

Changing the parameters of Community Transport to deliver greater economic and social value to rural areas across the UK

Jamie Smith

Transport Planning Society Bursary Competition 2022

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Jamie Smith

Transport Planner, Arup

TPS Membership Number: 93505755

Word Count: 4976

Contents

Introduction	3
Aims and Objectives	3
Methodology	4
Literature and Policy Review	4
Engagement	4
Action Plan Development	4
Rural Transport: Key Issues	5
National Transport Strategies	5
Legislation	6
Introduction to Community Transport	7
Operation	7
Funding	7
Existing Schemes	7
The Social and Economic Value of Community Transport	9
Challenges and Opportunities	10
Legislation	10
Operation	10
Engagement	11
Driver Shortages	11
Funding and Resources	11
Public and Political Perceptions	12
Measuring Economic and Social Value	12
Community Transport Action Plan	13
Conclusions and Recommendations	14
Conclusions	14
Recommendations	14
Appendix A- Bibliography	15
Appendix B- Engagement Participants	17
Appendix C- Engagement Questions and Prompts	18
Table 1: Summary of national transport strategies	5
Table 2: CT and DRT best practice across the UK	8
Table 3: CT and DRT best practice outside the UK	8
Table 4: CT Action Plan	13

Introduction

There are various transport issues that negatively impact rural populations. One is poor public transport and bus provision, with common themes including poor frequency, limited geographic coverage and declining assets. Geographic barriers such as topography, smaller populations and population sparsity also make operating an economically viable, traditional public transport network very difficult.

The bus sector in the UK has endured sustained decline over the past 10 years in terms of frequency, coverage, service quality and patronage. Contributing factors include economic austerity, public sector subsidy reductions, flexible working, and the reduced cost of car ownership. Evidence also shows that declining bus services impacts vulnerable groups that depend on them most (Arup, 2021).

Poor public transport in rural areas contributes to limited transport options for local people, leading to forced car ownership, isolation and transport poverty. Contemporary societal challenges such as the cost-of-living and climate crises with post-covid recovery have considerably changed the economic and social viability of public services. Public transport in rural areas cannot escape greater scrutiny to ensure social and economic value and more opportunities to local populations are being achieved.

Community Transport (CT) services could be a key part of the solution in rural areas. This research will explore how CT can be used and adapted to deliver greater economic and social value to rural areas across the UK. Policy and legislation will be explored, alongside existing CT provision and opportunities to make CT services more attractive for all users in rural areas.

Aims and Objectives

Aim: To explore how CT can be adapted to deliver greater economic and social value to rural areas across the UK.

Objectives:

1. To understand current transport and bus-specific issues in rural areas across the UK.
2. To explore the CT sector and existing CT facilities across the UK, outlining their economic and social potential in rural areas.
3. To identify challenges, opportunities and solutions for key stakeholders to ensure CT delivers greater economic and social outcomes.

Methodology

This research has been undertaken using a qualitative approach, allowing for in-depth exploration of key issues. The key research stages are outlined below.

Literature and Policy Review

Literature and policy has been reviewed to provide a baseline understanding of rural CT in the UK and best practice. The key steps of the literature and policy review were as follows:

1. *Policy and legislation review*: a review of transport policies, strategies and legislation across UK devolved nations.
2. *Literature review*: a targeted review of literature such as industry, third sector and academic sources on rural transport, public transport and CT.

A bibliography with Harvard-style referencing can be found in **Appendix A**.

Engagement

To build upon the literature and policy review, engagement has been carried out with bus and transport planning experts and key stakeholders. The engagement stage is summarised below.

Technical Workshops

Online and in-person workshops were carried out with technical experts. The workshops undertaken were as follows:

1. *Arup Bus and Coach Workshop*: This online workshop was undertaken with bus and coach experts across the UK.
2. *Arup Transport Planning Workshop*: This workshop was held with transport planning consultants across multiple areas of expertise.

Semi-structured Interviews and Discussions

Interviews were held with key stakeholders related to CT across the UK, including rural transport representatives, public transport managers and CT experts. The organisations interviewed were:

- Community Transport Association (CTA)
- Department for Transport (DfT)
- Transport Scotland
- Ceredigion County Council
- Stirling Council
- Suffolk County Council

Engagement sessions were recorded to allow for full interpretation of results. The identity of workshop and the interview participants were fully anonymised.

More information on the engagement sessions undertaken can be found in **Appendix B**. The questions and prompts used can be found in **Appendix C**.

Action Plan Development

A CT action plan has been developed, which was informed by the literature and policy review and engagement stages. The action plan strives to provide a framework for delivering CT solutions to rural areas across the UK that bring positive economic and social outcomes.

Rural Transport: Key Issues

Rural areas across the UK currently suffer from private car dependency and limited transport options. On average, around 78% of rural populations travel by private vehicle for all journeys as a driver or passenger (DfT, 2019; Transport Scotland, 2018; Department for Infrastructure Northern Ireland (DFI NI), 2019).

There are several contributing factors to high car dependency in rural areas, including poor public transport provision. Common themes include lack of frequency, limited geographic coverage, lack of real time information, limited timetable reliability and poor price and journey time competitiveness with the private car.

Poor public transport in rural areas contributes to limited transport options for local people, leading to forced car ownership, social isolation and transport poverty (Arup and Urban Transport Group, 2022).

“There is a reliance on car travel in rural areas as there is not the public transport services... if you don’t have access to a car that can lead to social exclusion.”
(Workshop participant)

Geographic issues in rural areas such as topography, smaller populations and population sparsity also make operating an economically viable, traditional public transport network very difficult.

The decline of bus patronage and economic viability of running fixed bus services with lower demand is a prevalent issue in rural areas. Economic challenges and low demand often result in bus services being reduced or removed, leading to many rural locations not being connected by public transport (SEStran, 2020).

“In Northern Ireland we have massive gaps in rural transport...the rural routes keep being put under threat or reduced when budgets are squeezed by the public transport provider.”
(CTA representative (Northern Ireland))

National Transport Strategies

Policies and strategies across the UK recognise rural transport issues and the requirement for a different approach to rural public transport provision. They acknowledge the importance of the bus sector in improving rural transport connectivity and addressing issues including isolation and inequality.

The table below summarises the strategies reviewed. In the absence of any recent DFI, NI transport strategy publications in Northern Ireland, the latest Translink (the main public transport operator in Northern Ireland) strategy has been reviewed.

Table 1: Summary of national transport strategies

Policy	Devolved Nation	Reference to rural areas	Reference to bus sector
Bus Back Better: National Bus Strategy for England (2021)	England	Fixed-route buses in lower density areas cannot compete private car flexibility. Potential solutions include demand responsive transport and smaller vehicles.	Recognition that bus deregulation doesn’t work for all locations. Aims for Bus Service Improvement Plans to provide opportunities for communities.

National Transport Strategy 2 (2020)	Scotland	Recognises that buses serve locations with no rail services, including rural areas.	Recognition that women and lower income individuals are more likely to travel by bus. Therefore bus service cuts have an uneven impact on these groups.
Wales Transport Strategy (2021)	Wales	Desire to deliver transport networks meeting the needs of different locations including rural areas.	Priority to “extend the geographical ‘reach’ of public transport”. Desire for the bus network to be integrated with other modes.
Translink Get on Board Strategy (2020)	Northern Ireland	Aim to work with all shared mobility providers to deliver rural services.	Objective to “deliver excellent bus and rail service performance”.

A review of national policy shows that the public transport offering across UK rural areas must be improved.

Legislation

The *Transport Act 1985* led to the deregulation of bus services across the UK outside of London, meaning that the majority of bus services are commercially run with very few franchised bus services. This focus on commercial viability leads to services being reduced in areas of lower demand such as rural areas, which has been a key contributing factor in the historic decline of bus patronage across the UK.

Recent legislation such as the *Bus Services Act 2017* and the *Transport (Scotland) Act 2019* provides local authorities across the UK with more powers to shape the bus services provided through partnership working and franchising. This may create opportunities for change within the bus sector that bring positive outcomes for rural areas, reversing the negative impact of deregulation.

Introduction to Community Transport

CT is described as transport services designed to meet a bespoke transport need or the needs of a specific group. CT can operate fixed bus services; however the majority are mainly Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services, which involves providing on-demand, flexible services which are designed to meet the requirements of the user and use smaller vehicles (SEStran, 2020).

“Community Transport is about providing flexible and accessible community-led solutions in response to unmet local transport needs.”
(CTA, 2022).

Operation

CT services across the UK are mainly operated by the third sector, therefore most workers, including drivers and administration staff, are either volunteers or paid significantly less than other sectors. CT operation can also vary from a traditional ‘dial-a-ride’ model to using digital technology through DRT.

CT providers are required to apply for *Section 19* (use of vehicles by educational and other bodies) and/ or *Section 22* (community bus permits) permits under the *Transport Act 1985*. This allows for the provision of a licence to carry passengers without the need for a public service vehicle operators (PSV ‘O’) licence. *Section 19* permits are aimed at specific groups (such as education bodies) and cannot be used to carry members of the public. *Section 22* permits are issued to organisations concerned for the social and welfare needs of local people and act as a community bus service, therefore can carry members of the public. All *Section 19* and *Section 22* permits must be approved by the local Traffic Commissioner (UK Government, 2022).

Funding

The main funding streams for CT services across the UK consist of customer fares, national funding and local authority funding.

National funding is often in the form of short-term grants that are usually capital rather than revenue funding. In England, Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) funding is issued to operators of eligible bus services and CT organisations. This includes incentive-related payments and capital to recover a proportion of fuel costs (DfT, 2021). In Scotland, the Network Support Grant (NSG) is a grant fund which subsidises community bus services and contributes to the operation of CT organisations. This can be applied to by CT organisations holding a *Section 19* or *Section 22* permit (Transport Scotland, 2022). In Northern Ireland, funding is mainly derived from annual grant funding through the Rural Transport Fund administered by the DFI, NI.

CT organisations in rural areas of England have also benefited from the Rural Mobility Fund administered by the DfT. Local authorities in England were invited to bid for funding in 2020 to pilot operating on-demand bus services. Some local authorities that bid successfully have used their funding to support CT services (DfT, 2022).

Existing Schemes

Table 2 summarises some of the existing CT and DRT services across the UK.

Table 2: CT and DRT best practice across the UK

Name	Location	Description
Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport Company	Highland (Scotland)	One of the most successful CT schemes in Scotland which operates a community bus service and a community car sharing scheme. The scheme involves door-to-door services and group hires for social activities for the local area. The service is mainly used by the elderly and mobility impaired.
Fflesci	Newport, Pembrokeshire, Rhondda, Prestatyn, Denbigh and Cardiff North (Wales).	Pilot DRT service to help people make essential journeys and replace bus services with flexible services that collect and drop off passengers from desired locations. The scheme operates through app or telephone-based bookings and bespoke vehicle sizes to ensure flexibility and meet demand.
Suffolk Links/Connecting Communities	Suffolk (England)	DRT service which provides links to bus and rail services from rural locations. The service is operated by Coastal Accessible Transport Service, which is a provider of Connecting Community Bus Service, Door to Door Service and Community Car Schemes.

Source: SMARTA 2019

The table below summarises best practice in relation to CT and DRT outside the UK.

Table 3: CT and DRT best practice outside the UK

Name	Location	Description
Ring a Link Kilkenny	Kilkenny, Carlow and Wicklow (Republic of Ireland)	Community service established in 2001 to tackle social exclusion. The service has grown over time in terms of coverage and quality. operates as a DRT minibuss service with some fixed services. They are for public use but services must be pre-booked.
Burgerbus	Baden-Württemberg, Lower Saxony and North-Reine Westphalia (Germany)	CT service operated by volunteers, with a package of financial support provided at state (regional) level and by private funding. This service complements existing public transport services in low density areas. There are currently around 350 of these services operating throughout Germany.
Bummelbus	Luxembourg	On-demand bus service that complements existing public transport. This service was established to combine transport needs with professional driver training for the long-term unemployed.

Source: SMARTA 2019

The Social and Economic Value of Community Transport

There are numerous benefits that CT services bring to individuals and communities. These include connectivity, increased independence, opportunities for social interaction and lower cost travel which reduces private car dependency. The benefits for wider society include better public transport coverage, greater journey flexibility, lower operating costs, reduced healthcare costs, environmental benefits through reduced private car trips and increased opportunities for rural communities (Nelson et al, 2017; Gauge NI, 2015).

Bus Back Better: National Bus Strategy for England recognises the social and economic value of CT. These services benefit passengers by helping operators keep fares lower, which allows for the operation of services that may be unprofitable, for example in rural areas. The strategy outlines that these services are cost effective and deliver high value for money, with every £1 invested in community bus services generating between £2.70 and £3.70 in benefits.

The Ealing Community Transport (ECT) charity, in collaboration with Deloitte, undertook research in 2016 to explore the social and economic value that their services bring to the communities they serve. This research shows that investing in CT leads to resource efficiencies across other sectors. For example, CT services typically take vulnerable people such as the elderly for their weekly shopping. This reduces reliance on local carers and improves their independence and overall wellbeing. CT services often take vulnerable people to health appointments, which preserves individuals' independence whilst also minimising the likelihood of health complications in the future, emergency trips to the hospital and weeks of aftercare.

This research also outlines the costs of isolation to public services across the UK, which is estimated between £1.3bn and £2.9bn. The research also estimated that a significant roll-out of CT services throughout the UK could reduce the number of people suffering from isolation and the subsequent health and social costs, with estimated savings to the health and social care sector of around £0.75bn per annum based on 2016 economic rates (ECT, 2016).

The ECT research focuses on the costs associated with loneliness and isolation and the impact on the health and social care sector. The research does not consider the economic and social benefits from a transport perspective, for example by replacing highly subsidised fixed bus services with CT services in areas with lower demand. This research also did not show the potential for CT to support a wider demographic of user. Therefore the social and economic benefits of CT could arguably be even higher than the findings of ECT and Deloitte.

It is considered that, other than the ECT analysis outlined above, the economic and social value of CT is not widely recognised, and more work needs to be undertaken to quantify the benefits of CT.

“No one has really made the case for the value it (CT) delivers...I think we can do a better job in capturing the economic and social value.”
(Workshop participant)

It is about knowing the social value of community transport. There is a social element to it in terms of reducing isolation...it is about quantifying that. We know it has an impact through conversations, but how do we translate that to policymakers.”
(CTA representative)

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite the benefits that CT services bring to rural areas, there are numerous challenges related to delivery. This section provides an overview of these challenges and the opportunities identified to overcome these challenges.

Legislation

Current legislation has been identified as a challenge that can make the forward planning of CT to benefit rural populations more challenging. The *Section 19* and *Section 22* permits system arguably restricts the scope for sharing resources, such as fleets and drivers, across sectors including CT, health and social care and education.

There may therefore be an opportunity to streamline legislation to allow for resources to be shared between key sectors and to build more resilience into CT. Workshop participants identified resource sharing as a way to deliver more economic and social value, citing historic examples such as the ‘Postbus’ operated by Royal Mail, which was ceased in 2017 due to low demand and increased subsidy costs for local authorities (Transport Ticket, 2022).

“When post was being delivered to remote rural areas you could get on board as a passenger...but now it isn’t as easy to integrate with other services such as mail delivery, ambulance service and education, which you could combine as community services.”
(Workshop participant)

One current example of resource sharing is ‘Social Services on Wheels’ in Bangladesh where one community vehicle is used for healthcare, ICT, and bus services (Greening et al, 2022).

The passing of recent legislation such as the *Bus Services Act 2017* and the *Transport (Scotland) Act 2019* creates new opportunities for local authorities to procure sustainable mobility services that meet the requirements of local populations. This may include local franchising and buses that meet social needs. Similar legislative frameworks could be passed and implemented across all devolved nations to allow local authorities to consider bespoke bus services that may include CT and DRT.

Following Brexit all EU legislation will be reviewed, which should allow simplification of the requirements for CT without jeopardising current standards. Other opportunities include exploring the potential of giving CT and other mobility services the legal protection of becoming community assets.

Operation

CT has the potential to enhance public transport connectivity and fill gaps in existing networks to remote locations. However, CT is often planned on a case-by-case basis, therefore tends not to be viewed as an integral part of public transport networks (SEStran, 2020).

The operation of CT services is often overly reliant on volunteers that are around retirement age, which leads to fragile services and a lack of resilience when these individuals are not available. There are also difficulties encouraging young people to pursue a career in the sector, with issues such as pay and the lack of a defined career path.

“Because of the age profile we are losing workers quicker than we are training them. Why isn’t this (CT) attractive for youngsters to go into as a career path? We need to identify what skills they need because it is a lovely job being outside and meeting different people.”
(Ceredigion County Council representative)

Steps must be taken to encourage more diversity in the sector, both in terms of paid workers and a wider range of volunteers. Examples include CT models adopted in Germany and the Netherlands, where bus services are run entirely by volunteers (SMARTA, 2019; Buurtbus.net, 2022).

Engagement

Participants also outlined that communities themselves should be given the opportunity to have a central role in the planning and operation of CT services, due to their local knowledge and understanding of their community's requirements. This should particularly be the case in rural areas where communities are traditionally smaller and more integrated.

“The council could say ‘we’ll bring the expertise and do the tendering and you (the community) run the service’...if the community run the service with some help in the background from the council it will better meet their needs.”
(Suffolk County Council representative)

Empowering communities through providing a greater role in CT would deliver wide-ranging social and economic outcomes, including community ownership, greater social integration and reducing operating costs through the provision of a more efficient service.

Driver Shortages

Bus driver shortages were consistently raised during engagement as a challenge for CT providers. The issue is heightened by the current requirement for a D1 driving licence to drive a minibus for individuals who obtained their driving licence post 1997. This leads to over-reliance on older drivers and the need for younger drivers to undertake additional D1 training, which is costly and time consuming.

This issue is even more restrictive in Northern Ireland, where a full D1 licence is required for all drivers regardless of when their driving licence was obtained. This brings higher costs for CT organisations upskilling drivers and significant operational issues when drivers are unavailable.

“Our drivers have to have a full D1 licence, which costs around £1300 to get and takes nearly 12 months to get through the different stages and qualifications...getting the D1 qualification is really tough, some people have had to step away from the sector as they can’t get through.”
(CTA representative (Northern Ireland))

Ideas mentioned during engagement sessions included removing the need for a D1 licence, delivering a UK-wide D1 training programme and using CT as a mechanism to upskill bus drivers, similar to the Bummelbus approach in Luxembourg (SMARTA, 2019).

Tackling the bus driver issue will allow the CT sector to deliver a better quality and more reliable service to local communities. The DfT have recently released a call for evidence on drivers licencing, which includes gathering views on the need to have a D1 licence to drive a minibus. The outcome of this review should determine the course of action the CT sector takes across the UK.

Funding and Resources

Obtaining the required level of funding is a major challenge facing CT providers across the UK. In Wales, many CT services are reliant on funding from grants, charitable trusts and foundations which are often short term and have complex application processes (Jones, 2016). These issues are similar across UK, with short term grants not allowing CT organisations to forward plan the resources they require to operate their service.

The covid-19 pandemic and current economic challenges also make the operation of CT services even more challenging. These problems are exacerbated in rural areas where CT organisations are more informal and less likely to be self-sustainable.

Conversations with CTA and local authorities indicated that CT providers are frustrated by the quality of their existing fleets. Fleets tend to be ageing with expensive to maintain diesel engines, leading to higher costs for CT providers and environmental concerns.

Discussions with stakeholders indicated that a national CT fund should be considered. Existing national funding sources could be consolidated into a dedicated rural CT fund across the UK. This would financially support CT organisations wishing to modernise vehicle fleets to reduce operating costs. This fund should require low emission vehicles. Examples of low carbon CT vehicles being implemented in rural and island locations in Scotland include ReFLEX Orkney and Ulva Ferry Community Transport on the Isle of Mull (HITRANS, 2022).

Steps could also be taken to diversify funding to avoid over-reliance on the public sector. Partnership working between CT providers and the private sector could generate revenue to be reinvested into the quality of CT services. For example, local businesses could provide sponsorships and advertise their businesses on CT fleets, which could also contribute to community and key stakeholder buy-in.

Public and Political Perceptions

Another barrier to improving CT is public and political perceptions. CT is often viewed as transport for elderly and disabled people, potentially reducing the willingness of politicians in national governments and local authorities to invest more in the sector. However this type of service could benefit a wider demographic. For example, young people in rural areas could use CT to reduce isolation, encourage independence and access opportunities such as further education.

“Community transport is very much focussed on the elderly population of communities, it doesn’t focus on other isolated groups of people within rural areas...the big question is how does community transport support all of these people rather than just a pocket of them.”
(Workshop participant)

Steps must therefore be taken to change perceptions towards CT and public transport more widely, potentially through behavioural change measures.

Measuring Economic and Social Value

There is an anecdotal understanding of the value of CT, and its untapped potential, for individuals and across society. However decision makers do not appear to make this connection and concentrate attention on the economic value of CT at the expense of its social value which is often not measured quantitatively.

“If you were to only measure cost per passenger, for example, you would miss all the other impacts like inclusion, isolation, wellbeing, loneliness, the need for social interaction. The need is there but there’s no value attached to it.”
(Suffolk County Council representative)

The research from ECT and Deloitte effectively monetises the economic and social value their services provide to their communities (ECT, 2016). This approach could be used as a template for local authorities and CT organisations across the UK to demonstrate the value of CT services and influence decision makers.

Community Transport Action Plan

A targeted CT action plan has been developed, informed by findings from the literature and policy review and engagement stages. The action plan sets out how CT could be adapted to deliver greater economic and social value to rural areas, providing actions for key stakeholders across the CT sector to consider.

Table 4: CT Action Plan

Action	Theme	Description	Stakeholder(s) responsible	Social and Economic Outcomes
1	Policy and Legislation	Deliver a National CT Strategy alongside CTA.	National Transport Bodies; CTA	Clear direction for CT across the UK.
2	Policy and Legislation	Pass and implement legislation that gives local authorities powers to provide bus and mobility services.	National Transport Bodies	Bespoke bus and mobility services, which may include CT, that meet the needs of local populations.
3	Policy and Legislation	Review <i>Section 19</i> and <i>Section 22</i> permits to potentially simplify and expand. Post-Brexit opportunity to do this.	National Transport Bodies	Facilitating cross-sector resource sharing leading to more resilient CT services.
4	Existing Services	Quantify the economic and social value of CT using the ECT example as a template.	Local authorities; CT Organisations; CTA	Demonstrating to decision makers the economic and social value of CT.
5	Existing Services	Review CT providers within local authorities and consider ways of supporting them to increase their value.	Local Authorities	Building on services that already benefit users to increase their value.
6	Operation and Funding	Empower communities to plan CT services with local authority support.	Local authorities; CT organisations; community groups	Social integration, community buy-in and more efficient services.
7	Operation and Funding	Streamline national funding sources into one dedicated rural CT fund across the UK.	National Transport Bodies	Financial support for providers, ability to forward plan and better CT service provision.
8	Operation and Funding	Partnership working with the private sector to deliver more CT funding sources.	National Transport Bodies	More funding to invest in CT services leading to economic and social benefits.
9	Promotional and Behavioural Change	Awareness campaigns about CT as a mode of transport.	National Transport Bodies; Local Authorities; CT Organisations	Change perceptions to increased user diversity and demand for CT services.
10	Promotional and Behavioural Change	Campaigns to encouraging greater diversity of people to volunteer and pursue a career in the CT sector.	National Transport Bodies; Local Authorities; CT Organisations; CTA	More resilience across the sector to allow delivery of better CT services.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This research has investigated how CT can be improved to deliver greater economic and social value to rural areas across the UK. This involved exploring key topic areas such as rural transport, the bus sector, CT and DRT through a targeted literature and policy review and engagement with experts and key stakeholders.

Findings from the literature and policy review and engagement were then collated into a CT action plan, which provides actions and next steps for key stakeholders across the sector. One topic area not addressed in the action plan is driver shortages and licencing requirements. Next steps on this issue should be determined by the outcome of the DfT call for evidence mentioned previously.

In conclusion, key elements of CT provision can and should be adapted to deliver better outcomes for rural areas. The literature and policy review and engagement has demonstrated that CT has the potential to tackle many of the transport and geographic issues faced in rural locations.

The research has shown that CT services will reach their highest potential if they operate as DRT. This reduces costs by avoiding the operation of highly subsidised fixed bus services whilst also providing the flexibility required to serve the needs of rural communities. CT also has the potential to reduce the burden on other sectors such as health and social care and education.

Recommendations

There are some topic areas that could be explored in more detail through further research, particularly in relation to rural areas. These include:

- Public transport network planning in rural areas
- The use of digital technology such as Mobility as a Service (MaaS)
- Other forms of DRT, including commercial DRT

Research findings demonstrate that CT is only part of the solution to transport issues in rural locations. CT should therefore be considered alongside other rural transport solutions such as rural mobility hubs, community car sharing and digital technology such as MaaS.

The CT action plan developed should be used by key stakeholders across the sector as a framework for changing the parameters of CT to deliver better economic and social outcomes to rural areas.

Key stakeholders at national, local and community level must work closely to improve CT provision across the UK. This should include CTA, who represent most CT providers across the UK, having a central role in policy and legislation making. Working collaboratively will deliver better social and economic outcomes for rural areas, both from an individual and community perspective.

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Appendix B- Engagement Participants

Organisation/ Group	Engagement Type	Number of Participants	Date/ Time
Arup Bus and Coach Skills Forum	Technical Workshop	5	10 November 2022, 13:30-14:30
Arup Transport Planning North	Technical Workshop	12	17 November 2022, 12:30-13:30
Community Transport Association (Northern Ireland)	1:1 Interview	1	14 November 2022, 11:30-12:00
Community Transport Association	1:1 Interview	1	14 November 2022, 15:00-15:30
Ceredigion County Council	1:1 Interview	1	15 November 2022, 15:30-16:00
Stirling Council	1:1 Interview	1	18 November 2022, 11:00-11:30
Department for Transport	1:1 Interview	1	2 December 2022, 11:00-11:30
Transport Scotland	Discussion	2	16 November 2022, 11:00-11:30
Suffolk County Council	Discussion	3	28 November 2022, 12:30-13:30

Appendix C- Engagement Questions and Prompts

Workshops

1. Introduction to the research
2. Rural transport/ public transport: What are the key issues?
3. Community transport: What does this mean? How does this fit into the wider transport network?
4. What are the challenges in delivering community transport services best suited to rural environments?
(Prompts: Policy/ legislation; governance/ funding; operating models; political support; public perception)
5. How do we overcome these challenges to deliver community transport services best suited to rural environments?
6. What are the actions/ next steps for key stakeholders moving forward?
Prompts: National governments across all devolved nations; local authorities; community transport services/ organisations; campaign groups; the public
7. Best practice examples from across the UK and globally?

Interviews

1. Introductions
2. What does community transport currently look like within your devolved nation/ local authority/ across the UK?
(Prompts: user eligibility, coverage, funding, booking systems etc)
3. What are the barriers/ challenges to delivering community transport in rural areas?
4. How do we overcome these challenges?
5. How do we ensure community transport delivers greater social and economic value to rural areas across the UK?