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South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

JOINT SCRUTINY TASK & FINISH GROUP FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

Joint Scrutiny of Public Transport – Interim Report

Councillors ELDC: A. Benjamin (Vice Chair), D. Hall, W. Grover

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Officers: Michelle Sacks (Deputy Chief Executive, Growth), Matthew Hogan (Assistant Director, Strategic Growth & Development), Rebecca James (Scrutiny Officer)

Expert Witness Support: David Ubaka (Managing Director, DUP Ltd)

Guest Witnesses: David Ubaka (Managing Director, DUP Ltd), Marianne Garbutt (Managing Director, Brylaine), Claire Foster (Principal, Boston College), Peter Burnett & Jacqui Bunce (NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board), Lucy Hawes (North Northants Greenway Officer), Roxanne Warrick (Strategic Lead, Prosperous Communities), Sue Armour (Team Leader, Environmental Protection, SHDC), Stephen Bee (Chief Operating Officer, Zwings Ltd), Karen Heppenstall (Midlands Connect), Richard Bates (Network Rail), Kevin Hughes (East Midlands Railway), Ed Pearson (Senior Revenue Strategy Manager, LNER), Colin Walker (Transportation Services Group Manager, East Riding Council), Councillor Jane Evison (Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, East Riding Council).

Background and Introduction

The Joint Public Transport Task and Finish group was the first such joint scrutiny group to sit across the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership area. The creation of a framework for joint scrutiny activity across the partnership's three constituent authority areas has been developed to enable members to scrutinise matters of common strategic interest that would benefit from a partnership approach.

The first such topic identified for this newly created process is a joint scrutiny committee with a focus on Public Transport. The Joint Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel was established in late Spring 2022.

Whereas public transport is not a subject matter that district authorities have statutory functions, it is a public service function which acts a key determinant of outcomes in areas where the three district councils (and its wider partnership) have a direct role to play in influencing change, including;

- Economic growth, access to employment and skills development
- Supporting the social mobility and increasing life opportunities for residents
- Addressing health inequalities
- Access to high streets and town centres, including support for the night-time economy
- Carbon reduction, sustainability, and air quality management
- Encouraging and supporting the visitor economy

However, the wider matter of rural mobility and alternative forms of transportation beyond the car is an area where the SELCP can bring direct intervention and influence.

Consequently, it was agreed that the Joint Public Transport Task and Finish group developed a programme of scrutiny activity focused on the following key areas;

- Developing a more detailed understanding of the policies and approaches that govern the delivery of public transport at a national, regional, and local level
- Gathering qualitative and quantitative evidence concerning the current provision of public transport across the SELCP area
- Understanding the relationships between existing public transport provision and wider agenda of importance to the SELCP area
- Understanding the matter of Public Transport from the perspectives of both operators and commissioners
- Exploring innovation and best practice around public transport, rural mobility and alternative solutions to personal and shared transportation that could inform future strategy for the SELCP area

This has been with a view for the Joint Public Transport Task and Finish group to prepare a series of recommendations, including potential for recommendations in the following areas;

- Issues on which the SELCP authorities may wish to lobby when seeking to influence (either directly or indirectly) improvements and changes to public transport and rural mobility in the SELCP area
- Local projects and initiatives that could be explored within the SELCP area over the short, medium, and long term, promoted by the SELCP in partnership with others

The panel has been supported by David Ubaka, an independent and external expert witness with a background in transport, mobility, and regeneration.

Since the initial scoping meeting in May 2022, the panel have held seven (six at the time of writing) meetings, interviewed 13 witnesses from across 12 different organisations and agencies. This includes witnesses from the following agencies;

- Brylaine
- Boston College
- UK Fresh Produce Network (which represents a number of major local employers)
- NHS Integrated Care Board
- North Northants Council
- Midlands Connect
- Zwings (a provider of e-Bike and e-Scooter 'micro mobility' solutions)
- Network Rail
- East Midlands Rail
- LNER
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- North Holderness Community Transport

Written evidence was also provided by both Suffolk County Council, and Babergh and Mid Suffolk Council. Lincolnshire County Council were invited to also attend a meeting of the committee, in their capacity as the Local Transport Authority. LCC declined direct involvement in the meetings of the group but have agreed to provide information in writing to the group. LCC have also offered members of the panel the opportunity to attend the county's Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

Key lines of enquiry, panel discussion and analysis***Public transport from the perspective of the provider/operator***

The panel received evidence and posed questions to three providers of public transport services: Brylaine (a local provider of intertown and wider, local bus network services), East Midlands Rail and LNER. The key themes and evidence emerging from these discussions include the following.

- From discussion the panel heard that Bus usage in the county is in decline, and that decline was exacerbated by the recent Covid-19 Pandemic. Recovery is slow and there is currently a degree of uncertainty as to whether usage will recover to pre-pandemic patronage levels.
- The panel heard the view from an operator that Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) - a discretionary grant paid to operators of eligible local bus services to help them recover some of their fuel costs – is at insufficient levels to make the services that remain viable into the longer term. BSOG is paid at a flat rate nationally of c£0.15 per mile, and this does not take into account the difference in costs and population densities that exist across rural and urban areas. The additional costs associated with rural provision include increased vehicle wear, tear, and maintenance due to the nature of the rural road network. The perspective of the bus operator witness was that BSOG levels needed to increase three-fold in order to support the viability of rural bus services and account for these challenges.
- Viability is made further challenging still given the significant rise in worldwide fuel costs, alongside staffing costs, and recruitment. Without significant increases in BSOG levels, the future provision of bus services across the SELCP (and rural areas a whole) remains a challenge. A typical bus service in Lincolnshire needs to earn £60 per hour to achieve commercial viability.
- Government has made available investment for improved bus services through its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme. However, only 31 Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) submissions in England out of the over 70 prepared by local authorities have been funded after an indicative total of £1.08bn was allocated to them. LCC's 2021 BSIP submission was not supported by central government, hence bus companies continued reliance on the BSOG regime to provider services in Lincolnshire. The Department for Transport (DfT) says the chosen areas have received money 'because of their ambition to repeat the success achieved in London', where services are delivered under a franchised model.
- The panel also learnt that strengthening Clean Air requirements for vehicle is further challenging future service delivery. The majority of small independent bus companies running services in the SELCP area are unable to purchase new cleaner vehicles within a viable business case. Those compliant vehicles coming onto the 2nd hand market are being purchased by larger national providers. Therefore, there is a significant vehicle supply challenge which smaller companies are less equipped to compete in compared with major providers. The costs associated with transitioning to fully zero carbon vehicles remains high and relatively untested, with a new zero emission or hybrid vehicle costing up to £380k compared with £40k-£50k for a second-hand 'Euro 5' diesel vehicle.
- Current timetabling for 'Intotown' bus services in Boston and Spalding do not currently cover the typical working hours of 9:00 - 17:30. However, Lincolnshire County Council's 'Enhanced Partnership Plan for Buses' (January 2023) sets out an ambition to extend these services to 7am – 7pm. It is our understanding that this would be dependent upon a need for buy-in from operators and further funding from government.
- Call Connect (the Demand Responsive Travel solution for Lincolnshire) is underpinned by LCC to the sum of circa £2.5 million a year from the Local Bus Fund. In other parts of the UK, demand responsive transport models are being developed that are increasingly 'smart' in terms of use of technology and apps to support ease of payment, and the ability to 'hail' services. The panel received evidence that, where such technology is used, it is assisting in increasing patronage numbers. An app-based DRT model does exist in Lincolnshire, but it is confined a trial area around Stamford, Bourne and the Deepings. LCC are seeking to roll this functionality out across the wider Call Connect network over the next two years. Lincolnshire County Council's 'Enhanced

Partnership Plan for Buses' (January 2023) sets out an ambition to extend Call Connect services to 7am – 11pm. It is our understanding that this would be dependent upon a need for further funding from government.

- Rail passenger numbers on the key stations within the SELCP area have not yet fully recovered from pre-pandemic levels. However, in Skegness the recovery appears to have been quicker than in Boston and Spalding. The table below shows entries and exit data for the three main stations within the network

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Boston	210,854	59,220	170,976
Spalding	176,342	44,986	134,834
Skegness	323,202	112,520	308,608

- Alongside operators, the panel also received evidence from agencies involved in strategic planning in respect of rail infrastructure.
- The Panel heard from Midlands Connect, who are the sub-regional transport body that covers the SELCP area. Midlands Connect is funded by the DfT to develop and maintain a regional Transport Strategy and recommend strategic investment in road and rail. Their approach is driven by seeking to align transport needs of the Midlands to the economic, social, and environmental ambitions of the area.
- Their current strategic focus is on developing access to Rail in a number of key 'corridors', those being Nottingham to Lincoln, Coventry to Leicester and Birmingham to Leicester – investments which Midlands Connect believe will have a positive impact on the wider network. Midlands Connect are also leading on work to explore decarbonisation of railway infrastructure, with a particular focus on hydrogen and battery storage as a future means of decarbonisation in Lincolnshire.
- Increasingly Midlands Connect feel they are establishing a stronger understanding of the needs and challenges within the SELCP area, partially driven by efforts by the SELCP and the local business community to raise awareness of the economic and social challenges and opportunities within the area. Consequently, Midlands Connect intend to invest further time in strategic planning for areas outside of their identified priority growth corridors. This represents an opportunity for the SELCP to lobby for focus on the area where it comes to strategic planning activity.
- Midlands Connect were clear, however, that the constrained national funding environment is leading to challenges to project investment and delivery, even where the economic case for investment is strong. The challenges concerning delivery are compounded in rural areas, where lower population density often weakens the economic case for investment as viewed by central government.
- The panel also heard from Network Rail. Whereas Midlands Connects role is about developing strategy that fits with economic and social needs and ambition, Network Rail's role is around the delivery of 'hard' infrastructure (both in terms of upgrades to existing infrastructure, but also in terms of delivery of planned new infrastructure).
- Network Rail are currently preparing their strategic advice to DfT for future infrastructure investment planning in Lincolnshire, the recommendations of which will be published in early 2023. Network Rail and Midlands Connect provided assurances that this strategic advice will take into account the representations being made through the SELCP concerning the economic, social, and environmental challenges within the area.
- Network Rail are supporting with existing entrants into the Restoring your Railway Fund (which is concerned with exploring the potential to reopen former 'Beeching lines'). The Restoring your Railway Fund is not currently open for new applications. However, it is anticipated that the fund will reopen in the future. Under the previous programme, a key route of entry was to apply for funds under the 'Ideas Fund'; a programme which provided applicants with funding to develop an Outline Business Case for their project.

Both Midlands Connect and Network Rail have expressed a desire to work collaboratively with the SELCP on seeking funding and investment to deliver on agreed priorities.

Public transport and economy, education, skills, and health

The panel received evidence and posed questions to three partner organisations involved in health, key local business sectors and the education and skills agenda. This was with a view to better understand how the public transport and rural mobility position in the SELCP area is playing out in respect of these areas. The key themes and evidence emerging from these discussions include the following;

- In East Lindsey, and according to Government data, the average travel time to a further education establishment is 38.3 minutes, with 101.6 being the longest journey time. The comparable journey times to an educational establishment rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' is 72.5 minutes. The South Holland the average is 34.8 mins to the nearest establishment, and 67.5 mins to a 'good or outstanding' school. In Boston, the timescales are shorter, given the geography of the district (26.1 mins and 28.2 mins respectively).
- That there is qualitative evidence in the SELCP area that round journey travel times to education establishments, coupled with challenges around the reliability and timing of public transport provision, is acting as a barrier to access to education, training, and skills across the SELCP area.
- This challenge is further exacerbated with course run in evenings and weekends to support working students, and results in disadvantage in terms of access for groups including those working shift work, apprentices and those who undertaking ESOL (English as Second Language) courses. To counter this, Boston College is spending £220,000 per annum on transport for their students.
- Coupled with this there are similar challenges in respect the health care system and public transport, where availability of public transport is identified as being a key determinant in exacerbating health inequalities (especially in coastal communities within the SELCP area).
- The sessions with NHS partners identified qualitative evidence of the following;
 - Access to NHS funded transport is governed by strict eligibility criteria. This means that NHS patients often are reliant upon community led transportation systems (e.g., community car schemes), but with volunteering numbers in such schemes decreasing this is creating a gap in provision.
 - Where such community services are not available, there is evidence of the availability and cost of transport leading to patients not attending appointments and treatment. These challenges create similar issues for the family of patients, alongside patients themselves.
 - Increasing the quantum of community diagnostic services are a key part of NHS Lincolnshire's strategy to counter these challenges.
- Finally, in respect of the economy, the sessions thus far have gathered qualitative evidence around the extent to which rural public transport services and challenges with mobility are impacting upon local business. This includes the following;
 - Public bus services do not service (or only service to a limited degree) large parts of the SELCP area where factories and packhouses in the food sector are located. This includes Marsh Lane in Boston (which accommodates around 15,000 employees), Wardentree Lane in Spalding and Fairfields Industrial Estate in Louth. Marsh Lane industrial estate in Boston is not serviced by a bus stop or service, with the nearest stop on Middlecott Close.
 - This picture exacerbates wider challenges around recruitment and retention within the food sector. In the visitor economy, Fantasy Island in Skegness regularly has staff issues as so many of their staff use public transport so if a bus is late, impacting upon their ability to run some attractions.
 - Food production company Bakkavor lay on their own transport, but smaller companies cannot afford to do this. However, through discussions with representatives from the food industry, there appears to be an opportunity to encourage and facilitate greater collaboration between businesses within our key sectors on business-facilitated transport solutions for employees.
 - For many employees, Cycling and walking is a key mode of mobility to support within towns to enable access to local employment. However, when travelling between settlements (or to more dispersed employment locations) this is often challenging in the SELCP area due to the lack of segregation between cycle traffic and car traffic.

Examples of innovation and best practice in public transport and rural mobility

The panel received evidence for a number of witnesses involved in innovative and alternative means of supporting public transportation and rural mobility. These witnesses include Babergh and Mid Suffolk Council, Zwings Ltd (a provider of micro-mobility solutions in a rural setting, including e-Bikes and e-Scooters) and East Northants Council (who are a leading authority in respect of developing rural 'Greenways' to provide better foot and cycle connectivity between rural settlements and employment areas). The key themes and evidence emerging from these discussions include the following;

- **Supporting rural mobility through community-led transport solutions**

- The panel received a presentation and verbal evidence from both East Riding Council and Holderness Area Rural Transport (a charity within East Riding which is providing community transport services to five parish areas). As the Local Transport Authority, East Riding Council has a national reputation in terms of it supporting the creation of (and commissioning services through) community-led transport organisations. East Riding and Holderness as localities have many similarities as South and East Lincolnshire, not least rurality and a coastal population.
- Holderness Rural Area Transport was started c20 years ago as a small community transport provider. The charity has grown from an organisation which was seed-funded through grant funding for one part time driver and one sixteen-seater minibus, to a community enterprise which has since grown to provide around 50,000 passenger journeys per year across a fleet of vehicles, under a Demand Responsive Transport model.
- The charity is funded through external grant funding (including community funds derived from offshore wind developments), alongside holding contracts with East Riding Council for whom it operates local services. It is overseen by a board of trustees, and how directly employs a number of staff.
- The services provided compliment, as opposed to duplicate, services within the wider network, and are largely aimed at those for whom more traditional forms of public transport are not available nor suitable.
- Cllr Jane Evison (the Chair of Holderness Rural Area Transport) shared with the panel her thoughts on the benefit of the community-led transport model. These included the following;
 - The localised nature of the service, and how this supports a deeper understanding of the needs of the community within those providing the service
 - The social value derived from the model, through the involvement of the community in raising funds and, in many circumstances, creating jobs that are fulfilled within the community, supported by professional training and skills development
 - The social interaction that is created by regular users of the community service, which has supported with addressing loneliness and isolation in rural areas
 - The scope for such charities, as has been the case with Holderness Rural Area Transport, to secure contracts with the Local Transport Authority to provide services on behalf of the authority. To support this, East Riding Council assessed contracts for Demand Responsive Transport on their basis to add social value beyond the pure transport function that they provide.
- When asked for their view on the immediate steps that the SELCP could take to support community-led transport provision in the sub region, Cllr Evison and the lead officer from East Riding advised the following;
 - That Local transport surveys, which seek to understand both a) need and b) community appetite to provide leadership to community-led transport solutions, are a logical 'first step' in terms of developing community-led transport approaches. The view was provided that this need not be an exercise led by the Local Transport Authority, and that the Community Transport Association is well placed to support the SELCP in further exploring how this might be facilitated within the SELCP sub-region.

- In the experience of East Riding Council, this is best supported by a community development resource, tasked with working with communities on developing capacity within the local community to take on the provision of such services.

Bus transport and Demand Responsive Transport

- In some areas local authorities (including rural district authorities) are creating ‘public private partnerships’ around DRT services, where the public sector is working with the private sector to raise awareness of unmet need for transportation within large cluster of businesses and major education providers, and then promoting that unmet need within the private market to encourage commercial interest in providing DRT services that run in parallel to existing services. Under this model, local authorities are playing a facilitation and enabling role, capturing evidence of unmet need for services, and then raising awareness and promoting within the commercial sector to invite solutions, often on a wholly commercial basis. Typical needs met by such services include those seeking regular access to further education, employment, and healthcare, alongside access to social activity.
- In Babergh and Mid-Suffolk council (an area with a similar rurality as the SELCP area), the district council is acting as a commissioner of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) solutions to meet need that is not being met by traditional bus services. This activity is being supported financially by the district council, with £820,000 budgeted in council funds to support with service development, with an aim of addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges through further supporting mobility in a predominantly rural area. Babergh and Mid-Suffolk are being supported by Suffolk County Council to develop this initiative.
- Elsewhere in Suffolk this has included engagement with taxi companies to develop local DRT services that operate within a small (c10 mile area), utilising e-minibuses. These services are being delivered to complement, as opposed to duplicate, existing services and often use app-based technology that can direct users to more suitable forms of existing provision if it is running locally (e.g., timetabled bus services).
- Increasingly, DRT services are being marketed in a way to encourage use by a broader demographic, and to move away from the association with ‘dial a ride’ as a service and brand. In Suffolk, there has been a particular focus on rebranding and visibly promoting such services in the local community to increase uptake post-pandemic. There is evidence that this approach is working in attracting a wider demographic to use such services.

Rural mobility through cycle transport and improved connectivity

- With cycling and walking infrastructure now viewed by government as an integral part of public transport, the newly formed North Northamptonshire Unitary Council are focusing on improving cycle and foot connectivity between rural settlements so as to encourage and support mobility between areas and support access to services and employment. Their ‘Greenways’ project, which started 10 years ago under the former East Northants district authority, has focused on developing a network of ‘off highway’ cycleways and pathways that provide improved connectivity between key settlements.
- In Northamptonshire, Greenways have been developed through repurposing routes such as former railway lines, alongside acquiring strips of agricultural and forestry land, in order to develop a network consisting of permanent and semi-permanent surfaces. The network has also been supported with investment in public art projects, to improve and enhance the network. Segregation of cycling and walking is also a feature of the network, which also includes existing public rights of way and upgraded public paths.
- The network has been led and developed through a partnership consisting of parish and town councils, community groups, philanthropic landowners, and the local highways teams. Funding has come about through s106 agreements and national lottery funding, with plans to also utilise UKSPF and Rural England Prosperity Funding to support the development of the network. The rise of e-bikes (which allow users to cover greater distance with less physical effort) has further supported the use of the Greenways network between settlements, for both commuter and recreational use.

- In order to deliver the project, North Northamptonshire have employed the services of a dedicated Greenways Officer, whose role involves developing, bringing together partner organisations to identify opportunities, feasibility planning for extensions to the network, and seeking funding (latterly through the Levelling Up Fund).

Mobility through the use of e-bikes and ‘micro-mobility’

- The panel received evidence from Zwings, a provider of e-bikes and ‘micro mobility’ solutions in larger market towns in rural counties. Zwings operate in Gloucestershire, South Somerset, and Staffordshire. Zwings are also involved in the government’s e-scooter trials, which is designed to test the safety of e-scooters on public roads ahead of government considering whether to review legislation concerning their use.
- Beyond the potential for carbon emissions savings, the panel received evidence concerning the potential benefits of supporting residents in utilising solutions such as e-bikes to support mobility within and between settlements, alongside the models for delivery of such services to the community. This includes the following;
 - Evidence suggests that the average length of journey when utilising an e-bike is 2 – 20km, compared with a 2-10km for a pedal bike. Consequently, the rise of e-bikes is making cycling a more accessible and viable way for short distance commuting and travel from a broader age and ability demographic and supporting their uptake. However capital cost is often a barrier to participation, leading to a variety of alternative models being developed.
 - In a typical town considering typical car use, around 70% of short distance car journeys could be replaced with micro-mobility alternatives, such as the use of an e-bike.
 - Delivery models for e-Bikes in rural areas such as the SELCP include shared public schemes (such as the ‘Boris bike’ model). Zwings Ltd advised the panel of a view that such models work best in areas with a population of 40,000 or more. Consequently, in the SELCP area, Zwings saw opportunity for e-Bike provision in Boston, Spalding/Pinchbeck, and Skegness.
 - Typically, where such shared public schemes have been implemented, they have been led by the local authority (both district and county) through an ‘invitation to tender’ process, where the commercial market has been invited to put forward proposals to deliver services. Models include;
 - The local authority procures a company as the service provider, with a view to award a concession for that company to operate in the area. Under this model, the provider takes all of the revenue.
 - The local authority funds installation of capital infrastructure (e.g., docks and bikes), with the company overseeing the operational delivery. Under this model, revenue is often shared between the local authority and the provider.
 - Alongside shared public schemes, other delivery models exist including;
 - ‘Business to business’ (where employers consider making bikes available for use by their employees to support with access to work over shorter distances)
 - A ‘borrow a bike’ model, where users can borrow a bike for period of 3-6 months with an option to buy at the end, with a view to encourage uptake and allow ‘try before you buy’. Local authorities typically play a co-ordinating role in such schemes, working alongside bike providers. Durham Council is one such authority which operates such a scheme.

Public transport from the perspective of the Local Transport Authority

As set out earlier in this report, Lincolnshire County Council were invited to also attend a meeting of the committee, in their capacity as the Local Transport Authority. LCC declined direct involvement in the meetings of the group but have agreed to provide information in writing to the group. LCC have also offered members of the panel the opportunity to attend the county’s Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

In January 2023 LCC published their Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme for Buses; a document received by the panel for consideration. The key objectives and proposals within the plan include the following;

- Extending Call Connect services from 7am – 11pm
- Increasing IntoTown services to half hourly 7am – 7pm
- Supporting operators with the transition to lower carbon vehicles

These ambitions align well with the evidence gathered by the panel in respect of supporting access to employment, education, and healthcare.

Emerging recommendations

The table below captures the emerging draft recommendations, based on the evidence and discussions to date. These have been grouped into two overarching themes – a) influencing and supporting partners, and b) forward planning and SELCP-led action.

Theme	Recommendation
Influencing and supporting partners	Given the importance of the Bus Service Improvement Plan process in securing national investment in bus service delivery, to seek to enhance strategic collaboration with Lincolnshire County Council (as Local Transport Authority), for the SELCP to seek to support LCC with the evidence required to strengthen the county’s future BSIP submissions.
	Alongside the above recommendation, to further consolidate the SELCPs existing local evidence base in respect of the impact of poor rural mobility in the SELCP area on health, educational and economic outcomes into a single picture. For the SELCP to then consider how this evidence base is made available to decision makers (e.g., local MPs, the LTA etc.) to demonstrate the need for investment (and the consequential impact of under investment).
	Given the alignment with the issues identified through the scrutiny discussions, for the SELCP to respond positively and engage with the proposals with Lincolnshire County Councils ‘Enhanced Partnership’ Plan and Scheme for Buses in the following areas; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending Call Connect services from 7am – 11pm, to support greater access to employment, education, and health care • Increasing IntoTown services to half hourly 7am – 7pm, for the same reasons as above • Supporting operators with the transition to lower carbon vehicles, especially in areas such as Boston where air quality is an identified issue
	To prepare a SELCP response to the 2023 Strategic Advice being prepared by Network Rail for the Department for Transport in respect of the Lincolnshire area, and make representations on behalf of the SELCP
	Given their importance in developing transport strategy to deliver on social, economic, and environmental objectives, to maintain the existing focus within the SELCP on raising awareness of the challenges and opportunities in the SELCP area with Midlands Connect, so as to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure greater strategic planning focus on the area, as part of their planned wider review of strategy outside of their current ‘corridors’ focus • Explore opportunities for joint funding applications
Forward planning and SELCP-led action.	In response to the current gaps in provision which are having an evidenced impact on health, education, and employment, to further explore the merits of how the SELCP can encourage community and commercial transportation solutions for the area and develop outline business cases for intervention. This could include;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outline business case in favour of establishing a commercially focused ‘public-private partnership’ linked to Demand Responsive Transport service to complement (as opposed to duplicate) existing services, with a view to further exploring of existing financial resources could be aligned across agencies. • Facilitating and supporting greater collaboration between businesses on employer-facilitated transport solutions for employees, including expansion of existing employer-led transport schemes and models linked to e-bike provision for staff. • Progressing a community-led transport agenda, focused on community outreach and development work, to support an increase in the number of community-led transport organisations operating across the SELCP area.
	<p>To consider consulting on locations where shared public e-bike schemes (alongside conventional bike hire) may work within the SELCP area as a means of promoting personal mobility, and to consider how the SELCP might take forward initiatives to support e-Bike uptake and usage, supported by an initial outline business case.</p>
	<p>For the SELCP authorities to considering developing its own, more detailed assessment of active travel measures that it may like to see implemented in individual towns and settlements, so as to positively support with engagement in developing the Local Cycling and Walking Plans produced by Lincolnshire County Council and explore how funds could be leveraged into the sub-region through Active Travel England.</p>
	<p>With funding anticipating being released into the future to support with the Beeching Lines reopening and new stations, for the SELCP to consider commencing how it best prepares to access available funds. This could include mapping of where Beeching Lines were and consulting with the public on which routes would be the best to reopen in terms of widest benefits. This would be with a view to prepare for potential future ‘early ideas’ applications, which if successful would lead to government funding to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case</p>
	<p>To explore the merits of developing a network of off highway ‘Greenways’ across the SELCP area, emulating the approach taken in North Northamptonshire, with a view to better support connectivity between rural settlements and key areas of employment.</p>
	<p>To support with delivery of the above, to consider opportunities for how the SELCPs UK Shared Prosperity Funding (alongside other external funding sources) might be used to support with aspects of delivery of rural transportation and mobility, including but not limited to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building capacity within the community to deliver locally led transport initiatives, as per the approach adopted in East Riding • E-Bike uptake and infrastructure planning • Strategic planning in respect of a potential Greenways initiative • Business engagement and collaboration around transport solutions

Report author: Matthew Hogan on behalf of the T&F group