Journey
Five

Greener, smarter and a lot more fun — the future of travel in Huntingdonshire will transition away from the car. We welcome effective public transport, on-demand travel options, a sustainable distribution and an attractive cycling and walking network.
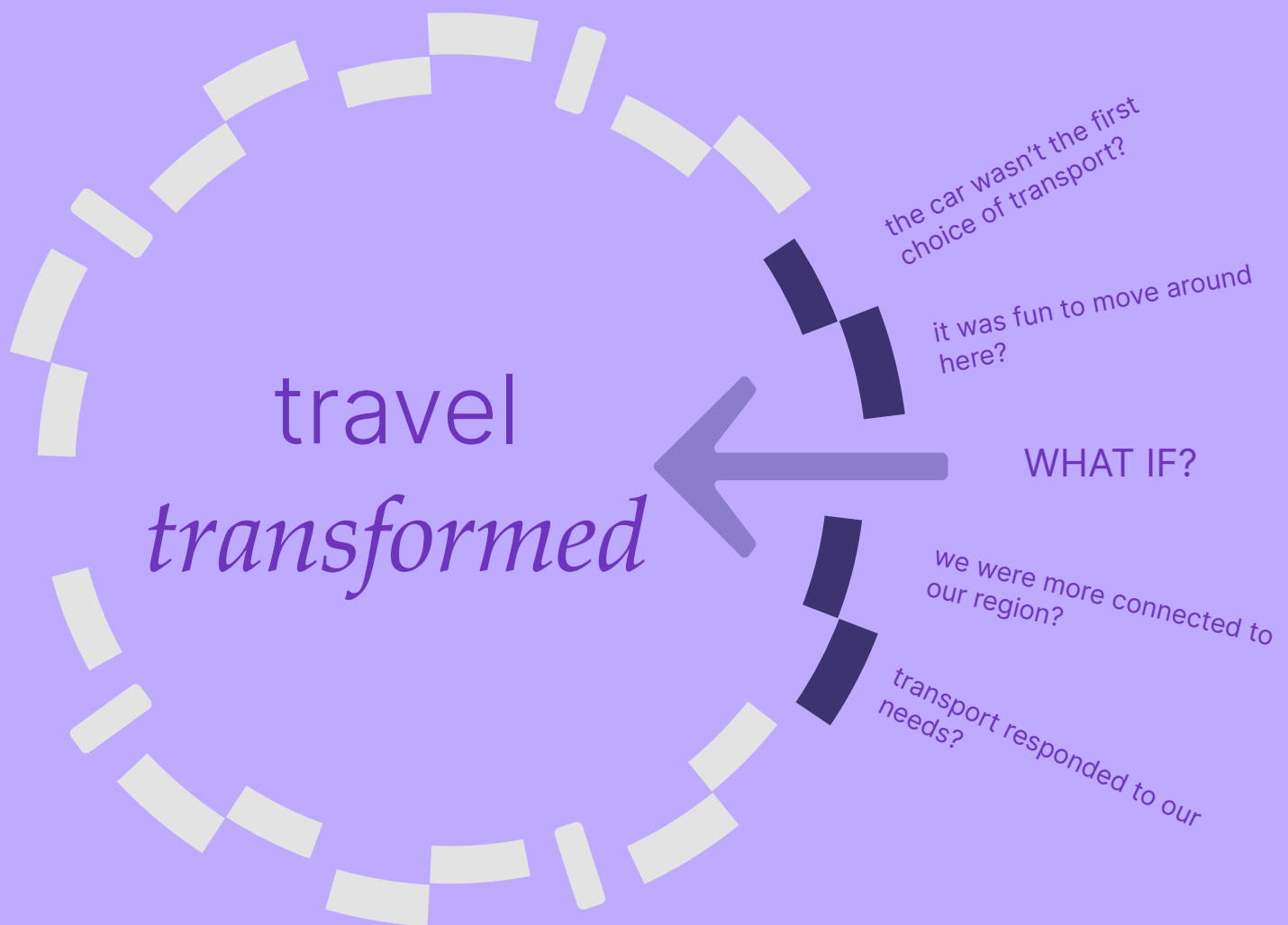
You said...

'Public transport needs to be frequent, cheap and reliable otherwise it won't work.'

'More needs to be done to create a network, rather than just a hodge potch of paths.'

'The river is lovely; it would be great to see paddleboards and rowers on it more often.'

travel
transformed

WHAT IF?

the car wasn't the first choice of transport?

it was fun to move around here?

we were more connected to our region?

transport responded to our needs?

What if... the car **wasn't the first choice** of transport?

In a world where... petrol prices are high, further exacerbated by the energy crisis, we need new modes of getting around. Public transport is inadequate and the car remains a necessity to get around, especially in rural areas. The impacts of car-led carbon emissions on the environment are alarming and Huntingdonshire is currently the most polluting district in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in terms of road transport emissions.

There is a place... home to communities who genuinely care about the climate crisis. The district has green picturesque landscapes and flat towns perfect for cycling and is already trialling new approaches to public transport including the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway and the on demand Vectare Bus.

Which could become... a place where it is easy to make trips by green, zero-carbon public transport that is fast, frequent, reliable and affordable; where short trips are only made by walking or cycling through safe picturesque routes; and where bus stops provide a sheltered, comfortable hub, equipped with cycle parking and charging facilities and which provide real time bus information.

But only if... we invest in our public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and transform it into a sustainable, efficient and convenient system which is subsidised and thus affordable to all.

Source: Huntingdonshire BEIS Emission Data, 2020

What could we do?

1. Upgrade the bus service

Buses serve the district as the key public transport mode. The most regular bus services are to the key service centres, the market towns. Nevertheless, the more rural parts of the district are less well connected to service centres.

The provision of more frequent and reliable bus routes to villages and rural settlements, every day of the week and from early in the morning until late in the evening, will help reduce reliance on the car. The service should also be affordable to become a better alternative to the car.

The timetables of these routes should be integrated with the wider bus, Guided Busway and rail services to create a fully integrated service.

2. Trial car free days

To support the transition away from car dominated travel, special car free days could celebrate sustainable travel choices.

The concept of giving streets back to residents can promote wider and longer term positive effects. The council can support residents in closing streets to traffic over weekends to create play streets and parklets and encourage local groups to organise neighbourhood cycle rides or walking routes. People can be reminded of the joys of active travel and discover desirable walking or cycling routes which they could utilise in their daily lives.

The days can also be used to trial options and approaches, before committing to expensive projects or to work out gaps in the network.

Source: Living Streets, link

Guiding Lights

Every village, every hour

The rural region of North Hesse in Germany boasts a bus network that reaches every village of more than 200 residents, at least every hour, with the ambition to double public transport use in the region by 2030. This is achieved through a mix of public and commercial operators who provide a service for at least 12 hours a day, seven days a week. Overall it runs 32 million passenger trips by bus per year. The bus service is in alignment with the rail timetables, offering an integrated system.

Source: Every village, every hour - A comprehensive bus network for rural England, 2021, link

3. Establish mobility hubs

Building on the potential expansion of the bus and the Guided Busway network, the establishment of mobility hubs in key stops along their network can enhance the whole-journey experience of people travelling within, into and out of the district.

Mobility hubs concentrate complementary transport modes, which minimise or eliminate the need for car. Bus stops can be co-located with cycle and car hire facilities, sheltered cycle parking, car parking and be equipped with real time bus information, wifi or electric bike charging points. These hubs can substitute the usage of car for the entire journey or parts of it and can serve people travelling from urban and rural locations alike.

it was **fun to move** around here?

In a world where... people are rediscovering the pleasure of being out on a bike or going for a stroll, active travel on accessible routes is recognised as not only a fun way to connect with our surroundings, but also an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.

There is a place... that is characterised by its picturesque towns and villages with beautiful flat landscapes and expanding network of trails and quietways.

Which could become... a joyful, safe and inviting place for everyone, whether 8 or 80, to travel on an extended, safe and fun pedestrian and cycle network that crosses urban areas and beautiful natural landscapes, connecting homes with services, employment, schools and leisure opportunities.

But only if... the pedestrian and cycling routes form a comprehensive joined up network including quiet country lanes and riverside routes linking towns, villages and key destinations. This should be supported by infrastructure including bike parking spaces, showers and repair stations. To increase participation, e-mobility hire infrastructure should be widely available and promoted across the district.

Guiding Lights

Joyful Journeys

Waltham Forest is one of the leading Boroughs of the country piloting sustainable transport improvements with funding from Transport for London. Through its 'Mini Holland' scheme, it has delivered 29km of segregated cycle lanes and 62 improved pedestrian crossings. The scheme focuses on creating cycle lanes with safe dedicated space, walking and cycle routes between town centres, cycle hubs and designing new attractive outdoor spaces along the way.

Source: Enjoy Waltham Forest, link

What could we do?

1. ## Establish a network of cycle routes

The existing cycling paths which are mainly concentrated within towns and in certain open spaces, are an invaluable asset which can be built on to create a comprehensive and joined up network.

The delivery of cycle paths will be given priority away from main roads, with appropriate signage and lighting. A comprehensive plan of existing and new paths could establish commuting routes in town and village centres.

Apart from the utility routes, leisure routes can take advantage of the district's rich natural assets and traverse its scenic parks and rivers while connecting them to the rest of the district.

2. ## Have fun on the river

The River Great Ouse winds its way across Huntingdonshire connecting market towns and villages. Promoting boating and paddle-boarding on the river could be a slow leisurely way to move about the district and support great quality of life.

Celebrating the river could also be a great way of building local identity and promoting slow sustainable tourism.

3. ## Improve wayfinding and safety

Safe and accessible pedestrian and cycle routes are much more likely to be used for both leisure and commuting purposes. Signage that incorporates strong graphics, simple maps and pointers to interesting landmarks which is co-designed with residents and local interest groups will help to create a clear shared identity for the district. Improved wayfinding should be delivered along with wider accessibility improvements such as better lighting, mobility and visibility impairment adaptations, crossing enhancements and outdoor seating, to aid people of all abilities.

Signage should also be placed in strategic locations including near bus stops, train stations, high streets, mobility hubs, and places of interest.

we were **more connected** to our region?

In a world where... road traffic is steadily increasing, causing Huntingdonshire to have much higher greenhouse gas emissions than the UK average. And where housing and employment growth put pressure on the region's transport infrastructure.

There is a place... that is located at the heart of the UK with links to London, the Midlands and the North, through key routes such as the M11, A1(M), A14, the East Coast Mainline with direct Thameslink Great Northern services to London and the Guided Busway connecting the district to wider Cambridgeshire.

Which could become... a place linked to its neighbours, to wider Cambridgeshire and beyond, which makes longer journeys easy, fast and reliable. A place where strategic housing and employment locations and other key attractions of the district are conveniently connected with its surrounding areas, thus drawing people in.

But only if... strategic collaborations are secured which raise and direct funding towards regional transport infrastructure improvements.

Source: Huntingdonshire Strategic Transport Study - Baseline Report, Mott Macdonald, 2017. Image to the right: Thameslink Railway

What could we do?

1. Expand the Guided Busway

The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway has proven its success by connecting housing to employment locations and residents to central places. The Busway is already linked to Huntingdonshire with three frequent and high quality services into and out of Cambridge to St Ives but less frequently to Huntingdon and the bus network also misses out rural locations and key employment hubs outside of market towns.

It will be a key move to expand the bus service across the district and make trips more frequent, reliable and affordable which will encourage more passengers. This upgraded network will effectively connect the entire district and make the bus the more desirable option to the car.

2. Improve highway capacity

Given Huntingdonshire's location, its strategic road corridors are vital in accommodating local, regional and even national journeys. Frequently these routes are impacted by heavy traffic, resulting in longer journey times and safety concerns.

Investment in key highway improvements, especially for congestion hotspots, road upgrades, junction enhancements and bypasses, will result in more reliable and safe car trips.

To mitigate their impact, highway improvements should be accompanied by sustainable drainage, green infrastructure and biodiversity corridors.

Source: CPCA Local Transport Plan, link

Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan outlines the long term strategy towards transport improvements across the region as it aims to bring communities closer together. Travel Demand Management will aim to reduce pressure on the transport system, namely by offering public transport alternatives. A 15% cut in car mileage will also be targeted to help cut carbon emissions. The Plan will even include internet connectivity for all, to enable access to jobs and reduce social inequalities.

Source: CPCA Local Transport Plan, link
Image below: Cambridgeshire County Council

3. Link up strategic locations

Sustainable housing and employment growth can only be accommodated by directing growth to locations well connected with public transport, and by strategically planning for mobility infrastructure in accordance with growth needs.

In addition to housing and employment, other key attractors, such as natural spaces, should also be part of the regional transport network.

This way, the district's residents get closer to the wider region and its opportunities, and conversely the district becomes more attractive to people from outside, for living, working and leisure.

In a world where... people are reliant on cars, especially in rural regions, traditional public transport options are often lacking. Yet new digital services and technologies mean that individual car ownership is being reassessed.

There is a place... that is predominantly rural, with villages and towns scattered around expansive landscapes, but shows that change is possible with pioneering public transport options including the Vectare Bus service (previously the Ting Bus) and the Guided Busway.

Which could become... a place where reliable, responsive and affordable on-demand mobility options with joint ticketing mean that it is easy to live and move around without your own car. The district could become a hub for on-demand mobility with car-sharing, ride-sharing, bike-sharing and the extended Vectare Bus serving all our urban and rural neighbourhoods.

But only if... communities, businesses, developers and transport authorities collaborate to attract and support mobility investment and commit to using different forms of mobility. In addition, on-demand options should be widely encouraged and promoted, so people know it is an easy option. We must allow for sufficient time and testing to create a system that is easy, affordable and effective.

Top image: Voi e-bikes

Guiding Lights

Fflecsi Flexible Bus Service

Fflecsi is an on-demand bus service provided in partnership with Transport for Wales. Through the app, the website or by calling, customers can book their trips at their desired times, including pick-up and drop-off locations. The bus's route is updated in real time to reflect passenger demands as they arise. The service is particularly valuable for rural communities, where public transport is limited.

The app even provides information on other public transport options to help customers decide the best means of travel for them.

Source: fflecsi, link

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1. Grow the Vectare Bus coverage

The Vectare Bus is currently one of the uncelebrated heroes of the district. It provides an on demand service currently only in West Huntingdonshire, 6 days a week until 8pm. This service connects some of the most rural parts of the district with towns such as St Neots and Huntingdon.

The pilot could become a permanent service and extended to the entire district, especially with an expanded service on Sundays and later in the night. The App makes it easy to instantly book trips on the phone and get picked up at the chosen time. Promoting the service to more residents would increase its passenger numbers and solve many transport issues faced by rural areas.

2. Promote cycle sharing

Access to cycling does not have to depend on owning a bike. Cycle share is an effective way to attract more people to embrace cycling without the commitment and investment. A commercial or community bike share pilot can be established with bikes and stations in key locations and especially close to bus stops, the Guided Busway and mobility hubs. This could include a mix of traditional bikes, e-bikes and cargo bikes to meet diverse needs.

One-way cycling trips could increase and become the preferred mode for last-mile travel combined with other means of transport for short amenity trips. In order to be successful, the service has to be complemented with the right cycling infrastructure, creating integrated networks of safe routes with clear signage.

3. Establish a car club

The rural parts of the district depend heavily on the car due to public transport deficiencies, while the urban areas are frequently congested and face parking problems. Some trips will always be more convenient by car, nonetheless they do not have to depend on car ownership.

Establishing a car club through a partnership between the community, businesses and local authorities, could cover this need. An appropriate provider can be attracted and supported through dedicated parking spaces in convenient locations, charging facilities and signage. A marketing campaign could be rolled out to inform the district of the benefits, money savings, convenience and environmental advantages of car clubs.