

CPRE'S POLICY ON TRANSPORT

1. The issues for the countryside

CPRE's vision and goals for the countryside rely on good land-use planning and its integration with transport planning. A well-planned transport network should encourage urban regeneration, curb urban sprawl, help slow the growth in road traffic, protect the beauty and tranquillity of landscapes, safeguard wildlife habitats, improve access to / around the countryside and green spaces, and lead to 'Smart Growth'¹. Planning for new development needs to be travel-orientated from the start and centred on public transport with walking and cycling fully integrated. In rural areas development is best located at local service centres which can act as hubs for transport provision into the countryside.

Conversely, poor transport planning has a massively damaging impact on both the physical appearance of the countryside, and the sustainability of rural communities, but also more widely on efforts to tackle the climate emergency. The 'three pillars of sustainability,' championed since the 1980's, give equal weight to society, the environment and the economy. This does not happen when transport policy is focused on promoting the development and use of infrastructure for private motor vehicles, particularly roads, to the neglect of reducing emissions and pollution. Impacts on air quality, dark skies, ecology, food production, heritage, landscapes, and noise are too frequently over-ridden for perceived economic benefits that fail to materialise.

2. Our response

CPRE's vision is of a world where integrated land-use and transport planning leads to outcomes that sustain communities and protect the countryside; climate change has been arrested; transport emissions have been cut to and held at net zero and people can reduce their need to travel by private car. We would make best use of existing infrastructure and take advantage of sustainable travel choices - for people and freight – whilst still having access to jobs, education and training, shopping, leisure, and everyday services. The impact of transport on the countryside and the wider environment would be explicit and given great weight in planning and funding decisions. To tackle the current significant barriers preventing the integration of transport and development will need a strong lead from central government. Key government departments must integrate their planning and strategy implementation and provide leadership to regional, sub-regional and local authorities, to deliver all 'three pillars of sustainability'.

We will advocate ways of thinking, planning, working and behaviour around transport that prioritise addressing the climate and nature emergencies. We call for an integrated government strategy for land use encompassing planning, farming and transport and energy network development. We will call for the transport sector to make sufficient progress in reducing its emissions in accordance with successive iterations of the UK's carbon budget. The UK Government must urgently implement measures that ensure the transport sector makes its fair contribution to net zero 2050. Climate change must be brought into all aspects of transport planning, investment, management, and monitoring.

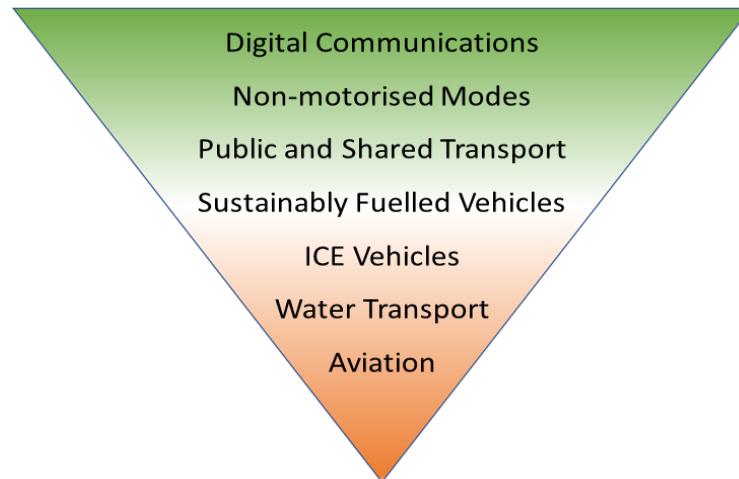
3. Our approach

CPRE Transport Policy is based on a sustainable transport hierarchy (see diagram below), informed by that of the Energy Saving Trust¹. It presents, in descending order, the decreasing sustainability of the options for travel and the choices that minimize carbon emissions and energy, reduce the need to travel and are the healthiest. For a multi-modal journey, each leg should be taken by the most sustainable

¹ <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/an-introduction-to-the-sustainable-travel-hierarchy/>

means available. When planning, funding and implementing transport solutions the hierarchy should be applied downwards from the inverted base of the triangle, giving greatest priority from the top down. Its application is essential because until alternatives to the private car provide an equally affordable, convenient and attractive option people will not switch modes. Even then they will require initial encouragement with information and incentives. We first deal with the application of the hierarchy to the movement of people and address the movement of freight separately.

CPRE's Sustainable Transport Hierarchy



[NB 'ICE' vehicles are those powered by the Internal Combustion Engine.]

Evidence base

A companion CPRE paper, **Transport Policy Guidance** ([link](#)), deals with the background elements of transport in greater detail, and provides source material for the principles contained in this policy. The two documents should be read together.

4. Our focuses

Reduction of Carbon Emissions from Transport.

We will call for:

- An expansion of dedicated cycle routes in towns and cities, and of areas where walking and cycling take priority over vehicles.
- Electric bikes should be encouraged to replace the car for shorter journeys. E-scooters should be restricted to roads or pavements which are deemed suitable, safe, and authorised by the local authority.
- Electric vehicles roll-out of charging points in public places and in domestic situations should be speeded up. Charging points should be easy to locate and universally available.
- ICE vehicles using fossil fuels should be phased out as swiftly as possible, using all the levers at the Government's disposal – road pricing and taxation - with prioritisation given to the most harmful vehicles.
- River and sea-going passenger ferries should be encouraged where they provide more sustainable alternatives to for example air travel.
- Where rail offers an efficient alternative service in less than 2.5hrs air routes should be axed.
- Car clubs and car sharing should be encouraged to reduce overall car use – these should be based on sustainably fuelled vehicles to address the climate emergency.
- Any expansion of logistics/ warehousing sheds should demonstrate it will reduce travel for both freight and staff and be located to maximise the use of rail/water wherever possible.

Reduced pollution and Environmental damage from transport and transport networks.

To achieve net zero, to reduce the landscape impacts of transport, and to make the countryside more accessible to all, public transport must be affordable, reliable, and carbon-free. It is essential there is an integrated plan for the public transport network, with adequate funding, and based on a single national public transport timetable, aligning all trains and buses on a 'pulse' model of repeated hourly services.

We will call for:

- Slower traffic speeds are essential through the enforcement of statutory speed limits. These should be 40 mph on minor rural roads, and 20 mph on quiet lanes, through villages and in built-up areas.
- Those involved in planning and running bus services must be statutory consultees for any major housing or commercial development to ensure that public transport is an attractive option. Requirements for bus transport should be enshrined in legal agreements for larger developments (>100 dwellings) and planning agreements should be enforced and not time limited.
- Where these support the rural economy and enable countryside access, new and re-opened stations and rail lines, restoration of double track lines, addition of more passing loops, a faster roll-out of better-quality rolling stock and local passenger trains.
- New High Speed Rail lines could in certain circumstances free capacity on the most congested parts of the existing network and achieve a significant modal shift from air and road to rail. However, the benefits need to be weighed carefully against harm to the countryside. We will want to be satisfied that they provide value for money.
- We support the switch to vehicles powered by alternatives to fossil fuels, but incentives should be used to reduce their weight and size.
- CPRE does not support marinas or other developments where they would attract high powered vessels into sensitive environments.
- CPRE does not support the expansion of the cruise liner industry.
- CPRE opposes the expansion of existing airports and the construction of new ones.
- Whenever possible, heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) should travel on motorways and A roads. The road freight industry should be obliged to improve its route management, to avoid subsidiary and minor roads, by reviewing the Sat/Nav system used and monitoring the use of the recommended and appropriate routes.
- Transfer of goods to rail or water should be encouraged by subsidies that make rail/water the most affordable option. Transferring goods by air should be the option of last resort.
- CPRE supports the expansion of short-sea shipping and the use of inland waterways for freight as alternatives to road transport.
- Additional Road infrastructure should be an option of last resort and we would be unlikely to support individual schemes unless they make a positive overall contribution to delivering what we call for across this policy. Best use should be made of existing infrastructure noting that there is an increasing requirement for asset renewal, maintenance, and demand management.
- Air, Noise and Light Pollution reduction measures (*see guidance document*)
- A decrease in Clutter (*see guidance document*)

Improving access, both within the countryside for all social groups that dwell there, and to the countryside for urban social groups, including through stronger public transport.

We will call for:

- Deterrents to walking and cycling must be addressed. Roads and junctions should be designed to avoid the primacy of vehicles. Low Traffic neighbourhoods

- Networks of greenways and quiet lanes should be provided in rural and semi-rural areas for both recreation and to link communities.
- Demand Responsive services, such as various types of flexible bus and coach services or shared taxis, should connect main bus routes and remote rural areas.
- Best use must be made of existing infrastructure with longer trains and platforms, up-graded stations, improved signalling, and re-use of unused track.
- Rail investment, including light rail and tram, should be prioritised if it is demonstrated to be the most cost-effective way of achieving CPRE objectives.
- Development around existing rail stations or new stations provides the opportunity to reduce car usage, but this benefit must not be allowed to outweigh other harms such as loss of Green Belt.
- CPRE supports in principle the preservation and enhancement of water bodies such as by canal restoration. This facilitates access to and enjoyment of the countryside and could encourage more 'staycationing'.
- Slower, enforced, statutory speed limits should be 40 mph on minor rural roads and 20 mph through villages and other built-up areas.

Reducing the need to travel by private, including through improved digital comms and no new road building.

We will call for:

- Good digital connectivity is essential to reduce the need to travel. It must be universally available in urban and rural areas, using underground cables or existing infrastructure, rather than masts or satellites.
- A new system of pricing for the use of roads should replace the current system of fuel and vehicle tax.
- Parking and planning policies should promote and support sustainable travel choices, reduce the land-take of development, and reduce reliance on the private car.

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