



# Transforming UK Transport

The Power of Public and Private Partnerships





# Foreword

The UK's transport system stands at a pivotal moment. With major policy developments in its first year, government has laid an encouraging foundation for a more connected, sustainable, and user-focused mobility future. However, ambition alone may not suffice, and delivery would benefit from meaningful collaboration between public authorities and private innovators. With private sector expertise embedded earlier in the process, we can unlock investment, accelerate decarbonisation, and improve connectivity for communities across the country.

The Urban Mobility Partnership (UMP) was founded to help realise this vision. We are a coalition of leading transport operators, mobility providers, and other key stakeholders committed to working with government at all levels to deliver integrated, multimodal transport solutions. Our members cover a broad range of modes, including vehicle rental, bus services, micromobility, demand responsive transport and active travel. Collectively, we bring deep expertise in service delivery, infrastructure planning, and user experience. UMP convenes these partners to help shape policy in collaboration with the public sector, sharing insights and co-developing practical solutions that meet the needs of people and places.

This report, *Transforming UK Transport: The Power of Public and Private Partnerships*, sets out a clear framework for how government at local, regional and national levels can work together with industry partners to deliver a transport system that is more efficient, inclusive, and sustainable. UMP and its members are proud to contribute to this work. Our approach is grounded in evidence, shaped by real-world experience, and focused on outcomes for users. We believe that fostering genuine partnerships built on trust, shared goals, and a commitment to delivery can help government realise its transport ambitions and improve mobility for all.

We invite policymakers, local leaders, and transport stakeholders to engage with the recommendations in this report. We also encourage you to work with UMP to translate them into action. Together, we can build a transport system that delivers for communities, drives economic growth, and supports the UK's journey to net zero.

**Julian Scriven**

**Chair of the Urban Mobility  
Partnership**



# Introduction

The UK's transport and mobility sectors are undergoing a potentially transformative period, influenced by a series of significant government policy developments. The Integrated National Transport Strategy, English Devolution, the National Policy Planning Framework, rail nationalisation, and evolving bus operation models collectively offer a pivotal opportunity for government to reset the UK's transport system. This also represents a critical period for the UK's transport sector; both to ensure these policy frameworks go on to deliver the intended outcomes and to deliver the necessary innovation and investment.

The combined opportunities for government and the transport sector mean that partnerships will play a crucial role in the future of the transport system. We believe that by harnessing the potential of partnerships, in all forms, government can ensure that the user experience is prioritised and deliver its transformative ambitions.

To help foster collaboration and accelerate partnerships, this vision document sets out recommendations for how the transport industry, the third sector, national government, and regional and local governments can come together to enable a multimodal transport future that is more efficient and more sustainable. Our aim is to foster a strategic dialogue between business, policymakers, and other relevant stakeholders, so that together we can harness the ambitions that the Government has laid out for our transport future.

The Urban Mobility Partnership, a coalition of leaders from the mobility and transport sectors, welcomes the opportunity to work as effective partners with this Government in transforming transport and mobility in the UK. Through close collaboration with national, regional, and local governments, UMP is committed to accelerating the adoption of multimodal transport solutions. UMP members, whose innovative mobility services deliver over a billion consumer journeys annually, are well-positioned to support the Government's vision.





# Recommendations

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## **1. Stronger Public-Private Partnerships (Part 1)**

The private sector should be embedded in the transport planning process from earlier on to leverage investment, innovation, and expertise. This would also ensure transport projects better align with user needs and long-term sustainability goals.

## **2. Devolution & Transport Funding Reform (Part 1)**

To help deliver the necessary private sector investment, Government should reform the highly centralised and competitive transport funding model to provide long-term, consistent funding to local authorities. This would allow authorities to develop consistent, long-term plans, which would give businesses the confidence to co-invest in the long-term. Additionally, the Department for Transport (DfT) should issue guidance to local authorities about how best to utilise Section 106 Funds and other developer contributions for mobility projects.

## **3. Capacity Building for Local Authorities (Part 2)**

DfT should establish a specialist support framework, similar to Active Travel England, to help local authorities address capacity gaps in transport planning, modelling, and infrastructure delivery.

## **4. Private-led Partnerships (Part 2)**

To provide maximum value for money for Government, we recommend more widespread use of private-led and enhanced partnerships in delivering innovative mobility solutions. By leveraging private sector expertise and investment, councils, public sector bodies, and businesses can enhance local transport networks, reduce costs, and accelerate project completion.

## **5. Multimodal connectivity (Part 3)**

Multimodal connectivity should be a mandatory criteria for Local Transport Plans and local planning more generally. This would ensure that mobility is fully integrated into all new housing, urban regeneration, and infrastructure development from conception. This would unlock private investment while ensuring sustainability targets are more achievable.

## 6. Developer Contribution Funding (Part 3)

DfT should issue detailed guidance and actively encourage local authorities to use unspent Section 106 funds and other developer contributions to support mobility hubs and transport projects. Clear direction on how to deploy these funds would empower councils to unlock much-needed investment, deliver local infrastructure improvements, and enhance the value and appeal of new developments.

## 7. Advancing Digital Partnerships (Part 4)

DfT should provide funding incentives for local authorities to implement digitally enabled partnerships with private operators. Enhanced information sharing and coordinated timetables between transport modes should also be required to improve service reliability, enhance user experience, and increase public transport patronage.

## 8. Partnering to Reduce Commuter Emissions (Part 5)

DfT should use the upcoming Integrated National Transport Strategy to lead by example on reducing commuter emissions by encouraging all large public sector employers to develop sustainable employee travel plans. These plans should promote active, shared, and low-emission transport options, including innovative solutions like dedicated car clubs. By setting a strong precedent in the public sector, the Government can catalyse similar action across the private sector, helping to reduce reliance on greyfleet vehicles and enabling the transition to electric vehicles.

## 9. Rural Mobility Solutions (Part 6)

To address the unique challenges faced by rural communities, UMP recommends integrating DRT, Enhanced Partnerships, and other mobility services with public transport networks. These solutions can reduce private car dependency, lower emissions, and improve road safety for the most transport-poor communities. Co-locating mobility hubs in rural areas and supporting multimodal transport options are essential steps towards a more connected and sustainable rural transport network.

## 10. Monitoring and Accountability (Part 7)

To ensure accountability and drive measurable progress, the Government should establish an oversight and reporting system for local transport plans, with Ministerial responsibility. This system should track implementation, monitor outcomes, and ensure transparency via performance reporting. This system would also serve as a central resource for local authorities—sharing best practices, highlighting successful interventions, and supporting continuous learning across regions.





# Part 1 – National government and partnerships

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The Government's recent publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Devolution White Paper marks a step toward granting more powers and funding flexibility to the largest authorities. While these proposals are promising, proper implementation and monitoring will be vital if local authorities are to take full advantage of the twin opportunities of greater policy power and funding flexibility. Ultimately, greater public transport patronage will be the key measurement of success.

Devolution has been a goal of successive governments, with significant progress beginning in 2014 through the creation of Combined Authorities (CAs). These authorities, led by elected mayors and councillors, have steadily gained control over key local services such as transport, roads, and urban regeneration, among other areas. The Government's recent proposals to create Strategic Authorities and grant additional transport powers to larger Mayoral authorities are on the whole positive developments.

UMP is generally understanding of the principles and importance of devolution for transport and mobility; localised transport needs in the UK vary quite significantly from place to place. However, national government finances will not always be able, and should not be expected, to be the sole funding provider for transport projects via large fiscal settlements to devolved powers. The private sector will play a vital role in helping local and regional governments deliver transport plans that move towards a more multimodal future. While devolution in places such as Manchester and the West Midlands has been a great success, new authorities are unlikely to be given the same degree of capital allocation from central government at this time, making private sector collaboration even more critical.

To help bring along the necessary private sector investment, certainty and stability are key. Investors need confidence that their capital will be deployed effectively. As such, UMP would recommend that the Government reform the current funding model, which remains highly centralised, complex, and opaque. The competitive bidding process for project funding should be significantly scaled back, as local transport teams spend excessive time preparing bids rather than implementing transport plans. Instead, local transport funding should be long-term and consistent, enabling local authorities to develop and deliver multi-year strategies. Mobility and transport projects often require substantial time for planning and infrastructure development, and local authorities need both stability and support to see these plans through to completion. For many operators in the mobility space, market growth depends on sustained funding and a stable regulatory environment to support service improvement and customer adoption.

Another benefit to Government of a partnerships-led transport model is the ability to realise a vision-led approach to transport, as opposed to the current more reactive model. The National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF), published in December 2024, underscores the need to utilise a vision-led approach, which considers desired outcomes from the outset of planning and provides solutions to deliver those outcomes. In practice, a vision-led approach can look different in different places, so while it is right that the Government has not been overly prescriptive in their approach, in any case private sector partners should play a role in developing vision-led approaches at all levels.

Too often, businesses are consulted only at the point of procurement, meaning much of the project has already been designed and planned out. This limits business' ability to provide their expertise, data-driven insights, and customer-centric approaches to ensure projects fit local needs and are designed around users. Leaving the private sector out of the vision-setting process is a missed opportunity. Integrated transport networks rely on public and private transport operators to work in tandem to deliver seamless mobility. This is particularly the case where operators are already pioneering mobility solutions and, in some cases, self-funding entire projects because they recognise the growing demand for multimodal, convenient transport options.

It is also the case that the private sector is often subject to generic or difficult procurement processes, where terms and conditions have already been decided and/or are not specific to the project involved. This can often mean that operators are unable to support certain projects or that contractual processes delay the delivery of new services.

Bringing in businesses earlier into the planning process not only helps improve network design, but it also helps unlock further investment. As consumer demand grows for more flexible and multimodal transportation solutions, there is a real market opportunity in the shared and on-demand mobility model. There are also real-world use cases where the private sector is leading the way in recognition of the commercial opportunities available. Ultimately, enabling greater public transport patronage is not about any one intervention. It is about how weaving together physical and digital innovations into a single, coherent offer meets the needs of people and places. The partnerships we forge today will determine the shape and success of our transport system for decades to come.

### **Recommendation 1: Stronger public-private partnerships**

The private sector should be embedded in transport planning process from earlier on to leverage investment, innovation, and expertise. This would also ensure transport projects better align with user needs and long-term sustainability goals.

### **Recommendation 2: Devolution and transport funding reform**

To help deliver the necessary private sector investment, Government should reform the highly centralised and competitive transport funding model to provide long-term, consistent funding to local authorities. This would allow authorities to develop consistent, long-term plans, which would give businesses the confidence to co-invest in the long-term. Additionally, DfT should issue guidance to local authorities about how best to utilise Section 106 Funds and other developer contributions for mobility projects.

# Case study: Stratford International Mobility Hub



In Stratford, Hadley Property Group were delivering a 700+ new home development of predominantly social and affordable housing and, as a B-Corp, have the ambition to have zero requirement for private car ownership for residents.

The Mobility Hub has been baked into a larger community hub, which creates a destination for the future residents as well as the current community surrounding the site. The Hub includes folding bike hire, cargo bike hire, Full electric car club, a bus stop and is adjacent to Stratford International. The funding model is unique, where the property developer has underwritten the capital cost and the transport operators have provided free use for the community to encourage the trialling of modal shift. This has delivered a marquee mobility hub for Newham Council at zero capital or operating cost.

For a mobility hub of this scale, it would normally cost the Local Authority over £250,000 (source: Greenwich Peninsula Mobility Hub 2019), including the provision of EV charging infrastructure, car club and bike hire. The activation cost (provision of free use of car club and bike hire) would be a further operating cost of £30,000/annum. This has been delivered at zero cost to the Local Authority. The development work on the new housing has not started yet, so it is not possible to provide utilisation, but utilisation by the wider community indicates that the combing of mobility solutions at a single hub increases utilisation by over 30% compared to similar locations.

The lessons learned are:

- Mobility hubs have a multiplier effect for all modes.
- It is possible to deliver infrastructure in conjunction with property developers being part of the funding solution if the right environment is created.







## Part 2 – Local government policy and accelerating partnerships

While national policies and devolution provide the enabling framework for a sustainable and multimodal transport future, their success ultimately depends on local authorities' ability to translate these broad directives into actionable plans.

A key existing challenge for local governments in the UK revolves around capacity. And yet, as local authorities gain greater control over transport policy and develop Local Transport Plans (LTPs), they will be asked to do more. In February 2023, a DfT-commissioned report<sup>[1]</sup> found that many local authorities around the UK felt that they had the capability necessary to implement LTPs, but they lacked the capacity to do so. Capacity challenges are particularly acute in specialist roles such as transport planning, transport modelling, and civil engineering. Smaller authorities face the most significant recruitment difficulties, while retention remains an ongoing issue for many of these roles. DfT should look to provide greater specialist support to local authorities that need it.

One model of centralised knowledge and targeted funding disbursement DfT could follow is that of Active Travel England (ATE). Established in 2022, ATE is an executive agency responsible for active travel in England and is an inspectorate and funding body. ATE's leadership team consists of highly respected individuals from the broader active travel and transport ecosystems. A report from the National Audit Office in June 2023<sup>[2]</sup> noted that ATE had made good early progress and is well-placed to address many issues facing active travel schemes. In particular, the report lauded ATE's efforts to help local authorities with minimal capability in active travel improve their abilities, while facilitating knowledge sharing between higher- and lower-capacity authorities. In the end, ATE is well-placed to deliver high value for money to taxpayers and the authorities it works with.

Beyond Government-led initiatives to build capacity and share knowledge, the private sector can also help address these challenges. By working together as partners, businesses can bring their expertise and capabilities to help plan, deliver, and manage projects alongside public sector colleagues. One such way of doing so is via partnership-based funding mechanisms. While budget constraints remain a challenge, local authorities can unlock private sector investment by co-developing projects with businesses that align with shared policy objectives. Public-private co-funding models, such as concession agreements, revenue-sharing schemes, or joint ventures, can ensure that both sectors have a vested interest in delivering high-quality, long-term mobility solutions.

Private sector mobility providers can also help local authorities accelerate their decarbonisation efforts. Numerous cities and LA's across the UK have introduced their own net zero and emissions targets, many of which will necessarily require modal shift and greater use of more sustainable modes of transport. LA's can work closely with private providers to offer more transport modes for consumers, be it bike and scooter share, car rental and car clubs, and of course greater use of bus networks.

Public-private partnerships offer flexibility, which is essential given the varied mobility challenges across the UK. At their best, these partnerships foster knowledge sharing, reduce the resources needed to complete complex projects, and accelerate delivery. While such collaborations should be subject to scrutiny to ensure value for money for taxpayers, fostering genuine partnerships with the private sector can minimise public risk while speeding up project completion. These partnerships represent a critical tool in building a sustainable and efficient transport network.

### **Recommendation 3: Capacity building for local authorities**

DfT should establish a specialist support framework, similar to Active Travel England, to help local authorities address capacity gaps in transport planning, modelling, and infrastructure delivery.

### **Recommendation 4: Private-led Partnerships**

To provide maximum value for money to Government, we recommend the more widespread use of private-led and enhanced partnerships in delivering innovative mobility solutions. By leveraging private sector expertise and investment, councils, public sector bodies, and businesses can enhance local transport networks, reduce costs, and accelerate project completion.



# Case study: A vision for a bus depot of the future



Stagecoach is funding a £5m investment in its Matford bus depot in Exeter, to provide capacity to act as the main support site for its vehicles from across the region as the business moves to a fleet of zero and low emission vehicles.

The bus parking area is already used as a Park & Ride site during the day, when the bus fleet is out. The site will be developed further into an EV Charging hub for community use by day - offering charging to other operators, HGV operators, van and fleet operators and the public - and to charge the electric bus fleet by night.

The infrastructure also supports Stagecoach's own service vehicles which are being migrated to a plug-in electric fleet and require non-commercial plug-in charging facilities.

The depot provides an income to the council through rent, improved parking facilities for the city, reduced congestion and pollution, and will in time offer greater availability of rapid charging infrastructure at competitive prices for residents and local businesses.

Working in partnership with the Local Authority has been key to delivering this project - and often across Local Authority departments to ensure that the opportunities that can be unlocked by public transport solutions in one area, can have lasting and tangible benefits in other areas of the community - not directly connected to public transport. In this case, access to high speed, high quality and affordable charging infrastructure in a residential and industrial area of Exeter that may not have been benefiting from such investment if a typical business case for a charging project had been presented. The ability to work with industries that are decarbonising, such as public transport, should be recognised for the synergies that can be achieved by working together and collaborating on projects that deliver better community outcomes for all - not just public transport users.

As part of these works, we have been working closely with experts in charging hub design, to ensure that site layouts allow safe and secure access to users outside of the bus operating space and therefore assist others on their decarbonisation journey without the need to install their own infrastructure.

This project is particularly unique in that it is strategically located on the junction of the M5/A30/A38 offering a charging hub that has the potential to benefit those on long journey's heading to South Devon, Cornwall or further North to the Midlands and a good example of what can be achieved with collaborative and partnership working in one of England's smaller cities (Exeter) with a deep rural fringe and hinterland that would not normally be 'front of the queue' for such projects.



## Part 3 – The role of planning in enabling partnerships

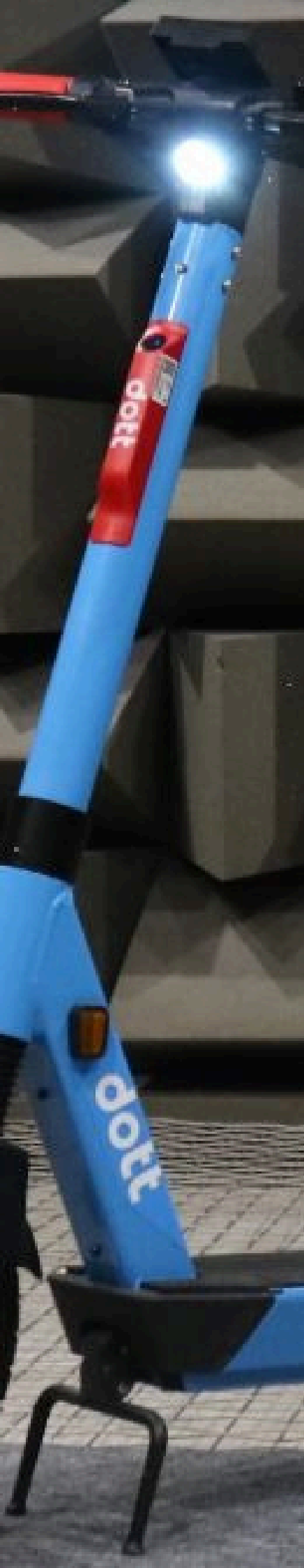
The recent changes in the UK's planning system—represented in major projects like airport expansion and the Lower Thames Crossing, alongside ambitious housebuilding and new city initiatives—are laying the foundation for a more integrated transport network. Transport and mobility are inextricably linked to these initiatives, from employee travel to new worksites, to ensuring efficient local connectivity. With a vision-led planning system and public private partnerships underpinning all of this new development, we will focus on a dual approach of physical infrastructure supported by digital innovation.

While many view integrated transport solutions as futuristic, much of the necessary infrastructure is already in place and must be actively promoted. This is evident in the existing bike hire schemes, scooter hire, car sharing, car hire, and car clubs. Often, these assets aren't considered modal hubs, but they are and should be recognised as such. They play a crucial role in the sustainable mobility ecosystem by providing flexible, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly transport options.

Public authorities deploying mobility hubs is another option and provide one of the clearest examples of public-private partnerships and vision-led transport planning leading to physical infrastructure improvements. These hubs serve as interchange points between longer distances and first mile/last mile modes, located at key parts in urban centres and surrounding areas. They feature highly visible focal points within the streetscape that seamlessly integrate public and shared mobility offers. The hubs are modular in approach and can be scaled to local needs. Mobility hub services can include bike hire schemes which are integral to reducing congestion and emissions while promoting active travel and shared mobility.

### Mobility hub services can include:

- **Demand Responsive Transport:** Providing on-demand service systems supporting accessibility in towns and urban centres.
- **Vehicle hire:** Accessing extensive branch networks to provide vehicles on demand as an option for users to access cars when longer trips are required.
- **Car Clubs:** Building upon existing car clubs, the provision of on-street car/van share services with potential for EVs as they become commercially viable for such applications.
- **Bike Share:** providing users with on-demand access to dock or undock (pedal and electric) bicycles at a variety of pick-up and drop-off locations for one-way (point-to-point) or roundtrip travel.
- **Micro-consolidation and e-cargo bikes:** Small, secure, open access consolidation centres to transfer deliveries to e-cargo bikes for local deliveries.
- **Open Access Parcel Lockers:** Provision at Mobility Hubs and other locations of parcel drop and pick-up lockers. Lockers operate on an open access basis where any commercial delivery operator can make use of them.
- **E-Scooters:** E-scooter service provision on private campus-style developments, potentially expanding to other areas.



These hubs can range in size from locations which incorporate all the above-mentioned modes to a simple bus stop which has a bike sharing rack connected to it. Located near busy bus and rail interchanges, mobility hubs compliment existing mobility infrastructure and encourage greater public transport patronage. The varied modes of transport stationed at each hub are typically operated by private providers, who bring investment to the hubs and surrounding areas.

The private providers supporting the hubs can bring significant capabilities to planning these projects, since many providers will have advanced insights such as data on customer travel patterns and behavioural preferences of consumers in the surrounding area. They will also have excellent knowledge of factors such as the appropriate types of transport modes needed in different settings.

The planning system plays a crucial role in enabling key transport infrastructure. As such, land surrounding rail and major bus stations should be prioritised for shared mobility solutions such as mobility hubs. Local authorities should more rapidly utilise existing developer contributions to fund these projects, because they will enable modal shift, increase transport sustainability, reduce congestions and even improve journey times.

#### **Recommendation 5: Multimodal connectivity**

Multimodal connectivity should be a mandatory criteria for Local Transport Plans and local planning more generally. This would ensure that mobility is fully integrated into all new housing, urban regeneration, and infrastructure development from conception. This would unlock private investment while ensuring sustainability targets are more achievable.

#### **Recommendation 6: Developer contribution funding.**

DfT should issue detailed guidance and actively encourage local authorities to use unspent Section 106 funds and other developer contributions to support mobility hubs and transport projects. Clear direction on how to deploy these funds would empower councils to unlock much-needed investment, deliver local infrastructure improvements, and enhance the value and appeal of new developments.



## Part 4 – Digital innovations enabling partnerships

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To further facilitate a vision-led approach to transport across the UK, digital partnerships should also be strongly considered. Mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) and integrated ticketing are excellent examples of digital partnerships that should be strongly encouraged through policy incentives. MaaS is the integration of transport services into a single mobility service, usually an app, allowing users to plan, book and pay for a multi-modal transport journey in one place. UMP has made significant strides in MaaS policy in the UK, having fed into and supported DfT's launch of its MaaS code of practice in 2023.

Data-driven and digitally enabled, MaaS has the potential to significantly increase public transport use by providing consumers with smart, accessible, and user-friendly service options that make travel safe, affordable, and convenient. While various MaaS models exist—as detailed in a previous UMP policy paper—the most effective implementation often occurs when local authorities partner with private sector operators. Such collaborations not only provide access to cutting-edge MaaS technology but also support local decarbonisation goals by promoting sustainable mobility solutions and reducing reliance on private vehicles.

These partnerships allow local authorities to benefit from MaaS without requiring extensive in-house expertise because private operators can deliver and manage the service. Additionally, MaaS platforms generate valuable transportation data, enabling local authorities to plan future transport services and infrastructure improvements more effectively. By fostering an attractive MaaS offering, authorities can crowd in private investment, enhance local mobility infrastructure, and create new revenue streams, all while contributing to greener, more efficient transport systems.

A distinct but related concept to MaaS is integrated ticketing, which should also be made a priority for local authorities when they are developing their Local Transport Plans (LTPs). Integrated ticketing involves the seamless coordination of different modes of transport—such as buses, trains, trams, and shared mobility services—into a unified system.

Integrated ticketing can significantly enhance the appeal of public transport by reducing friction in the customer experience. When travellers know they can complete an end-to-end trip—from their doorstep to their destination—using a single ticket, they are more likely to opt for public or shared transport over private car use. This, in turn, can lead to broader societal benefits, including reduced traffic congestion, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and improved urban air quality. For local authorities, prioritising integrated ticketing within their LTPs can also facilitate better data collection and service optimisation. By analysing usage patterns and customer preferences through MaaS and ticketing platforms, transport operators can identify gaps in service provision, adjust schedules, and invest in infrastructure improvements that meet real-world demand.



Other digital solutions that can improve mobility include greater data usage to help curate more accurate public transport timetables. Similarly, coordinated timetables across major transport networks – especially for buses and trains – can drastically improve user experience. From a passenger’s perspective, few things are more frustrating—and damaging to public transport uptake—than arriving at a train station minutes after a once-hourly bus has departed. Greater data sharing across transport network can minimise this type of negative experience.

For public attitudes to meaningfully shift in favour of multimodal and public transport, it must be recognised that convenience, reliability, affordability, and confidence are key factors influencing travel choices. Public transport and multimodal options must be the obvious first choice, not a secondary option. This will only happen when the transport ecosystem is designed and delivered in a coordinated way, seamlessly linking transport modes together.

Public-private partnerships become essential here. Public authorities bring place-based visions and long-term planning, while private sector operators contribute innovation, technology, and rapid deployment capabilities. If both sectors are genuinely collaborative—with clear roles, incentives, and shared outcomes—they can usher in the transformative, integrated public transport network the Government aims to achieve.

### **Recommendation 7: Advancing Digital Partnerships**

DfT should provide funding incentives for local authorities to implement digitally enabled partnership with private operators. Enhanced information sharing and coordinated timetables between transport modes should also be required to improve service reliability, enhance user experience, and increase public transport patronage.



## Part 5 – Corporate travel partnerships

An area of transport and mobility with tremendous opportunity is the role that corporations and large employers play in shaping the commuting habits of their employees. Large worksites—including universities, hospitals, corporate campuses, and government departments—are increasingly being held accountable by their employees and shareholders for the emissions generated by employee commutes. Given that the daily commute alone contributes nearly 18 billion kg of CO<sub>2</sub> annually, tackling this issue is critical for achieving local and national sustainability goals.

The Government and public sector have a unique opportunity to lead from the front and tackle commuter emissions and promote sustainable, shared mobility solutions. In the upcoming Integrated National Transport Strategy, DfT should strongly encourage councils, authorities, and other large public sector employers to create employee transport plans, leading the way in reducing commuter and employer emissions. This strong sign of leadership would help set a precedent for the private sector, while helping the Government get ever closer to its own ambitious emissions targets.

In some areas with strong existing public transport links, employee travel plans will be easier and more straightforward to create. However, recognising that for some people car use will still be necessary, employers should look to adopt innovative solutions such as car clubs and car hire services. By hosting dedicated, on-site car clubs, local authorities and employers can maintain convenient access to vehicles when needed while avoiding the financial and logistical burden of maintaining large vehicle fleets. Additionally, car club and hire fleets tend to consist of newer and cleaner vehicles, further supporting sustainability goals. The corporate use of car clubs, alongside public sector support and use, can be a key contributor to the viability of car club locations. This use is typically during the working day, which can be the lowest periods of utilisation for operators.

Spain is already leading the way on commuter transport plans, providing a model for DfT to follow. The Spanish draft bill, which is currently under consideration in the Spanish Parliament, would require all public and private companies employing more than 500 workers (or 250 per shift) to create sustainable mobility plans for their workplace. Included in the plans would be specific sustainable mobility-to-work measures that cover active mobility, collective transport, zero-emission mobility, and more, alongside evaluation and monitoring actions to ensure proper implementation.

UMP has covered employer, grey fleet, and commuting travel in detail in a previous report<sup>[1]</sup>, and we strongly support efforts that embrace technology and active and shared mobility solutions to reduce the number of older, more heavily polluting vehicles on the road. While clean air zones and/or emissions zones can play a role in reducing air pollution, alternative interventions like car clubs and vehicle rental can still ensure access to vehicles when needed, without the cost and hassle of ownership, insurance, and mileage reimbursement.





Beyond the commute, corporate travel policies also play a pivotal role in shaping employee transport choices. If employees rely on their private vehicles for business travel during the workday, they are far more likely to drive to and from work as well. UMP's own research has shown that these types of vehicles are on average 8.5 years old and are some of the highest polluting vehicles on the road. Worse still, many of these vehicles may not be properly insured for these business trips. By offering sustainable alternatives, employers can break this cycle and drive real modal shift.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to reducing corporate travel emissions, which is why tailored solutions are essential. UMP can provide guidance on region-specific strategies to help businesses transition to more sustainable, multimodal transport options. Employers should actively engage with transport providers—including car clubs and vehicle rental, bike hire schemes, technology companies and shared mobility operators—to ensure that employees have seamless access to diverse transport options.

### **Recommendation 8 : Partnering to reduce commuter emissions**

DfT should use the upcoming Integrated National Transport Strategy to lead by example on reducing commuter emissions by encouraging all large public sector employers to develop sustainable employee travel plans. These plans should promote active, shared, and low-emission transport options, including innovative solutions like car clubs. By setting a strong precedent in the public sector, the Government can catalyse similar action across the private sector, helping to cut carbon, reduce reliance on grey fleet vehicles, and meet national climate targets.

# Case study: Ireland's First Public eMobility Hub Launch



Galway City faces challenges with private car dependency, urban congestion, and the need to meet emission reduction targets. Residents and visitors often lack accessible, sustainable alternatives to car ownership for daily travel, particularly in suburban and residential zones.

Trinity College Dublin, in partnership with Atlantic Technological University (ATU), ESB, and Enterprise Car Club launched Ireland's first shared eMobility Hub at Westside Library Car Park in Galway City, offering electric cars, e-bikes, and an e-cargo bike for public use. Each purpose-built site includes an ESB charge station, one e-cargo bike, four e-bikes, and two electric vehicles provided by Enterprise Car Club. Users can book vehicles by the hour or day. The initiative is part of a wider research and demonstration project funded by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and led by Trinity College Dublin, with additional hubs planned for Letterkenny, Waterford, and Dublin.

The hub supports multimodal travel by providing alternatives to private car ownership, helping residents and visitors to choose the best transport mode for each journey. It is expected to reduce transport emissions, encourage behavioural shifts in travel habits, and offer cost and time savings. The research team will evaluate outcomes including emissions reductions and modal shift at each site over time.

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## Part 6 – Partnerships to address rural mobility and isolated areas

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Public transport in more rural communities is often neglected due to the lack of population density, the larger geographical boundaries, infrastructure requirements, and the false perception that there is low demand for public transport services amongst rural residents. As a result, there are naturally high levels of private car dependency in rural areas. This dependency leads to greater carbon emissions per person per mile travelled, and far more dangerous roads for drivers, motorcyclists, and cyclists – all of whom are more than three times as likely to be killed per mile travelled on rural roads versus urban ones.

As public service funding has declined over the last 10–15 years, rural public transport services have been hit particularly hard. Rural bus service provision declined by 20% from 2011–2023, a trend showing no signs of reversal.[3] Robust public private partnerships are one key solution to turning around this decline, not least because the private sector can help provide the much needed capital to get services back on track.

One of the most promising solutions is Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), which offers flexible, shared transport services that connect users from lower-density rural areas to public transport hubs in urban centres. Rather than replacing fixed-route public transport, DRT complements public transport networks by enhancing mobility in low-density areas and during low-demand periods. By enabling rural residents to access rail stations, bus routes, and key services more easily, DRT strengthens the link between rural and urban mobility, reducing the need for car travel while increasing public transport usage.

By collaborating with public transport bodies and local authorities, private sector DRT providers can help implement environmentally friendly and economical travel solutions for longer distances. However, these collaborations require mutual trust, as DRT works best when providers have access to adequate data on existing fixed-route services. This data enables DRT providers to design services that integrate with existing routes, ensuring that pick-up and drop-off points are co-located with bus and train stations, and that passengers can transfer smoothly between DRT and fixed-route services using coordinated timetables. In addition to DRT, local authorities can explore the Enhanced Partnership (EP) bus model. While not exclusive to rural areas, EPs are about bus operators and LTAs forming an alliance to improve services for people in their regions. They also give LTAs greater oversight over bus service delivery. In simple terms, EPs are bespoke plans for bus service delivery designed to encourage bus operators and LTAs to work together to address local needs while minimising costs to the public purse. Fares can be simplified or even capped and can bring bus operation under a single unified brand, all while ensuring minimum service reliability.

A notable example of successful collaboration in rural transport is the GO-HI initiative in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland through Hi-Trans. This project integrated multiple transport options into a single technology platform, providing users with seamless access to buses, trains, taxis, car hire, car clubs, bicycle hire, air travel, and ferries. Partners included Brompton Bike Hire, Stagecoach, Liftango, and Enterprise Rent-A-Car. Even after the Mobility as a Service (MaaS) trial concluded, these operators continue to provide their services in the region today. By leveraging the strengths of these partners, Hi-Trans offers a range of mobility solutions that enhances accessibility, reduces carbon emissions, and promotes sustainable travel choices in rural areas.

By embracing these solutions, policymakers can bridge the gap between rural and urban transport, reducing car dependency, lowering emissions, and making road travel safer—all while ensuring that rural residents remain connected to the services and opportunities available in nearby towns and cities.

### **Recommendation 9: Rural mobility solutions**

To address the unique challenges faced by rural communities, UMP recommends integrating DRT, Enhanced Partnerships, and other mobility services with public transport networks. These solutions can reduce private car dependency, lower emissions, and improve road safety for the most transport poor communities. Co-locating mobility hubs in rural areas and supporting multimodal transport options are essential steps towards a more connected and sustainable rural transport network.



## Part 7 – Monitoring & Accountability

While this report highlights various policy solutions, without a robust oversight function, there is a risk that even well-intentioned initiatives may have little real-world impact on driving modal shift. To ensure progress, UMP proposes establishing an oversight and reporting system for local transport plans, with Ministerial responsibility. This oversight system could serve as a central hub for guidance and best practices to improve outcomes nationwide. Likewise, this body could work with local authorities to track citizen satisfaction since DfT considers user experience to be a top-metric for assessing policy success in this space.

This body should operate across government, with collaboration between DfT and the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government—the two key departments responsible for planning and transport. This centralised knowledge hub and oversight function could also foster more coordinated action across regions that aren't necessarily joined up via a singular local authority.

Key to monitoring and accountability is establishing clear and measurable performance standards for key aspects of public transport service delivery. Building a greater sense of trust and partnership involves the DfT collaborating with transport operators and providers to mutually agree on which metrics to track, and how to track and report them. Considering outcomes such as improved journey times and reduced private vehicle congestion would serve as effective measures.

### **Recommendation 10: Monitoring and Accountability**

To ensure accountability and drive measurable progress, the Government should establish an oversight and reporting system for local transport plans, with Ministerial responsibility. This system should track implementation, monitor outcomes, and ensure transparency via performance reporting. It could also serve as a central resource for local authorities—sharing best practices, highlighting successful interventions, and supporting continuous learning across regions.





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