Local transport authority assessment of uptake of data, technology and innovation.</p>
Empower local leaders	<p>Local leaders will be empowered and supported to deliver better local transport for their communities.</p>	<p>Local transport authority assessment of how well the Department for Transport supports them in delivering transport for their area.</p>
Optimise decision-making and appraisal	<p>Transport investment decisions will prioritise our <u>principles of people and place</u>, underpinned by high quality analysis.</p>	<p>Monitoring trends in the use of the Department for Transport Connectivity Tool and other analytical models in the development of business cases.</p> <hr/> <p>Local transport authority confidence in using appraisal to meet their needs.</p>

Commitments

The commitments set out in bold throughout this document and listed below are interventions that we as government are responsible for delivering.

Ref	Commitment	Description
Simplify payments and information		
PI1	Make available the essential tools for major city regions to roll out integrated contactless ticketing locally in a way that suits their needs	Ensure city regions have access to the back-end technology needed for integrated contactless, and devolved funding arrangements to allow them to deliver according to their needs and priorities.
PI2	Develop technology that will enable expansion of Project Coral to rail	We are funding the development of a national rail back office, so regions do not have to develop this themselves in isolation. Project Coral is being developed for initial rollout in the West Midlands, and will be available to all local transport authorities in future.
PI3	Work with city regions as a priority to support the delivery of integrated contactless ticketing	We will engage with city regions seeking to implement contactless ticketing to ensure they are confident in delivering this for their area
PI4	Develop technologies to give local areas in every part of the country a menu of choices for implementing integrated ticketing	In parallel with contactless, we are developing technology options including digital PAYG, and smartcards on mobile. These will give local areas options for non-contactless payments, without having to work to build from scratch.
PI5	We will provide £6m funding to support an integrated transport demonstrator programme in the rural region of the Hope Valley	This programme will explore integrating existing rail services with an hourly or better bus service to demonstrate a rural public transport system that works for local residents and visitors alike.
PI6	Work directly with Google to integrate the live location and expected arrival times of local bus services into the Google Maps app	Google and the Department for Transport will work together to integrate the live location and expected arrival times of local bus services in England into the Google Maps app for the first time. This will include operators who are meeting their Bus Open Data legislative requirements, and where the data feeds provided by the operator are meeting the highest standards of data quality as defined by Google.

Ref	Commitment	Description
Provide safe and dependable journeys		
SD1	Additional funding to track bus punctuality and enforce timetables	Increase investment to ensure increased monitoring and enforcement of bus operators sticking to the timetables they set out.
SD2	Improve the quality of real-time information and ensure digital bus timetables accurately reflect arrival times	We will work with operators, the wider bus sector and enforcement bodies to raise the quality of real-time bus information, ensuring it is up to date, and that digital timetables accurately match when services will arrive.
SD3	Work with GBRx, the innovation arm of Great British Railways, to create a plan on how AI will be used to improve timetabling decisions and resilience on the rail network	Creation of a plan, owned by Great British Railways on how AI will be integrated into rail timetabling to deliver better decisions, time and cost savings, as well as improve resilience on the rail network.
SD4	Expand the role of the strengthened rail passenger watchdog, which we are creating from Transport Focus in the Railways Bill	Expansion of the role of strengthened rail passenger watchdog, which we are creating from Transport Focus in the Railways Bill, will mean it can monitor passenger experience and advocate for the rights and interests of passengers across all public transport.
Make travel accessible and affordable		
AA1	Develop and launch an Accessible Travel Charter	The Transport Select Committee published a report on accessibility in transport, highlighting systematic failures across all public transport. In June 2025, the government published its response, including a commitment to develop a charter. We will deliver this charter, which aims to incentivise transport providers and local government to acknowledge and remove the obstacles that impact disabled people.
AA2	Review the current legal framework for transport accessibility	We will work with the Law Commission to carry out a review of the legal landscape for transport accessibility, to simplify the complex legal framework to better support disabled people.
AA3	Publish an improvement plan to increase the data available to help those with accessibility needs plan their journeys	Building on public reviews and the work of experts, we will determine the next steps that need to be taken to ensure disabled people and others with accessibility needs have access to data to help them plan safe, comfortable journeys. We will publish this and engage across the sector on the feasibility of this plan.

Ref	Commitment	Description
AA4	Develop and investigate how to embed a new measure of transport poverty	To support the government's Opportunity Mission, the Transport Poverty measure will identify places where transport issues, such as limited connectivity and/or poor affordability, risk limiting people's ability to access earning and learning opportunities and key services.
AA5	Publish an Opportunity Mission Toolkit	This toolkit will help decision-makers in local transport authorities to evidence the social value of transport, supporting better outcomes for disadvantaged groups. It will provide both guidance and good practice case studies on what the mission means in a transport context and how to make a strong strategic and economic business case for interventions with strong social benefits.
Create healthier communities		
HC1	Update the Network Management Duty Guidance	This will set out how local traffic authorities should manage traffic on their network and ensuring that all pavements and cycle paths are treated in the same way as road infrastructure.
HC2	Active Travel England will develop a framework for assessing the quality and connectivity of active travel routes to and cycle parking provision at stations	This framework will support Network Rail, train operating companies, Great British Railways and local transport authorities to improve cycle and rail integration. Active Travel England will provide support for implementing these improvements.
HC3	Publish guidance for local authorities on car clubs	This will provide guidance for how local authorities can best support the roll-out and use of car clubs in their areas.
HC4	Consult on regulatory interventions to address brake and tyre wear emissions of road vehicles	To update the UK's emission standard to the Euro 7 standard, which introduces limits for non-exhaust emissions such as brake and tyre wear.
Align transport and development		
TD1	Embed the alignment of transport and housing into local and national capital investment programmes	Embed the alignment of transport and housing into local and national capital investment programmes, such as the National Housing Delivery Fund, Transport for City Regions funding, and rail and road programmes including the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline and third Road Investment Strategy.
TD2	Maximise the opportunities from Platform4	Maximise the opportunities of Platform4, a new publicly-owned property company that will unlock 40,000 new homes and millions of square feet of commercial and public space through the release and high-impact regeneration of surplus railway land.

Ref	Commitment	Description
TD3	Ensure vision-led principles are adopted at every tier of government	Work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure vision-led principles are adopted at every tier of government, to shape our new towns and better align the spatial and transport planning systems.
TD4	Consider the role of the Connectivity Tool in national planning policy and guidance	Work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to consider the role of the Connectivity Tool in national planning policy and guidance, taking account of responses to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation.
TD5	Consider how national planning policy and guidance can best support higher densities for development in highly connected locations	Work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to support higher densities for development in highly connected locations, including around well-connected rail stations, and other sustainable transport infrastructure.
TD6	Put the alignment and integration of transport and complementary interventions at the heart of place-based business cases	Ensure that government considers the co-benefits of different projects that contribute to the objectives of a particular place. The approach will be tested by early adopters in Plymouth, Liverpool, Birmingham Sports Quarter and Port Talbot.
Champion data and technology		
DT1	Deliver a Transport Innovation Procurement Pathway	We will publish guidance to support local and strategic authorities with access to procuring innovative technologies and services, deliver an evidence base in line with the Procurement Act 2023 and publish a priority list of innovation challenges for adoption in local settings.
DT2	Explore options to support knowledge exchanges.	Building on existing initiatives we will explore options to support a network of knowledge exchanges to support local authorities and other practitioners to adopt innovative technologies.
DT3	Set out a plan for improving and investing in digital connectivity on the transport network	This will support the sector to understand potential opportunities and investment.
DT4	Develop a Transport Data Marketplace	We will set out the next steps to develop a Transport Data Marketplace, bring together multi-modal data in an open manner, through an update to the Data Action Plan.

Ref	Commitment	Description
DT5	Pilot an Integration Innovation Fund	The fund will provide £10 million to enable a small number of local authorities to trial and/or accelerate innovative projects to improve integration across the passenger journey.
DT6	Invest £30million into Integrated Transport Digital Twins	These digital twins act as digital representations of physical networks and we will provide £30million funding to support these to be trialled by local authorities to deliver maximum impact at the local level.
DT7	Commission research into the barriers to, and benefits of, Mobility as a Service	This will develop the evidence base about the benefits of, and barriers faced to, deploying and scaling Mobility as a Service apps in England and explore steps towards their future delivery.
Empower local leaders		
ELL1	Implement agreed outcomes and indicators for local transport funding settlements that reflect local and national priorities, including the principles set out in this strategy.	Implement agreed outcome frameworks and supporting indicators in line with this strategy to hold established mayoral strategic authorities to account on delivering improved transport via their Integrated Settlements. In addition, set the local transport outcome framework and supporting indicators in line with this strategy to hold all other local transport authorities to account on delivering improved transport via their relevant funding settlements.
ELL2	Develop a Transport Evaluation Support for Trials programme	The programme will provide professional evaluation support to local authorities to help them to trial new approaches to transport delivery and learn about their effectiveness. This will help authorities who may currently lack the capability to get robust evidence about the effectiveness of their innovations. Publication and dissemination of trial findings will share learning across authorities.
ELL3	Support local transport authority capability and capacity including through targeted discussions with places	Explore further ways to enhance capability and capacity, including through targeted discussions with places to understand work already ongoing in this area and what we can do to provide further support.
ELL4	Publish updated Local Transport Plan guidance	Publish updated Local Transport Plan guidance to align with the principles set out in this strategy.

Ref	Commitment	Description
Optimise decision-making and appraisal		
DMA1	Embed the project and programme initiation framework within the department	A new framework to ensure that the rationale for change and a range of options (considering all transport modes) and resources required are considered from the outset.
DMA2	Enhance our Strategic Modelling Capability	This involves speeding up and streamlining our existing National Transport Model to provide quicker and more reliable analysis of future travel demand and policy options; developing a prototype National Activity-Based Model, to expand the range of policies we can model, including measures aimed at integrating the transport system and supporting multi-modal journey and refining and widening access to our recently launched Connectivity Tool (see Aligning Transport and Housing chapter).
DMA3	Establish a Mass Transit Taskforce	We will establish a Mass Transit Taskforce to assess the wider economic, spatial and social benefits of integrated mass transit systems, and examine the funding, governance and delivery barriers that can impede their development, in line with the recommendation of the New Towns Taskforce Report on mass transit.
DMA4	Publish the New Appraisal, Modelling and Evaluation Strategy	Our updated AMES will set out improvement plan for appraisal over the next five years, identifying where we should focus our efforts to ensure that appraisal works for all stakeholders, allowing them to realise their visions and transport strategies, and putting evidence at the heart of that process.
DMA5	Improve the Analytical Library for local transport authorities	The analytical library is a central repository of guidance, templates and resources local authorities can draw on when preparing business cases, conducting analysis and develop monitoring and evaluation plans for transport investments.



List of case studies

Case study	Area	Page
1 Go Eden	Cornwall	25
2 “Project Amber”	Blackpool	27
3 Road Prioritisation	West Midlands	28
4 Local leadership in reducing road casualties	London and Greater Manchester	30
5 Impact of “Your Bus Journey”	East Sussex	31
6 Bus Accessibility	Brighton & Hove	35
7 Mobility Credits Scheme	Solent	37
8 Free Travel Care Experienced Scheme	Newcastle	38
9 Community Transport	South Yorkshire	39
10 Creating a Healthier City	Bradford	41
11 Workplace Parking Levy	Nottingham	46
12 Andrew Road Mobility Hub	Halesowen, West Midlands	47
13 Transpennine Route Upgrade	Manchester to York	51
14 Bristol Temple Quarter Regeneration	Bristol	52
15 Coventry Very Light Rail	Coventry	57
16 Digital-Demand Responsive Transport	Lincolnshire	58
17 Urban Traffic Management & Control	Tees Valley	61
18 Bee Network	Greater Manchester	65
19 Devolution in Action	Liverpool City Region	67
20 People-focussed modelling with BERTIE	East of England	69

Nationwide

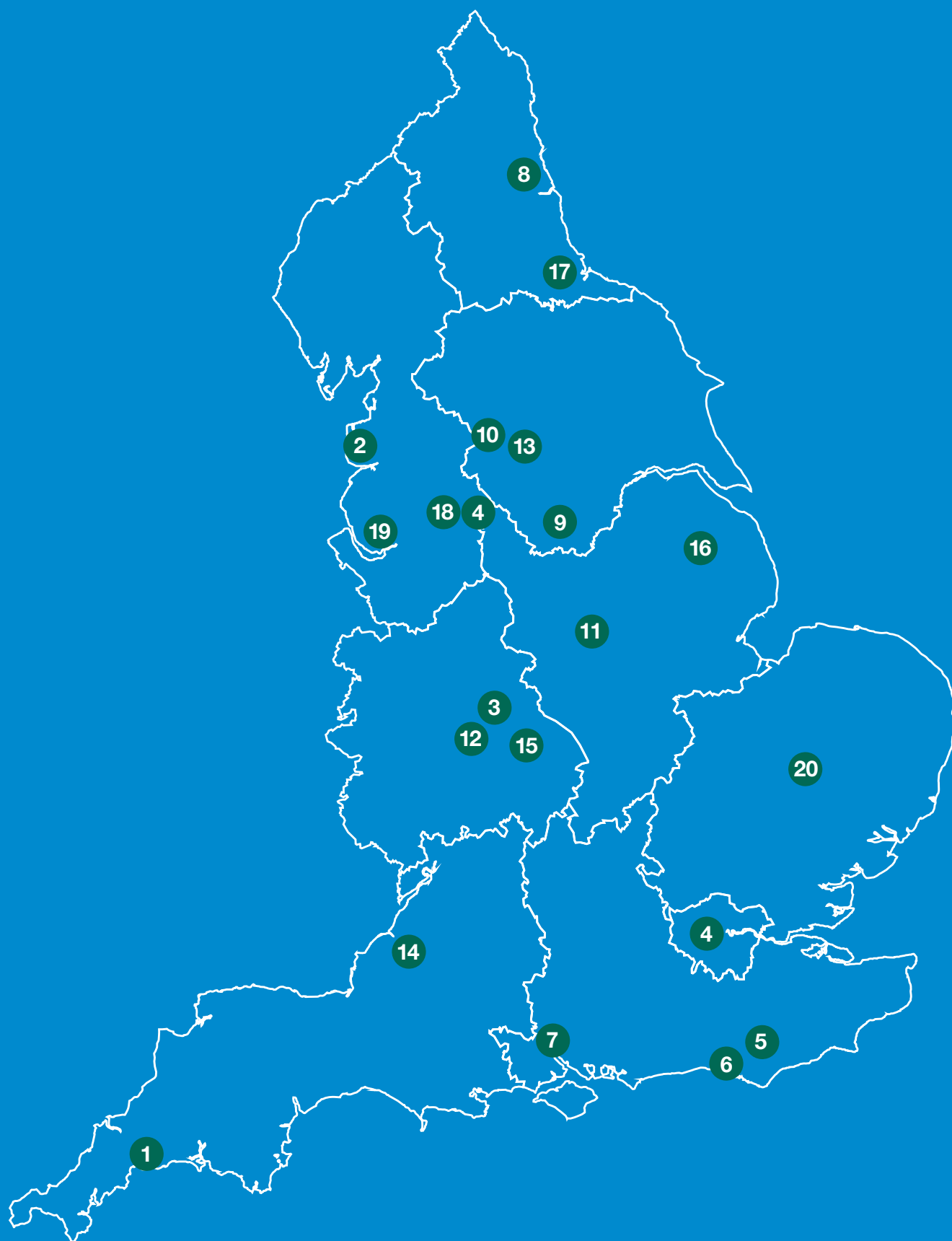
Plusbus integration of rail and bus tickets 23

Improving journey planning with open data 24

Options assessment for third Road Investment Strategy 70

Transport Personas 71

Map of case studies



Glossary

Accessible Easy for everyone to reach, use, and benefit from, regardless of their physical ability, background, or circumstances.

Barcode ticketing A QR code which acts as a ticket to travel and can be accessed on a smart device or printed out.

Bus franchising A system of bus service management in which local transport authorities specify routes, service frequency, and fares, and private bus operators compete for contracts to operate them; such as the model used in London.

Byelaws Local laws made by a local authority or other body, enforceable within a specific area, often used to regulate behaviour on public transport or in public spaces.

Contactless ticketing Passengers use a contactless bankcard or mobile-wallet device as a token to travel, which is “tapped” to enable travel and are charged an automatically calculated fare.

Cross-modal An integrated approach to transport that considers multiple transport types together as part of a wider system, including when planning, analysing and making decisions.

Devolution While devolution of transport powers and functions is nothing new, in the context of the government’s English Devolution White Paper and the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill devolution generally refers to the transfer of local transport powers to Strategic Authorities (see below) covering a wider area than existing local authorities.

Digital connectivity The ability to connect people, vehicles, and infrastructure to the internet and each other using technologies like mobile networks, Wi-Fi, and fibre. In transport, it powers things like real-time travel updates, smart traffic lights, and contactless ticketing.

Digital pay-as-you-go (DPAYG) ticketing Passengers download an app to travel, ‘tap’ on with their device and location tracking identifies their journeys. An automatically calculated fare is then charged at the end of the day based on those journeys.

Digital twin A digital representation or model of a physical asset or system (for instance a road network), often running in real-time which can influence or control its operation and often use AI. Digital twins have immense potential for transport

ranging from construction to network operations and strategic planning.

Disability equality training Training designed to help transport staff understand the barriers faced by disabled people and how to provide appropriate support and inclusive service.

Floating bus stop A bus stop design where a cycle lane runs between the bus stop shelter and the kerb, requiring pedestrians to cross the cycle lane to board or alight the bus.

Great British Railways Great British Railways will be a new public company responsible for providing the single point of leadership on our railways, accountable to its passengers for the service it delivers, with clear targets to meet on service performance and quality.

GBRx The strategic innovation body for Britain’s railway, established to overcome barriers to technology adoption and improve how the railway works for people.

Inclusive Making sure that everyone can engage in the same activities, access the same services, and share the same experiences in ways that feel safe, fair, and welcoming.

Local authority bus companies Bus companies that are owned by local authorities, allowing greater control over local services and reinvestment of profits into the network or local public services (a ‘social dividend’).

Level boarding Transport design feature where the train or tram floor is the same height as the platform, allowing easier and safer boarding for all passengers, especially wheelchair users and those with mobility impairments.

Local highway authorities Local highway authorities have a statutory duty to maintain the local highway network. Local highway authorities are either unitary or county councils where a strategic authority does not exist or are the constituent councils that make up a strategic authority.

Local transport authorities In England, outside London, local transport authorities are responsible for local transport policy, including planning and supporting local bus services. Local transport authorities have a statutory duty to produce a Local Transport Plan setting out their local transport policies and how they will implement

them. Local transport authorities are either a strategic authority or a unitary or county council.

Machine-readable data Data that is structured in a way computers can easily read and process. For AI, machine-readable data is essential because it allows algorithms to quickly access, analyse, and learn from the information without needing human input to interpret it.

Micromobility Smaller, lighter vehicles typically used for short trips, such as cycles, e-cycles, e-scooters, pavement robots and other powered transporters.

National Planning Policy Framework Sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Pay-as-you-go (PAYG) ticketing Passengers have flexibility to tap in and tap out and are later charged an automatically calculated fare based on the journeys they have made.

Placemaking Involving communities in establishing what good design means to them through consultation and engagement, and empowering communities to have a sense of belonging and pride in their local area as places change overtime.

Place-based business case Bringing together the different projects that are needed to achieve the objectives of a particular place, ensuring that government properly assesses the complementarities between different projects, such as housing and transport.

Platform4 A new development company formed between London and Continental Railways Ltd and Network Rail's Property Team, unlocking tens of thousands of new homes and commercial and public space by releasing surplus rail land for development.

Powered mobility devices Electric or motor-powered devices that assist individuals with their mobility.

Smartcard ticketing Passengers pre-load payment (for pay-as-you-go) or travelcards (such as multi-day passes) onto a smartcard with a microchip and 'tap' this to travel.

Smart Data Smart Data is the approved, secure sharing of customer data with authorised third parties. In transport, it could help passengers get personalised travel options or help operators improve services based on real usage.

Spatial Development Strategy Prepared by strategic authorities where they exist or groupings of upper-tier local authorities where they don't,

providing strategic policies for the development and use of land in the area they cover.

Step-free access Infrastructure that allows people to move through a space without needing to use stairs, typically through ramps, lifts or level boarding platforms.

Strategic authorities The English Devolution White Paper set out a new framework of devolution with three tiers of strategic authority – foundation, mayoral and established mayoral – with each tier getting progressively deeper powers. Strategic authorities are the sole local transport authority for their area.

Telecommunications (Telecoms) The systems and technologies that let people and devices send and receive information over distances, like phone calls, texts, or internet data. In transport, telecoms connect vehicles, infrastructure, and passengers to enable things like real-time updates, mobile ticketing, and smart traffic control.

Transport Analysis Guidance Guidance documents on transport appraisal and modelling, including how this fits into wider policy development processes such as transport business cases.

Transport Focus The independent watchdog for transport users across rail, bus, tram, coach and motorways

Travelcard or travel pass A 'rover/ranger' type ticket that allows unlimited or flexible travel under specific conditions for a certain time, such as within an area or on specific types of transport.

Vision-led planning An approach to transport planning based on setting outcomes for a development based on achieving well-designed, sustainable and popular places, and providing the transport solutions to deliver those outcomes as opposed to predicting future demand to provide capacity (often referred to as 'predict and provide').

Visitor economy The broader system that supports tourism, including attractions such as museums, heritage sites, cultural venues, theme parks and sporting events; hospitality; supporting infrastructure including transport and accommodation; visitor services; and the employment that enables positive visitor experiences.

Wheeling Moving as a pedestrian by wheeling unaided or using a wheeled mobility aid including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, walking frames, prams or buggies. Typically used in conjunction with 'walking'.

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