

The logo for Transport East, featuring the text "TRANSPORTEAST" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is centered between two sets of three horizontal white lines that are slightly offset from each other, creating a sense of motion or a stylized graphic element.

TRANSPORTEAST

Regional Strategy Hub

# Call for Evidence: Rural Mobility



# TE Background

## Priorities

Decarbonisation to Net Zero

Connecting Growing Places

Energise Coastal and Rural Communities

Unlocking International Gateways

## About Transport East

Transport East is the Sub-national Transport Body for Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.

The partnership provides a single voice for our councils, business leaders and partners on our region's transport strategy and strategic transport investment priorities, working in close collaboration with the government and the rest of the UK.

We are funded by the Department of Transport and local authorities.

# Background



## MARCH 2023

Strategy Hub concept was submitted as part of Transport East's business plan for DfT funding as a way of exploring complex transport issues

## JUNE/JULY 2023

Written call for evidence ran, receiving 117 responses from public, business and organisations.

## SEPTEMBER 2023

Oral evidence sessions with Local Authorities and Operators; Charities and Community; Business and Tourism

- DfT has now published *Future of Transport: Helping local authorities to unlock the benefits of technology & innovation in rural transport*
- This Call for Evidence was designed to drill deeper into the transport issues faced by people, businesses and organisations living and working in rural areas in the East – linked to our Rural Mobility Centre of Excellence work
- Guided by a set of independent Commissioners from a variety of sectors: local authorities, business, tourism, charity and community.
- Oral evidence sessions explored some of the points raised in the written evidence in more detail over 4 sessions
- Potential to explore other issues in a similar way subject to future funding

# Commissioners

**Dr Scott Copsey**

University of Hertfordshire (Chair)

**Candy Richards**

Federation of Small Businesses

**Caroline Whitney**

Community Transport Association

**Jack Eagle**

Transport Planning Society Eastern Region

**Nick Khan**

East Suffolk Council

**Pete Waters**

Visit East of England

**Rik Martin**

Community Action Norfolk



# Written Call for Evidence

JUNE/JULY 2023

The Strategy Hub launched and promoted a survey. Users were able to answer questions specific to individuals, businesses or organisations.

The Call for Evidence was sent to rural stakeholders across the region and beyond including Transport and Rural Industry bodies, operators, business, agriculture, diversity, education, visitor and heritage sectors.

## Key Questions

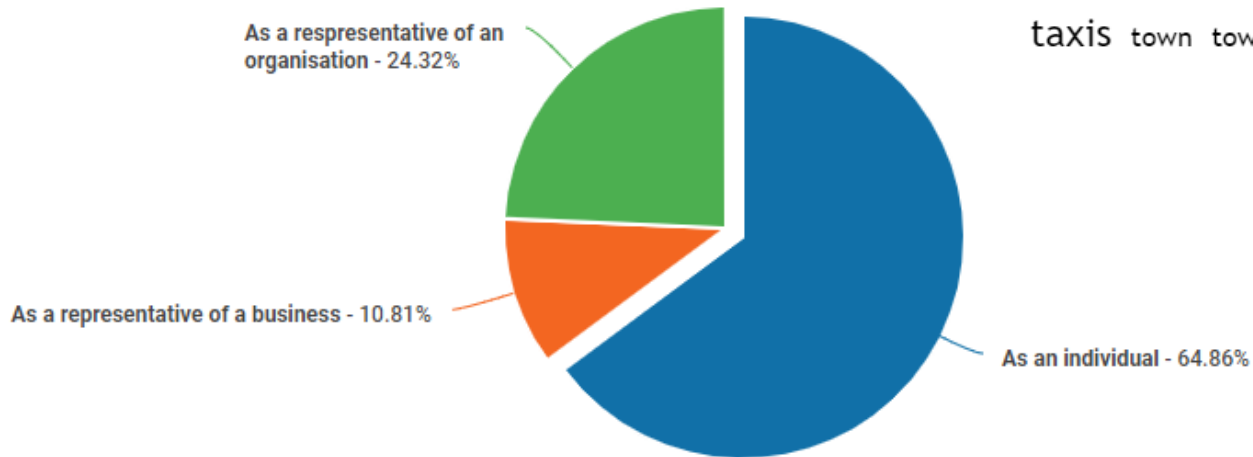
- ? What are your experiences of public/private transport connections in rural and low-populated coastal areas in the East?
- ? What difference could improving transport connections and services in rural and low-populated coastal areas make?
- ? What are the potential solutions to these challenges, and do you have evidence for achieving the intended or anticipated outcomes?
- ? Demographic questions such as postcode, size of organisation and accessibility requirements

# Written Call for Evidence



117 responses were received: 72 from individuals, 12 from **businesses** and 27 from **organisations**.

access area **bus** buses car community connections cost days difficult diss drive evening  
expensive friends **good** haughley hour hourly infrequent ipswich journey journeys lack limited live  
local london longer miles **nearest** norwich pass passengers people **public** rail regular  
return route rural **service** services shopping station stowmarket suffolk taxi  
taxis town towns train trains **transport** travel village walk week work years

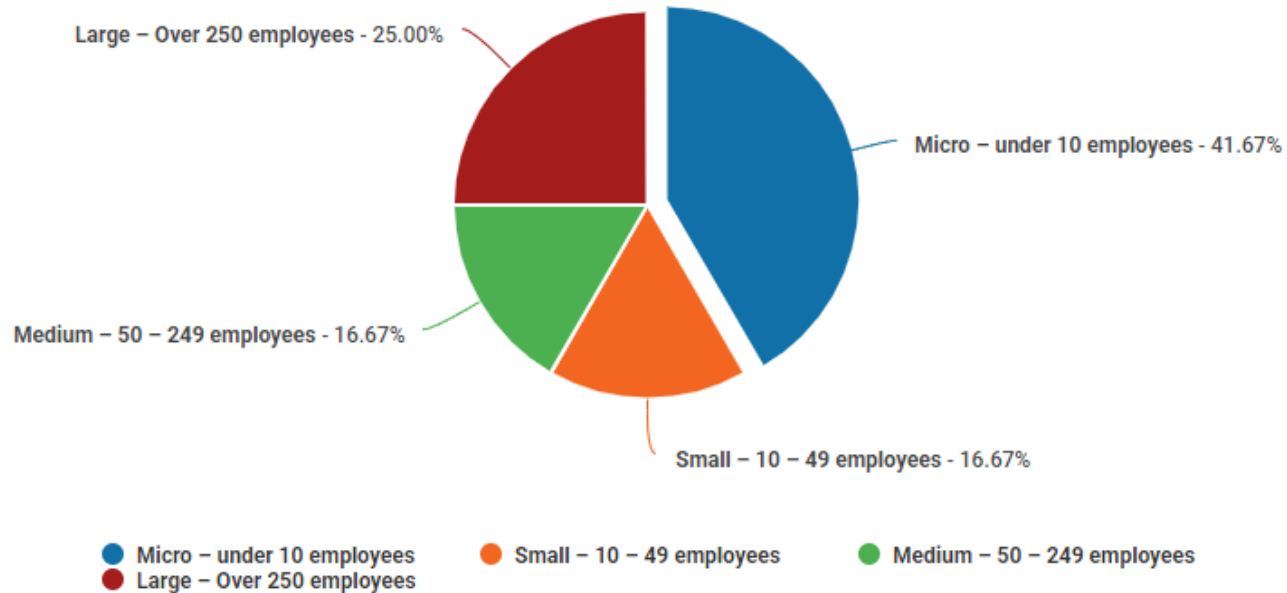


local public sector transport voluntary  
charitable charity community education **government**

Types of responding organisation

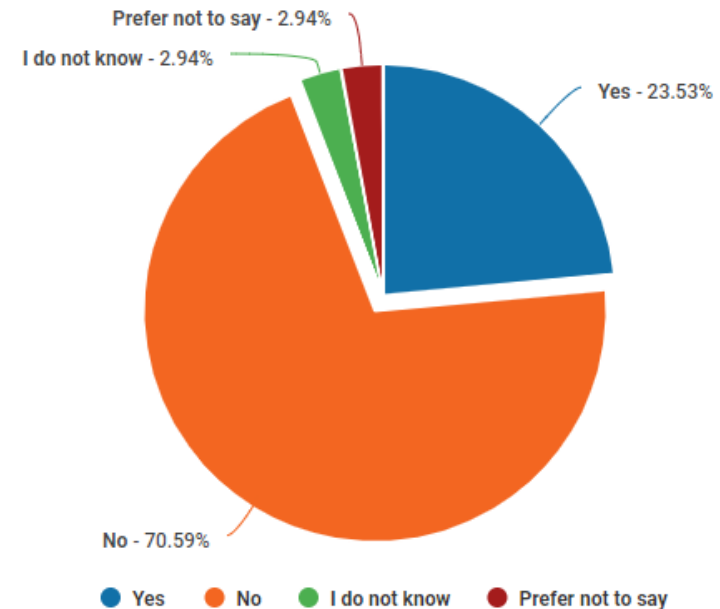
● As an individual ● As a representative of a business ● As a representative of an organisation

# Written Call for Evidence



Size of responding organisations:  
5 Micro <10, 2 Small 10-49, 2 Medium 50-249 and 3 Large >250

Number of respondents who identified as *disabled* or with *long term health conditions*:  
16 Yes, 48 No, 2 I Do Not Know, 2 Prefer Not To Say





# Oral Evidence Sessions

● SEPTEMBER 2023

The Strategy Hub conducted a roundtable discussion based on 4-5 key questions relating to the issues raised through the written evidence

4 sessions: three conducted online and one in-person session.

Sessions were recorded and transcribed, with attendee consent, alongside a collaborative online whiteboard for contributing attendees to add to.

## Key Questions

- ? How has the level and access to public and private transport provision affected your organisation/sector?
- ? A theme that arose from our call for evidence specifically regarding your sector was access to employees and customers.
- ? Are there any specific transport schemes that you are aware of in the area that tackle some of the challenges we have been talking about?
- ? If there is one change to national or local transport policy (other than greater funding) that you would like to see, what would it be?



# Oral Evidence Sessions

Are there any specific transport schemes that you are aware of in the area that tackle some of the challenges we have been talking about?

Coastal Clipper Service also an example of a good visitor route (Lowestoft-Gt Yarmouth?) SP

The Coastal Hopper in north Norfolk is fabulous for visitors wanting to walk stretches of the Coastal Path and then get the bus back to their car. - PW

Incentivised travel or tourism-friendly bus ticketing e.g. £25 for a week of bus travel in Blackpool. - SC

Some tourism destinations are offering discounts or extra 'rewards' - coffee/ gift for using public transport.- Could something locally or regionally coordinated help?

Could something be done with school buses during holidays to bolster seasonal transport needs?

Local authorities may have data to be shared to identify opportunities. - EY/PW

Good Journey & Norfolk

Challenge with services actually existing! - DS

We need to make it as easy as possible to provide the opportunities.

The Sunday and night time economies suffer in rural town centres. Especially as our high streets are shifting to experience or social economies.

Seasonal work opportunities, both paid and volunteer are often shift-work. Salaries may not be enough to cover costs of travel. - RC

Cycling - even daunting for experienced cyclists. Amount of traffic and lack of safe infrastructure.

Coast hopper in Norfolk is positive for visitors. But not always right option for staff. Also people still need to drive to main holiday destination in first place.

Young and older people can have similar issues related to rural isolation. linked to lack of access to private vehicles.



# Stakeholder Engagement



National  
Trust



THE  
HOTEL FOLK

ADNAMs.  
SOUTHWOLD

First  Bus

 UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

 University  
of Suffolk

  
HOLKHAM

'The people within Norfolk experiencing the most inequalities are likely to benefit most from improved access to goods and services, green spaces, and health and leisure services.'

'Compared to other flashier schemes, rural cycle paths are a proven solution with an extremely high benefit-to-cost ratio.'

'Population increase from new developments is highlighting the risks of using roads that weren't designed for modern times and creating more hazards.'

'We have no public services to our main site. This has impacted recruitment quite significantly as the skilled younger workforce with no vehicle, cannot commit.'

# High Level Themes

- 
- Access to real-time data
  - Buses – frequency, connecting routes, delays, cancellations
  - Rail connectivity and the location of stations – works and industrial actions
  - Ticketing and Fares
  - Booking CT, DR and Taxi – how to optimise for availability, accessibility and cost
  - Improving perceptions of sustainable modes
  - Improving active travel infrastructure to improve safety
  - Planning and land use
  - Social isolation and mental health; personal safety
  - Access to vital services – medical appointments, shops, education and work
  - Freedom for disabled travellers and accessibility
  - Shared transport – car clubs/bike clubs and relying on neighbours for lifts
  - Transport links or lack thereof with tourism
  - Rural areas being left behind in the race to net zero; air quality
  - Parking – on street and off street, location, price, use as a disincentive
  - Digital connectivity – reducing the need to travel

# Draft Recommendations



## Central Government

Focus on building long-term capacity and capability within local authorities to support innovation in rural transport

Long-term funding certainty for LAs and Gov to take a longer-term and wider view on the value and return on investment

Monitoring and evaluation framework to include social value and decarbonisation

## Local Government and other public sector service providers

LTA's and Districts to ensure rural transport and access needs are included in local plan making

Land use and development: Better join up between transport & land use planning in rural areas

Transport access impact assessment to be undertaken when services are changed

## Transport East and Partners

Break down barriers in public sector stakeholders to integrate rural access needs into decision making.

STBs to develop 'rural pilot guidance' STBs to work with rural experts to strengthen the narrative around the value of rural services

Transport East, local government and operators to consider weekend, evening and seasonal travel demand impacts within analysis, planning and delivery

# Next Steps

