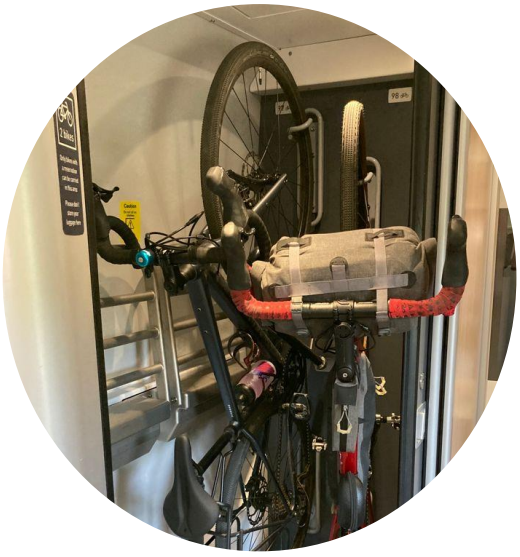

The Great British Staycation

Improving Public Transport and Cycling Access to Popular Tourist Destinations

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Transport Planning Society Bursary 2021

'Scenario Planning – how can Transport Planners best plan for the new normal?

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Introduction

The last 18 months have seen the popularity of the staycation – a holiday that includes only domestic travel – rise in the UK, with the RAC estimating that 29 million domestic overnight leisure trips using a car as the primary mode of transport were planned in 2021[1]. Although factors such as cost, convenience and sustainability are often cited as reasons to undertake domestic travel, an additional push factor has been the uncertainty around and restrictions on international travel caused by the COVID-19 pandemic[2]. However, far from being a temporary issue, research has suggested that the staycation trend is set to continue, with a coastal getaway or hiking trip fast becoming a facet of the 'new normal' in a post COVID-19 UK[3]. The Lake District National Park, one of the most popular UK staycation destinations, welcomed around 20 million people annually prior to COVID-19, over 80% of whom arrived by car[4]; this figure was already deemed to be unsustainable for the future of the National Park[5], without any additional trips from the impact of COVID-19.

Staycations are often advertised to consumers as being a sustainable option. However, this notion is predicated on the idea that the only unsustainable aspect of a holiday is the damaging emissions associated with flying. Whilst surface transport is undoubtedly responsible for a far lower amount of CO_2 emissions than an international flight, it should be recognised that there are still other negative impacts to the community and environment caused by domestic tourism. One of the largest impacts, and the one that this paper focuses on, is the issue of unsustainable traffic levels[6]. A topical issue this year, one headline from the Lake District stated that "tourist traffic obstructs scene of boat accident"[7] and other stories highlighted the air pollution and verge degradation from vehicles[8]. This paper examines how the issue of unsustainable traffic levels is currently being addressed and looks at opportunities for the future, in relation to how Transport Planners can work on advocating for improvements to funding, data capture and policy change. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations for how Transport Planners can help promote more widespread use of public transport and cycling when on a staycation.

For the purposes of this report, Transport Planner refers to any individual with a professional role to prepare, assess and implement policies, plans and projects to improve and manage our transport systems.[9]

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[1] RAC, 'RAC Forecasts Unprecedented Summer on the UK Roads with 16m Staycations', 2020, https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/rac-forecasts-unprecedented-summer-on-the-uks-roads-with-16m-staycations/, (accessed 30/11/2021).

[2] Department for Digital, Cultural, Media and Sport (DDCMS), 'The Tourism Recovery Plan', 2021, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/992974/Tourism_Recovery_Plan__Web_Accessible_.pdf, (accessed 28/11/2021).

[3] The Guardian, 'Surge in Britons Booking Ahead for UK Holidays in 2022', 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/aug/29/surge-in-britons-booking-ahead-for-uk-holidays-in-2022, (accessed 27/11/2021).

[4] Lake District National Park, 'Tourism', 2019, https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/learning/factstourism (accessed 18/11/2021).

[5] Convery et al, 'Reimagining the Lake District', The Ecologist, 2020, https://theecologist.org/2020/jul/27/reimagining-lake-district, (accessed 12/12/2021).

[6] Dickinson & Robbins, 'Representations of tourism transport problems in a rural destination', Tourism Management, 2008

[7] BBC, 'Lake District tourist traffic obstructs scene of boat accident', BBC, 2021, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-57335474, (accessed 28/11/2021).

[8] The Guardian, 'Campaigners Lose Legal Challenge Over Lake District 4x4 Vehicles, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/aug/24/campaigners-lose-legal-challenge-over-lake-district-4x4-vehicles (accessed 18/11/2021).

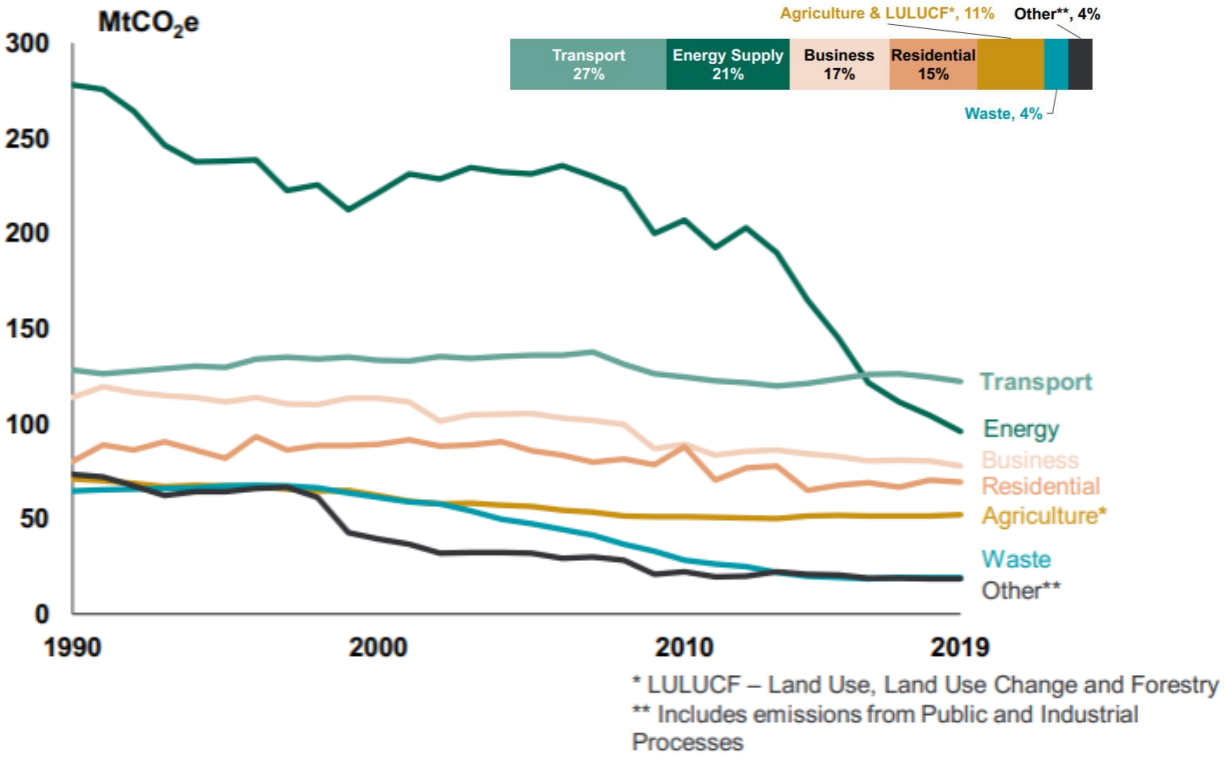
[9] Transport Planning Society, 'What is Transport Planning?', 2021, https://tps.org.uk/profession/careers, (accessed 16/12/2021)

Understanding The Current Situation

The Issue of Traffic

As shown in Figure 1, surface transport in the UK is responsible for 28% of domestic carbon emissions, with total emissions remaining stable for the 30 years up until 2019[10]. The latest available data from pre COVID-19 showed that 83% of the 20 million visitors to the Lake District National Park arrive by car and more than 50% used the car as their primary mode of transport when within the Park[11]. It is worth noting that issues associated with traffic in places like the Lake District are not linear across a year. Traffic issues are exacerbated at peak times, during the summer months, school holidays and bank holiday weekends. Thus, any increase in the peak number of car trips will have a detrimental impact on the goal to reduce emissions.

Figure 1: UK Domestic Greenhouse Gas Emissions (up to 2019)



Source: 'Transport and Environmental Statistics', DfT, May 2021, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/984685/transport-and-environment-statistics-2021.pdf, (accessed 14/12/2021).

[10] Data from 2020 and 2021 has not yet been published and is likely to be skewed by the impact on COVID-19 lockdowns.
[11] Lake District National Park, 'Smarter Travel', 2021, https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/smarter-travel, (accessed 28/11/2021).

The Rise of Leisure Cycling

Another facet of the new normal that this paper is concerned with is the increase in leisure cycling trips over the past 18 months. Research using on-road counters has shown that levels of leisure cycling have increased 40-60%, with some weekends peaking at a 300% increase on pre-COVID-19 levels[12]. Correspondingly, an estimated additional £1bn was spent on cycling (bikes and accessories), with the sale of electric cycles (e-bikes) doubling[13].

Despite the popularity increase of both staycations and leisure cycling in the post-COVID-19 new normal, it can be difficult to integrate the two activities. Aside from public transport generally being more expensive than driving to certain destinations, the other major barrier is the difficulty of taking a bike on a train. Challenges include accessing stations at both ends of the journey, booking a bike space in advance or at short notice and manoeuvring a bike into the designated space, if one is available at all as generally, most trains only have capacity for 2-4 bikes. The second difficulty is using sustainable transport modes at your destination, which can be hindered by the cost of public transport and the lack of connected, safe and inclusive routes. As a result, cycling is often viewed as a one-off holiday activity (either by cycle hire or bringing a bike as luggage) rather than part of a multi-modal journey.

UK Policy and Practice

In the past 25 years there has been a shift in both academia and aspects of public policy in favour of sustainable modes of travel, such as walking and cycling. The Journal for Sustainable Tourism was established in the mid-1990s and by the mid-2000s academic literature started to discuss more widely how the environmental impacts of transport as part of tourism have been neglected[14][15][16] and how potential solutions to the problem of tourism related traffic were under-researched[17].

In one of the earliest studies, Cullinane & Cullinane investigated carrot versus stick methods of influencing travel behaviour in the Lake District and found "getting some people to even *think* of public transport as an option, let alone persuading them to use it, is not an easy task"[18]. The two key factors to enact behaviour change via carrot methods would firstly require people to perceive that there is a traffic-related problem and

[12] DfT, 'The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on walking and cycling statistics', England, 2021, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-2020/the-impact-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic-on-walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-2020, (accessed 28/11/2021).
[13] Carlton Reid, '£1 Billion In Additional Bicycle Sales Generated In U.K. During Pandemic Bike Boom, Reveals Report', Forbes, 2021, https://www.forbes.com/sites/carltonreid/2021/04/21/1-billion-in-additional-bicycle-sales-generated-in-uk-cycling-during-pandemic-reveals-industry-report/?sh=307c61d85105, (accessed 28/11/2021).
[14] Böhler et al, 'Encouraging environmentally sustainable holiday travel', Elsevier, 2006
[15] Gössling et al, 'The eco-efficiency of tourism', Ecological Economies, 2005
[16] Dickinson & Robbins, 'Representations of tourism transport problems in a rural destination', Tourism Management, 2008
[17] Dickinson, JE & Dickinson, JA, 'Local Transport and social representations: Challenging the assumptions for sustainable tourism', Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 2006
[18] Cullinane,S & Cullinane,K, 'Attitudes towards traffic problems and public transport in the Dartmoor and Lake District National Parks', Journal of Transport Geography, 1999

secondly to view alternative forms of transport as viable options[19]. Cullinane & Cullinane concluded that successful policies must "incorporate stick measures which actively deter car use".

From 2010 onwards, academic literature has undertaken more in-depth case studies to assess why traffic-related problems are worsening in National Park contexts. This included studies of initial traffic management strategies for rural tourist areas and focus on road closure schemes combined with shuttle services or traffic calming and parking controls. The conclusions drawn suggested that these initial measures had not been integrated together, ambitious enough or implemented on a large-scale basis, and therefore did not result in any major behaviour changes[20]. Further barriers to causing modal shifts, identified through academic study, include the lack of systematic analysis of the benefits of a scheme, combined with minimal data capture, both of which could help to aid future expansion of a scheme[2122].

This discursive shift towards viewing motorisation dependency as a problem has been mirrored in national and local public policy. Most governments and councils have accepted a new modal hierarchy which values walking, cycling and public transport over driving and in response to the new hierarchy, have outlined policies to encourage modal shift. Unfortunately, critics have highlighted that there is still an underlying bias towards motorisation[23] and the committed investment and actions so far have been hollow, largely due to their small-scale and short-term nature[24]. The potential light at the end of the tunnel for active travel investment came in 2020 from a new plan; 'Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking'[25]. The plan outlined a £2bn investment over a five-year period, the provision of a new government enforcement body called Active Travel England and updated cycle infrastructure design standards (released as Local Transport Note 1/20). A step in the right direction maybe, but some Transport Planners and commentators have pointed out that £2bn is only one-quarter of the amount needed and could disappear quickly if not prioritised correctly and thus fail to meet the outcomes of the project[26].

In July 2021, the government published a review titled 'Gear Change: One Year On'[27]. Relevant to this paper, the spending over the last year has included £320m to reallocate road space for dedicated walking and cycling routes and £2.5m for cycle-rail funding. Cycle-rail funding sounds promising for improving facilities on trains but primarily the funding has been spent on improving cycle parking spaces at stations, with only a further £2m promised for 2021/2022 to be spent on more cycle parking and better access routes to stations. Given

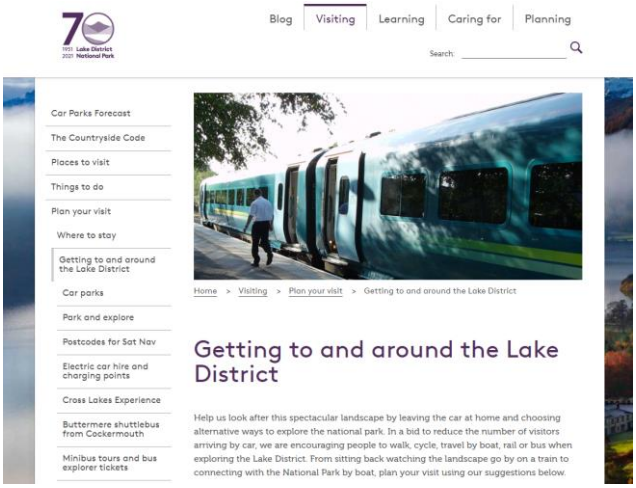
[19] Dickinson & Robbins, 'Representations of tourism transport problems in a rural destination', Tourism Management, 2008
[20] Smith et al, 'Defining sustainable transport in rural tourism: experiences from the New Forest', UK, 2017, Journal of Sustainable Tourism
[21] Parkin et al, 'Barriers to Cycling: An Exploration of Quantitative Analyses' Chapter in Cycling and Society, Routledge, 2007
[22] Livingston et al, 'Predicting cycling volumes using crowdsourced activity data', Urban Analytics and City Science, 2021
[23] Docherty & Shaw, 'New deal or no new deal? A decade of 'sustainable' transport in the UK', 2008, Traffic Jam: Ten Years of 'sustainable' transport in the UK
[24] Aldred, 'Governing transport from welfare state to hollow state: The case of cycling in the UK', Transport Policy, 2012
[25] DfT, 'Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking', England, 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf, (accessed 28/11/2021).
[26] Roger Geffen, 'Message to ministers: release the funding report and act on it', Cycling UK, 2021, https://www.cyclinguk.org/blog/message-ministers-release-funding-report-and-act-it, (accessed 26/11/2021).
[27] DfT, 'Gear change: one year on', England, 2021, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007815/gear-change-one-year-on.pdf, (accessed 28/11/2021).

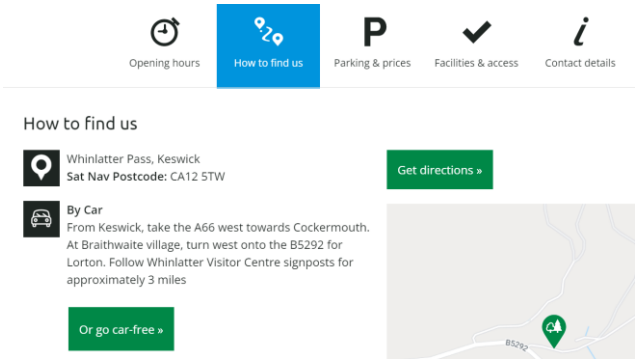
that recent segregated best practice 'dutch-style' junctions built in Manchester and Cambridge have cost around £2m per junction alone[28], the provision of £2m for the whole country seems negligible.

Lake District National Park

On a more local level, the Lake District National Park government are keen to reflect and reinforce the sustainable transport discourse to visitors. The 'visit us' page[29] of their website promotes car-free travel in the first sentence: "help us look after this spectacular landscape by leaving the car at home and choosing alternative ways to explore the national park". This message has been repeated by tourist attractions within the national park. For example, the Forestry England website[30] for Whinlatter Forest features a visible link stating 'or go car-free', linking to an external site with travel planning information and discounts arriving car-free.

Figure 2: Images of Travel Information in the Lake District National Park





Sources: Lake District National Park & Forestry England

The Lake District National Park adopted their Partnership's Management Plan (PMP) in October 2021[31], building on a previous Smarter Travel Vision from 2018. The PMP brings together 25 organisations to create a cohesive and integrated strategy. Outcome 5 'Sustainable travel and transport' opens with the key statement that 'low carbon travel needs to be the obvious and most attractive choice for essential and leisure travel', before setting out a series of key actions to help achieve this statement. The document is

[28] Phil Shepka, Cambridge's Dutch-style roundabout: Why all the fuss?, UK, BBC, 2020, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-53947440 (accessed 28/11/2021).
[29] Lake District National Park, 'Getting to and around the Lake District', 2021, https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/visiting/plan-your-visit/getting-to-the-lake-district, (accessed 2/12/2021).
[30] Forestry England, 'How to find us', 2021, https://www.forestryengland.uk/whinlatter, (accessed 2/12/2021).
[31] Lake District National Park, 'Partnership's Management Plan', 2021, https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/406210/Partnerships-Management-Plan-2020-2025-vFINAL.pdf, (accessed 2/12/2021).

comprehensive, covering a range of actions: from the relatively small-scale, such as developing a network of e-bike charging points; to larger-scale upgrades of the rail network in terms of capacity and access.

Methodology

To attempt to gain more information to bridge the gap outlined above, this paper has conducted primary research through interviews and secondary research in the form of a literature review. Key people to interview were initially identified via an online search with secondary contacts being identified through the interview process. To address how Transport Planners can bridge the gap outlined above, the focus of the interviews was to speak to people responsible for implementing/ delivering projects, and industry experts.

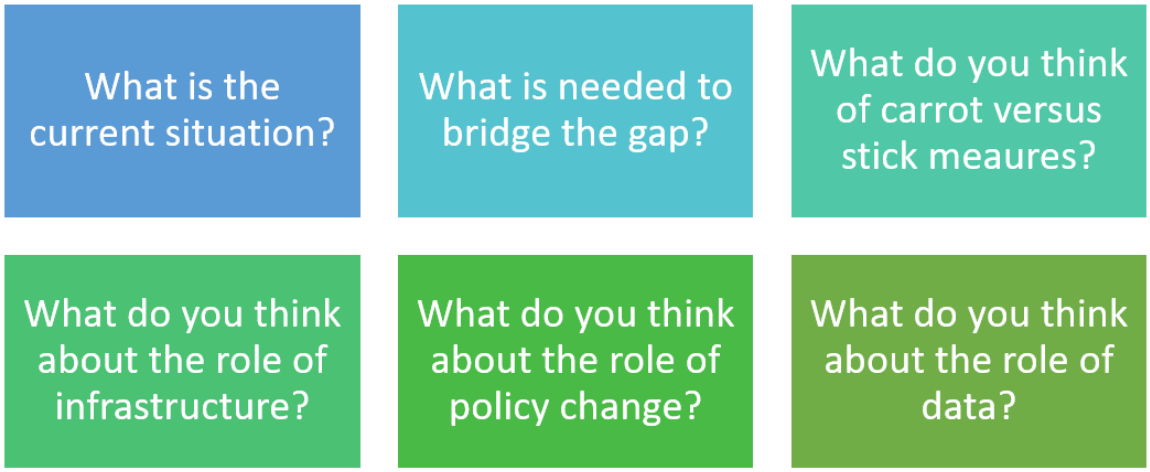
Interviewees

The following interviewees were contacted over email and the interviews were conducted online.

- Lead Strategic Advisor for Recreation and Sustainable Travel, Lake District National Park;
- Chairman of a transport planning consultancy;
- Transport planner with specialism in walking and cycling;
- Cycling officer at the national cycling and walking charity Sustrans;
- Behaviour specialist at national cycling organisation Cycling UK;
- Manager at Cycle-Rail partnership advisory group; and
- Project manager for ScotRail's Highland Explorer service.

Interview Questions

The interview questions fell under the following categories and were tailored to each interviewee's job role.



Analysis

What is the Current Situation?

A common thread that emerged was a recognition of the important role of experimental or pilot schemes. These schemes allow small-scale interventions to be trialled and assessed before rolling out to a wider audience/area. Unfortunately, positively received pilot schemes have not always led into a wider rollout due to funding and policy constraints. Despite this potential issue, experimental or pilot schemes are still largely viewed positively by Transport Planners, especially over the last 18 months as emergency powers were granted due to COVID-19 to expedite schemes. This meant there was more scope to implement pilot schemes such as pop-up cycle lanes and low-traffic neighbourhoods. In relation to the role of pilot schemes in tourist contexts, it was highlighted that thanks to COVID-19, a wider demographic of people are taking a staycation. Therefore, transport habits might not be ingrained and any opportunity to present a pilot scheme now could capture a wider audience and have scope to be rolled out further in the future.

Figure 3: Parked Cars on Entry to Village of Buttermere, Lake District

Source: Friends of the Lake District (accessed 16/12/2021)

Three case studies of pilot schemes that opened in 2021 are below. These schemes broadly represent three facets of sustainable transport as part of a staycations.

CASE STUDY: ScotRail Highland Explorer

Travelling to a Destination Via Public Transport and Cycling

In July 2021, the ScotRail Highland Explorer ran for the first time on the West Highland line from Glasgow to Oban. The project kicked off in 2017 following a request from Transport Scotland to investigate options for improved cycle storage on trains. The result was an updated carriage, adapted from excess rolling stock which provides 20 dedicated cycle spaces plus room for non-standard cycles and e-bike charging.

The West Highland line was identified as the best candidate to operate a pilot scheme following stakeholder engagement, an assessment of constraints including excess rolling stock availability and track speed limits. Booking a cycle space is free but a ticket to sit in the Highland Explorer carriage costs more, as the experience is designed to be aligned with a typical 'first-class' rail experience.

Figure 4: ScotRail Highland Explorer Dedicated Bike Storage Carriage

Source: ScotRail (accessed 05/12/2021)

CASE STUDY: Wasdale Valley Shuttle Bus

Travelling at a Destination Via Sustainable Transport

In Summer 2021, a temporary car park and shuttle bus began operating into Wasdale Valley in the Lake District. The scheme was implemented in response to high volumes of traffic on unsuitable roads and formed part of the Lake District's ambition to encourage people to see a multi-modal journey as a realistic option. The bus ran throughout the summer period, operating at 30-minute intervals between 0900-1700 and requested a suggested fee of £2pp.

Figure 5: Signage for Wasdale Shuttle Bus

Source: Lake District National Park (accessed 5/12/2021)

CASE STUDY: Keswick to Threlkeld Railway Path

Travelling at a Destination Via Active Travel

In early 2021 the Keswick to Threlkeld Railway Trail re-opened for the first time since 2015. Following extensive storm damage, the 5km pedestrian and cycle shared-use route was resurfaced and aimed to incorporate best practice on creating a safe, inclusive route with lighting, wayfinding and seating. The route forms part of the National Cycle Network route 71 and the signposted 'C2C' route between the east and west coasts of England. Unlike the other two case studies, the 'pilot' nature of this scheme – the use of best practice for surfacing and wayfinding – could not be achieved on a temporary basis.

Figure 6: Keswick to Threlkeld Railway Path

Source: Lake District National Park

Bridging the Gap

Initial data from the above case studies all showed a generally positive trend in uptake of the desired travel mode and positive feedback from users. The logical next step then should be to use the performance of these schemes as the evidence base to implement similar measures on a wider scale. The wider scale is necessary because, as evidenced in the literature, providing localised incentive carrot schemes at honeypot locations can be excellent for that specific area, but to create a meaningful modal shift, there needs to be a more holistic approach.

Discussions on the case studies highlighted three interlinked trends on how Transport Planner can help bridge the gap between pilot scheme and a wider transformative change: the issues of funding, data capture and policy change. All three are discussed within this section and it is worth noting that they are intrinsically linked in the following ways. Funding (both start-up and ongoing funds) requires the right policy conditions and an evidence base. To capture that evidence base requires sufficient funding a policy incentive. To provide the policy incentive, there might be need for an evidence base.

Data Capture

The importance of collating a comprehensive and comparable dataset was highlighted in several interviews, yet data collection is often not capturing the most useful data. It was suggested that this was largely due to a lack of funding and/or the lack of resources. An example of integrated data capture aspirations is the ScotRail Highland Explorer. As the Highland Explorer is acting as a pilot scheme for a wider program of changing cycle storage on trains, the project team have identified that data is key to rolling out future schemes. 'Hard' data such as the number of cycles and the boarding/alighting destinations is already captured daily via train conductors. From 2022, the plan is to work with external Transport Planners and economists to capture 'soft' data, such as why people are travelling, where are the start and end destinations of their trip and how where money will be spent. The intended outcome is to quantify and showcase the wider economic benefit from encouraging multi-modal rail-cycle trips, which could provide a better economic model than the current assessment of maximising passenger numbers. In addition to data capture, data sharing and collaboration has been considered and already other train operating companies have reached out to ScotRail to collaborate and learn.

Policy Change

Closely linked to data is the issue of overcoming or influencing policy to remove barriers to providing sustainable travel options. Despite 30 years of a pro-sustainable travel discourse in most national and local policy, it remains difficult to justify new routes (bus or active travel), partly because of the appraisal process.

For example, Transport Planners are not equipped with a methodology for estimating leisure cycling. It is important because the justification of new schemes and measures typically hinge on a suitable economic case being presented that provides a value for money assessment. An example for an active travel schemes

is the DfT's Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit (AMAT) which has several outputs including the health benefits and climate benefits of a scheme. To accurately assess a scheme using AMAT, appropriate baseline and future data needs to be sourced. However, it is difficult to accurately predict future demand for an active travel scheme aimed at leisure cycling. For example, it was difficult to estimate the suppressed demand for the Keswick to Threlkeld Railway Path, despite the route existing in a less upgraded format five years prior. Initial surveys demonstrated that 250,000 people used the Path in the first eight months after opening, a figure higher than anticipated in pre-opening forecasts. The difficulty arises from a lack of existing available comparable data or appropriate prediction tools. For example, the Propensity to Cycle tool predicts the number of cycle trips, but only works for commuter trips.

Another issue is that transport policy is primarily built around the average 'commuter', who travels on weekdays at peak hours. This assumption has been challenged over the last few years and has been especially brought into light during COVID-19 as more people work from home. There are small-scale examples of transport authorities incorporating recent commuter behaviour change, but it is not yet widespread in all aspects of travel demand. Currently, in all DfT value for money assessments, commuting and working time is deemed more valuable than leisure time, which means that any measures which are considered to largely benefit leisure trips are automatically viewed as less valuable.

Other policy issues relate to the lack of guidance or standards for cycling infrastructure. In terms of cycle routes, the guidance such as LTN 1/20 or Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) were developed primarily for urban application and are not always appropriate in rural locations. Cycle parking guidance varies by district across the UK. Generally, whilst there are cycle parking standards for new hotels, there are no cycle parking standards for changing the use of a building to a holiday let (a largely unregulated practice) or at key holiday destinations, such as beaches. Similarly, there is no certification or incentive by any consumer group for providing cycle parking at holiday lets or key tourist destinations: it is seen as a bonus rather than a necessity. There is currently no general standard for the quantity and quality of cycle storage on trains. This means provision for cycles varies from no designated spaces to an entire carriage for bikes on some services. Similarly, the quality of cycle storage varies with some spaces requiring the passenger to lift the bike and slot it into a cupboard using the front wheel.

Carrot Versus Stick

The carrot versus stick debate in transport is a simple way of asking which would be the more effective method; forcing people out of their cars by making it harder to drive (stick) or providing incentives to choose other modes of transport over driving (carrot).

Carrot methods are only seen as contributing a small amount to modal shift, unless operated on a larger scale. For example, expecting a larger number of people to stop driving and cycle as their primary mode of transport within the Lake District National Park would require a more comprehensive network of best practice cycle routes at present. Even then, with the infrastructure in place, it might be difficult to enact modal shift as car dependence is at the core of travel planning at present.

Implementing a stick method such as congestion charging or road closures could have a larger impact of getting people out of their cars. However, congestion charging is contentious and brings with it a host of social equity issues to consider. The Lake District National Park have not ruled out congestion charging in the future, but are rolling out other carrot and stick methods first. It was announced in November 2021 that following the pilot schemes of shuttle buses, such as Wasdale Valley, the National Park were actively considering closing further valleys in Summer 2022, maintaining access for residents, buses, cyclists and walkers.

The stick and carrot debate also lends itself to discussions on policy. The government released a series of papers ahead of COP26 which examined behaviour change. Although not specific to transport, one (since withdrawn) paper used the metaphor of a river with upstream, midstream and downstream stakeholders. It was speculated that the government withdrew the paper[32] because it lay the responsibility to change behaviour with them in their upstream position, by setting policies and putting the framework in place (stick) to help the average person (downstream) struggling against the flow, even if Transport Planners (midstream) work to put incentives in place (carrot) to help people to use sustainable modes of travel.

Infrastructure

Arguably the largest gap right now in encouraging more people to undertake sustainable trips is simply the lack of suitable infrastructure. As discussed, the provision of infrastructure is reliant on the right conditions to come together in terms of policy and funding. Although this happens on a micro basis at present to deliver some great examples of infrastructure through pilot schemes, there is overall slow progress.

Aside from the quality of the cycle route infrastructure and the unsuitable cycle storage facilities on trains, there are other infrastructure issues which contribute to making sustainable travel undesirable. For example, the cost of public transport, particularly buses, in rural areas and the relative infrequency of the service. This can often be a vicious cycle; lack of patronage leads to higher bus fares, which leads to lower patronage. Another example of an infrastructure issue is the difficulty in booking a train cycle space. Each train operating company has a different method which might involve using social media, phoning a hotline or using their website. Currently, you cannot book a bike space using mainstream booking services, such as the National Rail website or Trainline. Another issue is the lack of e-bike charging stations in rural areas, a network of which could expand the range of travel for e-bike users.

[32] Adam Forrest, 'Government deletes document recommending curbs on airport expansion and airline subsidies', The Independent, 2021, 'https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/airports-aviation-government-deletes-document-b1941877.html (accessed 14/12/2021).

Recommendations

Based on the evidence set out within this paper, the following recommendations are suggestions for how Transport Planners[33] can contribute to targeting the ideal new normal of improving sustainable travel when on a staycation.

DATA

Transport Planners should look for new ways of capturing data which includes:

- Detailed baseline data for best practice schemes;
- Investigating new models which can provide forecasts for leisure cycling trips; and

  Quantitative and qualitative assessments of the wider economic benefits of a scheme on a local community.

Transport Planners should investigate new methods of collaboration to share data which could help justify future schemes elsewhere in the UK.

POLICY

Transport Planners should work with policy makers and train operating companies to mandate or enable the environment for policy change regarding cycle facilities on trains.

Transport Planners should work with other organisational bodies to create an integrated policy on a national level, relating to the provision of active travel infrastructure such as cycle parking at tourist hotspots and tourist accommodation.

[33] any individual with a professional role to prepare, assess and implement policies, plans and projects to improve and manage our transport systems.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transport Planners should advocate for improving infrastructure between their tourist accommodation and key local tourist spots, including cycle facilities on trains, and re-working the booking process to be integrated into standard ticket booking.

Transport Planners should identify the rail routes and services which would benefit from cycle-rail infrastructure interventions including cycle parking improvements on trains. For example, targeting services at weekends and during holiday periods instead of every service.

Transport Planners should advocate for improving infrastructure at key tourist destinations to make active travel an easy and convenient mode of transport, rather than simply a leisure activity. This includes updates to active travel routes and enabling all types of active travel to occur, e.g. the provision of an e-bike charging network.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that active travel trips cannot substitute every trip, therefore an integrated network of sustainable multi-modal travel options should be presented. This includes projects that encourage park-and-ride (a bus) or park-and-cycle journeys.

TRAVEL PLANNING

Following the implementation of more infrastructure to enable sustainable transport, Transport Planners should investigate the role of travel planning in encouraging uptake of sustainable modes.

Currently travel planning to this market tends to be targeted at people already travelling and at tourist destinations, when ideally the consumer should be captured prior to booking a trip.

Conclusion

Evidently there is no one size fits all approach to encouraging people to travel via sustainable modes when on a UK staycation. Transport Planners are faced with the dilemma of firstly, how to encourage people to use routes without appropriate infrastructure and, at the same time, how to justify the provision of infrastructure when there is seemingly limited demand.

This paper has investigated this issue in more detail and made a short series of recommendations for how Transport Planners might bridge the gap. As Transport Planners, we need to encourage improvements to enact more rapid modal shift than the UK has been experiencing over the past few decades, capitalising on the historic and growing demand for UK staycations and the rise of leisure cycling in our new post COVID-19 new normal.

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