VISION 2225 REPORT

2026

GCRP
Gloucestershire
Community Rail Partnership

OXCRP
OXFORDSHIRE
COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vision 2225 was a youth engagement programme delivered by GO Community Rail Partnership (GOCRP), designed to ensure young people play an active role in shaping the future of rail and public transport across Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. Building on insights gathered from 913 young people through the 2024/25 Youth Transport Forum, the project empowered participants aged 16–25 to identify priority areas for change within the transport system, explore potential reforms, and develop recommendations that promote the accessibility, sustainability, and user-friendliness of the transport network.

Through workshops, research activities, stakeholder engagement, and ambassador placements, young people identified six priority areas for reform. Their recommendations reflected both lived experience and a strong awareness of wider industry priorities including sustainability, affordability, accessibility, confidence, and inclusion.

In Oxfordshire, young people prioritised reforms that promoted transport connectivity, reliability, and sustainability. Key recommendations included:

- **Integrated ticketing reform**, allowing passengers to seamlessly combine bus and rail journeys through a unified ticketing system, supported by youth discounts and flexible travel options.
- **Cycling infrastructure improvements**, including increased secure cycle storage, better integration between cycling and public transport, and more consistent, protected cycle routes across the county.
- **Measures to reduce bus bunching**, such as enhanced real-time passenger information and proactive service management to improve reliability and passenger experience.

In Gloucestershire, participants focused on bolstering accessibility, confidence, and community engagement within the transport network.
Their recommendations included:

- **Improved bus stop accessibility**, using clearer visual information, multilingual resources, QR-code-enabled journey support, and more intuitive route mapping.
- **A gamified active travel scheme** for children, encouraging walking, cycling, and sustainable travel through rewards, community participation, and links to public transport.
- **Support for travellers experiencing anxiety**, including the creation of an intermodal assistance helpline providing real-time guidance and reassurance across journeys.

Alongside these larger proposals, young participants consistently highlighted the value of practical, low-cost improvements that could be implemented quickly. Suggestions such as clearer signage, better wayfinding, improved lighting, enhanced travel information, and small behavioural incentives reflected a desire for small but meaningful changes that could improve everyday travel experiences.

A defining feature of Vision 2225 was the creativity, insight, and ownership demonstrated by participants throughout the programme. Young people engaged critically with transport challenges, developed realistic and evidence-informed solutions, and confidently presented their ideas directly to transport operators, local authorities, and community stakeholders. Their recommendations demonstrate that young people are not only future users of public transport but valuable contributors to its development today.

Overall, Vision 2225 demonstrates the importance of embedding youth voices within transport planning. The programme generated practical recommendations for improving mobility across Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire while providing young people with opportunities to develop skills, confidence, and leadership experience. As transport systems continue to evolve in response to environmental, social, and economic challenges, the perspectives of young people will remain essential in creating networks that are inclusive, sustainable, and fit for the future.

PROJECT & REPORT OVERVIEW

In 2025, the 200th anniversary of the modern railway provided a moment of celebration for the rail industry, serving as both an opportunity to acknowledge two centuries of progress and look ahead to future innovation. To ensure young people were part of these conversations, GO Community Rail Partnership (GOCRP) launched Vision 2225, a project designed to elevate youth voice in rail and public transport, support meaningful engagement with transport policy, and inspire the next generation of rail users and decision-makers. Through workshops, a youth ambassadorship program, collaborative research, policy development, and stakeholder presentations, the project championed inclusion, climate awareness, and community involvement while strengthening rail education.

This report outlines the Vision 2225 project, exploring the engagement methods that created a space for young people to shape conversations about the future of rail as well as the ideas for change that emerged from these sessions. The report ultimately demonstrates how GOCRP supported young people's personal development, confidence, and active citizenship by opening pathways into rail and transport engagement.

"THIS WAS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL STUDENTS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE FIELD BUT DON'T YET HAVE EXPERIENCE – ESPECIALLY VALUABLE IN TODAY'S COMPETITIVE GRADUATE CLIMATE."

– Youth Ambassador, March 2026

METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

Vision 2225 was designed as a youth-led, evidence-driven engagement process, positioning young people not as consultees but as active contributors to transport policy development. Through a structured, multi-phase approach, participants identified priorities, developed solutions, and engaged directly with industry stakeholders to shape practical, future-facing recommendations.

Youth-Led Exploration

The project began with a series of youth-led research workshops, enabling participants to critically examine their lived experience of travel, identify key challenges, and define what a forward-looking, sustainable transport system should deliver. Drawing on existing insights from the GO CRP Youth Transport Forum and Survey, these discussions were translated into six priority areas for improvement, alongside early, actionable policy ideas.

Engagement with professionals from rail, bus, and local government allowed participants to test assumptions, explore system constraints, and refine their thinking in response to real-world delivery contexts. This ensured that emerging ideas were both ambitious and grounded.

Research and Development

In the second phase, university student ambassadors developed these youth-generated priorities into evidence-based policy proposals. Through structured research and comparative analysis, they assessed feasibility, examined relevant case studies, and identified potential barriers, enablers, and impacts.

This process resulted in a series of concise policy briefs, strengthening the original recommendations with a clear evidence base and practical considerations for implementation. Additional academic partnerships extended this work, contributing further research aligned to the themes identified by young participants.

Advocacy and Engagement

The final phase focused on amplifying youth voice through direct engagement with stakeholders. Young people led the presentation of their recommendations to transport and community partners, creating opportunities for dialogue, challenge, and feedback within a professional context.

This approach ensured that recommendations were not only developed by young people but also tested, communicated, and strengthened through direct interaction with those responsible for delivery.

Why this approach matters

This methodology ensures that the recommendations presented in this report are grounded in lived experience, strengthened by evidence, and shaped through meaningful engagement with industry. As a result, they reflect both the priorities of young transport users and the practical realities of implementation, providing a credible and actionable foundation for decision-making.

"IT WAS SO NICE TO BE ABLE TO SHARE OUR IDEAS WITH THE EXPERT PANEL. I FELT EMPOWERED BY THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE." *– Workshop participant, June 2025*

Engagement Ladder

From Awareness to Youth-Led Advocacy in Rail's Future...

Stakeholder Presentations

Advocacy & Knowledge Exchange

- Youth ambassadors delivered a 30-minute presentation to rail, bus, council and charity representatives
- Presented six policy briefs with visualisations and case for change
- Direct Q&A with industry and council stakeholders

University Research Collaboration

Research-based participation

- Partnership with University of Gloucestershire's School of Business, Computing & Social Sciences
- 59 students briefed, 16 selected (3 groups) to conduct mixed-methods research on youth-identified reform areas
- Generated original evidence and peer-driven recommendations

Youth Research Workshops and Expert Panels

Co-creation & Dialogue

- 4 youth-led workshops with 11 participants (ages 16-25) across Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire
- Explored public transport experiences and co-created six key areas for reform
- Q&A sessions with rail, bus and local government experts

Social Media Outreach and Recruitment

Digital Engagement & Awareness Raising

- Project promotion via social media to attract young participants
- 40,574 impressions
- 21,548 users reached
- 970 link engagements
- Open call for 16-25 year olds to take part in shaping rail's future

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations proposed in the workshops, researched by both ambassadors and University of Gloucestershire students, and presented to stakeholders were six-fold.

OXFORDSHIRE

1. Integrated Ticketing Reform in Oxfordshire

Overview

Integrated Ticketing poses a strong opportunity to enhance coordination across a public transport system. In Oxfordshire, while some rail tickets already allow bus add-ons, a fully bidirectional system, where bus users can seamlessly purchase rail tickets and vice versa, would make multimodal travel significantly smoother and more attractive. Strengthening this symmetry would reduce barriers between modes, improve passenger convenience, and offer a compelling alternative to private car use.

This opportunity is especially meaningful for three reasons. First, Oxfordshire's population of over 600,000 residents includes more than 40,000 students, many of whom rely on affordable and flexible public transport. Second, integrated ticketing directly aligns with the county's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), which identifies seamless mobility and multimodal travel as core strategic goals (Oxfordshire County Council, 2022). Third, the environmental case is compelling: data on comparative carbon emissions shows petrol cars produce around 170g CO2e/km, compared with 35g CO2e per passenger km for rail and around 97g CO2e per passenger km for buses (Ritchie, 2023). Enabling smooth, simple transfers between buses and trains could therefore support more sustainable and environmentally friendly travel by encouraging a shift away from car use.

Youth Workshop participants viewed integrated ticketing as a top priority, especially when paired with youth discounts and flexible pass options. Importantly, integrated models are already delivering results across the UK and Europe (International Transport Forum, 2021). Our task is therefore not to invent a new system, but to adapt successful models into a practical, scalable, locally tailored solution that improves the travel experience for all users.

Evidence-based Recommendations

Establish Full Bi-directional Bus-Rail Integration

The core recommendation is to develop a unified ticketing framework enabling passengers to purchase combined bus-and-rail journeys in both directions to promote seamless multimodal travel and reduce friction between networks.

Evidence from comparable systems demonstrates the transformative potential of integrated ticketing. London's Oyster card, launched in 2003, became the dominant method of payment within a decade; by 2012, over 80% of public transport journeys used Oyster, with more than 86 million cards issued (Rollison & Coombes, 2023). Centre for Cities also reports that the Hopper fare, which allows free bus transfers within one hour, generated a 5% rise in total bus trips and an 8% increase in follow-on journeys (Ibid). This illustrates how integrated, simplified fares can meaningfully shift behaviour.

The West Midlands' Swift card provides another relevant example. Now supporting more than 42 million journeys each year, Swift is the "most comprehensive regional smartcard system outside London", integrating bus, tram, and rail with both physical and digital options (Transport for West Midlands, 2026). Swift's success shows that high-quality multimodal ticketing is achievable and effective even outside the most populous metropolitan areas.

European evidence only further reinforces the case. A What Works Growth (2016) review of integrated ticketing found increased ridership in all four evaluated schemes. Additionally, the International Transport Forum (2021) reports a 4% rise in public transport demand within two years of integration in Manchester, and a 33% increase in Paris over 18 years. While these reforms were accompanied by other improvements, the overall message is clear: integrated ticketing can support and amplify long-term growth in ridership.

For Oxfordshire, early steps could include establishing a Transport Integration Working Group to coordinate technical interoperability, develop revenue-sharing agreements, and pilot integrated fares along key corridors.

"WE WANT MORE FLEXIBILITY WHEN PURCHASING TICKETS. I WENT TO SCHOOL IN LONDON AND THE OYSTER CARDS WERE FLEXIBLE AND EASY TO USE. WE SHOULD HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN OUR SYSTEM."

– Workshop participant, December 2025

Introduce Youth & Student Discount Provisions

A second key recommendation is to introduce youth-focused concessions within the integrated system. The UK Railcard system provides strong evidence for youth-targeted fare incentives This system has over 7 million users contributing to the sum £11.5 billion in fares income between April 2024 and March 2025 (Rail Card, n.d.; Rail Industry Finance, 2025). Importantly, an estimated £60 million derives from journeys that would not have occurred without discounted fares (Wikipedia, 2026), showing that youth concessions stimulate new travel rather than simply reducing revenue.

The 16–25 Railcard demonstrates sustained demand, contributing to the over 7 million cards in circulation and nearly 210 million discounted journeys made from January to November 2024 (Railcard, 2024). Users save an average of £208 per year (National Rail, n.d.), illustrating the material impact of well-designed discounts. The West Midlands' Swift scheme also shows how regional concessions can succeed: half-price travel for 16–18-year-olds and a 28% student discount have driven high uptake among younger passengers (Birmingham Transport, 2024). Given Oxfordshire's large student base and many apprentices, an integrated youth pass offering discount could thus meaningfully support affordability.

Table 1: Perceived Potential Benefits & Impacts

Short Term (0-12 Months)	Medium Term (1-3 Years)	Long Term (3+ Years)
• Improved passenger convenience • Strengthened coordination between operators • Reduced friction in multimodal journeys • Increased uptake in key corridors	• Potential ridership increase • Increased youth mobility and access to employment • Greater alignment with LTCP objectives	• Sustained modal shift away from car delendency • Contribution to emissions reduction goals • Economic benefits linked to increased mobility

Additional Recommendations

While moving toward an integrated system, there are several smaller steps that our young participants felt could strengthen multimodal travel while larger reforms progress such as:

- improving real-time information sharing (e.g., displaying bus departures within rail apps and at stations)
- enhancing signage and wayfinding between stops and platforms
- adjusting timetables to improve bus-rail alignment at major interchanges
- offering simple through-journey promotions, such as small bus discounts for rail users
- training frontline staff on multimodal options
- using QR codes to link passengers to onward travel information
- piloting small-scale student or corridor-specific multimodal discounts

Table 2: Perceived Challenges to Implementation

1. Revenue Allocation between Operators	Negotiating fare-sharing agreements may be complex. Clear governance structures and formal arbitration machanisms will be essential.
2. Captial Investment	The Internation transport Forum estimates capital costs of £330 million for a large-scale systems outside London. Oxfordshire's costs would be significantly lower due to scale and exsisting SmartZone infrastructure, but feasibility studies are required.
3. Digital Exclusion	Intergrated ticketing must not rely solely on smartphone-based systems. London continues to offer physical Oyster cards alongside digital payment options. Oxfordshire could adopt a 'digital by default, but not digital only' model.

CONCLUSION

Integrated ticketing is a proven transport reform with strong evidence from London, the West Midlands, and leading European cities. It increases ridership, supports youth mobility, and encourages modal shift away from car travel. With more than 600,000 residents and a large student population, Oxfordshire is well positioned to introduce a tailored, fully integrated model that meets local needs. By delivering bidirectional bus-rail integration, youth-focused discounts, and flexible pass options, Oxfordshire can further their efforts toward an accessible, convenient, and sustainable public transport system. While implementation requires coordination, the benefits of improved connectivity, increased ridership, and meaningful progress toward climate goals, make integrated ticketing a compelling next step for the county's transport future.

2. Cycling Policy

Overview

Cycle reform in Oxfordshire is less about creating a new culture and more about completing the shift to a fully integrated, safe, and sustainable countywide network. While central Oxford already sees high cycling levels, rural communities and market towns such as Banbury, Bicester, and Didcot hold untapped potential. With better connectivity, safer routes, and easier access to active travel, the county could achieve major gains in mobility, sustainability, and fairness.

Reforming cycling policy is especially timely given Oxfordshire's climate goals, public health priorities, and commitment to social equity. Transport is the UK's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (around 30%) (Department of Transportation, 2025), and Oxfordshire's Net Zero ambitions depend on meaningful reductions in car use (Hampton et al., 2021). Cycling offers one of the most cost-effective ways to cut emissions, with even small shifts from short car trips delivering substantial carbon savings at far lower cost than large-scale electrification (University of Oxford, 2021).

The health benefits are equally compelling. Regular active travel reduces the risk of chronic disease, improves mental wellbeing, and lowers long-term healthcare costs (Ding et al., 2024), while reduced reliance on private vehicles helps address harmful air pollution in urban areas (World Health Organization, 2026). By enabling more people to cycle safely and confidently, Oxfordshire can promote healthier communities and ease pressure on the NHS and local services (Active Travel England, 2025).

Cycling is also a powerful driver of fairness and access. It provides low-cost, reliable mobility for young people, apprentices, and households without a car, supporting access to jobs, education, services, and social opportunities (Department of Transportation, 2025b). Extending high-quality routes into rural areas ensures that these benefits reach every part of the county, not only Oxford's urban core.

Although Oxfordshire has made strong progress, Youth Workshop participants highlighted ways that safety, signage, continuity, and multimodal integration can be further promoted. To fully realise the county's active travel potential, cycling investment must move from isolated improvements to a coordinated, sustainable, and countywide network capable of replacing short car trips at scale.

Evidence-Based Recommendations

Expand Bike Storage on Buses and Trains

Strengthening multimodal travel is a major sustainability opportunity for Oxfordshire. Expanding bike carriage capacity on buses and trains would make longer car-free journeys easier, especially for rural residents who already cycle to reach public transport (Oxfordshire County Council, 2015). Improving bike-bus and bike-rail integration would transform cycling from an urban mode into a countywide, low-carbon travel option (Oxfordshire County Council, 2022).

International examples highlight the impact of this approach. In the Netherlands, one logistical regression suggests that over 38% of commuters use cycling as a means to access rail (Geurs et al., 2016), a trend supported by secure parking and well-designed cycle-rail integration, contributing significantly to the country's low transport emissions (Netherlands France Chamber of Commerce, 2024).

In the UK, Cambridge demonstrates how combined secure parking and practical onboard bike storage can support some of the highest cycling levels nationwide (Cambridge City Council, 2010). While UK rail operators increasingly offer cycle spaces, capacity remains limited and often requires advance booking, creating barriers to mass uptake (Active Travel England, 2023).

By expanding flexible, reliable bike carriage, especially on regional trains and buses, Oxfordshire can reduce reliance on cars, support rural connectivity, and create a genuinely integrated active travel network.

"I LIVE IN A RURAL OXFORDSHIRE. WITHOUT MY BIKE, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GET TO THE BUS STOPS THAT GET ME INTO TOWN."

– Workshop participant, December 2025

Increase Secure Cycle Storage at Transport Hubs

Improving cycle security is an essential step to increase cycling uptake and support long-term participation. Bike theft is a leading barrier to active travel; addressing it directly builds confidence and encourages new riders (Cohen et al., 2024). High-quality, secure cycle parking at key transport hubs is vital for enabling bike-and-ride journeys, which are particularly important for connecting rural communities to sustainable transport options (Egan et al., 2023).

Successful cycle parking hubs already exist across the UK. Transport for London's secure station hubs, as well as similar facilities in Birmingham and Manchester, consistently demonstrate that secure, monitored, covered, and high-capacity parking supports increase cycling levels and the frequency of multimodal trips (Oxfordshire County Council, 2024). Oxfordshire can adopt this proven model by prioritising covered, CCTV-monitored cycle parking at major rail stations and secure lockers and stands at key bus interchanges. These measures could significantly strengthen the active travel environment and make cycling a more reliable everyday choice.

Standardise and Upgrade Cycle Lane Infrastructure

Workshop participants strongly emphasised the importance of consistent, high-quality cycle lane design. Continuous, clearly marked, and physically protected cycle lanes are effective way to improve safety and encourage new riders (Knight & Charlton, 2022). When infrastructure feels safer, more people choose to cycle regularly (Knight & Charlton, 2022).

Evidence from Transport for London shows that segregated cycle tracks deliver measurable increases in cycling levels and reduce car use, while improving safety outcomes (Transport for London, n.d.). The UK's national guidance, Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20), provides a comprehensive framework for delivering safe, continuous, and inclusive cycling infrastructure. Oxfordshire should fully adopt LTN 1/20 across all new and upgraded routes, prioritising:

- consistent coloured surfacing (green or red) for visibility and route continuity
- clear signage and advanced junction markings
- protected junctions at high-traffic intersections
- continuous design to eliminate unhelpful "disappearing lanes"
- sustainable, long-life materials

A standardized network could support safer journeys, behavioural change, and long-term sustainability.

Table 3: Perceived Potential Benefits & Impacts

Short Term (0-12 Months)	Medium Term (1-3 Years)	Long Term (3+ Years)
• Improved cyclist safety perception, encuraging initial modal shift • Increased bike, rail and bike-bus integration, reducing car dependency for multi-stage journeys • Reduced theft concerns, increasing confidence in cycling as a reliable low-carbon option • Visible sustainability progress aligned with LTCP and net-zero goals	• Growth in cycling participation • Measurable increase in sustainable commuting by bicycle, particularly on priority corridors • Reduced vehivle congestion in Oxford city centre, lowering urban emissions and improving air quality	• Sustained, measurable modal shift from private car use, contributing directly to Oxfordshire's net-zero targets • Quanfitied, reportable greenhouse gas reductions from transport sector • Enhanced economic connectivity across rural market towns, reducing the transport poverty that drives car dependency • Oxfordshire established as a national leader in sustainable active travel, supporting wider knowledge transfer

Additional Recommendations

Oxfordshire can make meaningful progress through low-cost actions while larger upgrades are developed. Improvements such as clearer wayfinding, better lighting around cycle parking, and installing modular or pop-up stands can quickly enhance convenience. Digital upgrades, such as real-time information on bike-friendly services and clearer online advice, require minimal investment. Incentives for bike-and-ride, cycle security marking sessions, and improved cycling information at stations all help build confidence and encourage combined cycling and public transport use.

Table 4: Perceived Challenges to Implementation

1. Investment Requirements	Although cycling infrastructure requires upfront captial, national guidance from Active Travel England and the UK Governments's *Gear Change* strategy highlights that active travel schemes offer exceptional long-term value.
2. Public and Political Concerns	Objections about reallocating road space can be mitigated through transparent engagement, clear communications of health and sustainability benefits, and phased pilot schemes.
3. Rural Design Challenges	Rural areas present distinct design constraints; however, they also offer major opportunities. Strengthened rural-urban links and bike-and-ride options can hekp residents reach buses and trains without relying on a car.

CONCLUSION

Cycling is already a defining strength of Oxfordshire, and the county is well positioned to expand its benefits. By addressing infrastructure gaps, improving integration with public transport, and adopting consistent high-quality design standards, cycling can play a central role in reducing car dependency, cutting emissions, improving health, and widening access to opportunity. The recommendations outlined are proven interventions with evidence of success. With political support, an established cycling culture, and clear strategic need, Oxfordshire is uniquely placed to accelerate progress and build a transport system that is sustainable, equitable, and fit for the future.

3. Bus Bunching

Overview

Bus bunching, where two or more buses on the same route arrive within a short interval, is a well-recognised challenge across many public transport systems (Drabicki et al., 2022). It typically occurs when small deviations from scheduled headways emerge due to factors such as increased passenger demand, traffic delays, or longer boarding times (Yang et al., 2024). These minor disruptions can trigger a “catch-up” effect: the first bus becomes increasingly delayed as it takes on more passengers, while the following bus encounters lighter loads and gradually closes the gap (Rezazada et al., 2024). Although this leads to inconsistent waiting times, overcrowded leading buses, and inefficient resource use, it also provides insight into opportunities for data-driven improvement (Drabicki et al., 2022).

In Oxfordshire, workshop participants have identified bus bunching as a priority area, particularly along key corridors including Banbury Road, Woodstock Road, Botley Road, and Iffley Road. These routes serve vital commuting, education, and leisure flows and are already under pressure from wider congestion. Addressing bunching offers a way to improve operational efficiency without major infrastructure changes (Rezazada et al., 2024). While detailed local monitoring data is limited, broader indicators suggest the scale of the challenge. For example, journey times between Blackbird Leys and Oxford city centre have increased by 33% since 2013 (BBC, 2025), demonstrating how delays accumulate and how regularity improvements could deliver substantial benefits. This brief sets out a practical, integrated approach to reducing bus bunching in Oxfordshire, combining enhanced real-time passenger information with proactive route regulation to improve reliability, user experience, and overall network resilience.

Evidence-based Recommendations

Enhanced Real-Time Information and Demand Management

The first recommendation focuses on strengthening real-time information (RTI) as a tool for managing demand and reducing irregular service patterns (Drabicki et al., 2022). By equipping buses with Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) and Automatic Passenger Counting (APC) technology, operators can gather accurate data on bus locations and on-board crowding (Ibid). This can be converted into user-friendly updates across multiple channels (Ibid).

Key actions include:

- upgrading electronic signage at bus stops to provide accurate, real-time arrival predictions
- ensuring consistent updates across mobile apps, websites, and onboard displays
- providing information on several upcoming departures, including expected crowding levels

The goal is to empower passengers to make informed choices, such as waiting for a less crowded bus, thereby distributing demand more evenly and easing pressure on specific vehicles (Drabicki et al., 2022).

Evidence supports this approach. A meta-analysis by Rezazada et al. (2024) finds that enhanced RTI improves passenger comfort, reduces perceived waiting times, and enables more efficient resource allocation. In Warsaw, providing real-time crowding information increased the likelihood that passengers would wait for a less busy service by 30–70%, contributing to a 40% reduction in denied boardings and higher overall satisfaction (Drabicki et al., 2022). These examples suggest that relatively modest investments in information infrastructure can have significant impacts on reliability and user experience.

> “WE NEED BETTER TRACKING MECHANISMS AS PASSENGERS. IF THE ROADS ARE BUSY AND THAT IS WHAT IS CAUSING DELAYS, IT WOULD BE GOOD TO KNOW SO WE CAN PLAN OUR ROUTE BETTER.”
>
> *– Workshop participant, December 2025*

Proactive Route Regulation and Intervention

The second recommendation is to introduce a proactive operational function dedicated to monitoring and regulating service headways. Using real-time data, controllers can intervene early to prevent bunching or correct emerging irregularities (Rezazada et al., 2024). Possible interventions include brief, strategically timed holding at selected control points; adjustments to departure times at route termini; as well as predictive, algorithm-based regulation to anticipate bunching before it occurs (Rezazada et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024).

This approach mirrors practices in air traffic management, where continuous monitoring ensures smooth flow. International evidence supports its effectiveness. For example, on TriMet’s Route 72 in Portland, prediction-based holding significantly improved service regularity without meaningfully increasing total journey times (Yang et al., 2024). Establishing such a function in Oxfordshire would provide a systematic, data-driven mechanism for stabilising service delivery and prioritising long-term reliability over short-term reactive decisions (Rezazada et al., 2024).

Supporting Measures and Implementation Approach

Several supporting measures would help maximise the effectiveness of the core recommendations.

First, strong infrastructure and data integration are essential (Drabicki et al., 2022; Rezazada et al., 2024). This includes rolling out AVL and APC across remaining fleet segments, building a unified data platform, and setting operational thresholds for headway deviation, intervention timing, and crowding levels (Drabicki et al., 2022; Rezazada et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024).

Second, passenger-facing information must be accessible, consistent, and easy to understand (Drabicki et al., 2022). Simple visual crowding indicators, standardised designs across stops and apps, and clear explanations of why buses are sometimes held can all support user understanding (Drabicki et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2024).

Third, demand-management strategies could be enhanced through small behavioural incentives (Rezazada et al., 2024). These might include messaging that encourages "willingness to wait" or limited pilot programmes offering minor fare incentives to shift travel away from peak vehicles (Rezazada et al., 2024).

Finally, communication and evaluation should be central (Rezazada et al., 2024). Pilot schemes on high-pressure corridors, such as Botley Road or Banbury Road, would allow testing, refinement, and stakeholder engagement before wider rollout (Drabicki et al., 2022).

Table 5: Perceived Potential Benefits & Impacts

Short Term (0-12 Months)	Medium Term (1-3 Years)	Long Term (3+ Years)
• Improved access to accurate, real-time service information • Increased passenger confidence and satisfaction • Initial reductions in overcrowding on leading vehicles • Enhanced data collection and monitoring capabilities	• More consistent service intervals and reduced bus bunching • Improved efficiency in fleet utilisation • Smoother passenger distribution across services • Increased reliability and potential ridership growth	• Sustained improvements in network performance and resilience • Reduced congestion along key corridors • Increased attractiveness of public transport relative to private car use • Contribution to broader environmental and sustainability objectives

Additional Recommendations

In addition to the main proposals, bus operators and city officials could implement several low-cost, easy-to-deliver actions to reduce bus bunching. Small operational measures, such as brief holding at key timing points and clear guidance to drivers on maintaining headways, can significantly improve regularity using existing communications systems. Stop-level improvements such as repainting markings, ensuring vehicles can pull in cleanly, and reducing boarding bottlenecks could also help to minimise delays that can trigger bunching.

Timetables could be reviewed to ensure they reflect realistic travel times, with sufficient recovery time at termini. Better use of existing real-time information, ensuring arrivals match across apps, displays, and signs, can help passengers distribute themselves more evenly across services. Finally, trialling these measures on a single corridor allows rapid learning and builds momentum for wider, more systematic reforms.

Table 6: Perceived Challenges to Implementation

1. Passenger Behavioural Responses	Providing real-time information may lead to "herding" behaviour, where passengers make similar decisions (e.g., all avoiding a crowded bus), potentially shifting rather than eliminating congestion. This risk can be mitigated through careful design, such as presenting multiple options rather than a single recommended service.
2. Public Perception of Operational Interventions	Interventions such as holding buses may be perceived negatively if not clearly explained.
3. Institutional and Governance Challenges	Establishing a route regulation function may require new institutional arrangements and coordination between operators. Ensuring clear accountability and alignment with existing structures will be essential.
4. Infrastructure and Investment Requirements	Upgrading vehicles with AVL/APC technology and improving real-time information systems will require upfront investment. However, these costs are relatively modest compared to large-scale infrastructure projects and are likely to deliver strong long-term returns.

CONCLUSION

Bus bunching poses a significant yet highly addressable challenge for Oxfordshire's transport system, highlighting where targeted intervention can have substantial impact (Rezazada et al., 2024). This brief has outlined an integrated approach that combines enhanced real-time information systems with proactive route regulation, supported by behavioural incentives, improved communication, and low-cost operational adjustments (Rezazada et al., 2024). Evidence from other cities shows that these interventions are feasible and effective when implemented in a coordinated, data-driven manner (Drabicki et al., 2022). By adopting this approach, Oxfordshire can strengthen service regularity, improve passenger satisfaction, and contribute to broader objectives of congestion reduction and sustainable mobility (Rezazada et al., 2024). Ultimately, addressing bus bunching is not only a technical solution but a strategic investment in a transport network that promotes reliability, efficiency, and is centred on passenger needs.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

1. Bus Sign Accessibility

Overview

In the youth research workshops, a strong theme that emerged was the potential to better support those who feel less confident navigating the network. Participants felt that while many young people already travel with ease, others would benefit from clearer information and more familiar, user-friendly tools. Groups who stand to gain the most include travellers, people with limited English proficiency, individuals with visual impairments, and those who are new to the area. Their experiences highlighted that challenges often arise not from a lack of transport options, but from information that can feel unclear, overly text-heavy, or inconsistent.

Participants emphasised the positive impact that simple, intuitive guidance could have. Young people described how clearer visual cues would make it easier to understand routes, identify the right stops, interpret service numbers, and confidently navigate connections. They also highlighted the benefits of more visually engaging maps, improved signage, and accessible timetables, particularly for those who do not speak English as a first language. Additionally, providing straightforward explanations of ticketing choices and bus etiquette was seen as a valuable way to help new or anxious travellers feel more at ease.

By strengthening visual design, expanding multilingual resources, and making thoughtful use of digital tools, these measures aim to create a more intuitive and user-friendly transport network. In doing so, they support wider goals around social inclusion, growing ridership, and helping all passengers move around the county with confidence.

Evidence-Based Recommendations

Improved Visual and Multilingual Information

The first recommendation is to introduce clearer, more accessible visual information across the bus network. This includes updated posters and signage at stops and onboard buses, offering straightforward explanations of ticketing, bus etiquette, and simplified route summaries. Materials should be produced in English alongside a small set of priority languages, informed by local demographics.

Participants strongly supported the creation of redesigned network maps modelled on legible systems such as the London Underground diagram. These maps would emphasise clarity and usability, highlighting key routes, interchanges, destinations, and landmarks in an intuitive format that works for both regular and infrequent users. Over time, these improvements could be expanded to include Braille formats and enhanced audio announcements, offering better support for visually impaired passengers. Haylett (2018) notes that in promoting the accessibility of resources through such amendments, the wayfinding ability of individuals may be bolstered.

Integration of QR Codes and Digital Resources

The second recommendation is to deploy QR codes at bus stops and on buses, enabling passengers to access real-time and multilingual travel information via their smartphones. Scanning a QR code could direct passengers to live service updates and arrival times, ticket purchasing links, multilingual explanations of rules, routes, and fares, as well as clear journey-planning tools.

QR systems are inexpensive relative to digital display boards and can be scaled across the network quickly (Gammer et al., 2014). Evidence from other regions demonstrates their value: for example, QR code implementation in Southampton increased perceptions of safety, reduced uncertainty, and improved overall passenger experience, with 65% of users reporting positive outcomes (Ibid). This approach is particularly beneficial for passengers who prefer discreet access to information or who are unfamiliar with the area (Ibid).

> “QR CODES WOULD BE HELPFUL TO SHARE INFORMATION WITH THOSE COMING TO GLOUCESTERSHIRE TO EXPLORE, AND THOSE ALREADY IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE WHO ARE TAKING THE BUS FOR THE FIRST TIME.”
>
> *– Workshop participant, December 2025*

Balanced Approach to Physical and Digital Information

A third recommendation emphasises balancing digital and physical information. Research shows that many infrequent travellers and new users rely heavily on printed materials for pre-travel planning (Islam et al., 2020). At the same time, a significant portion of passengers may lack access to smartphones or digital confidence (Liu et al., 2021). Overreliance on digital tools therefore risks excluding those who may benefit most from accessible information. A combined approach ensures inclusivity. Printed maps, clear signage, and simple visual cues should exist alongside QR codes and online platforms. Multilingual printed materials are especially helpful in reducing language barriers. Examples from Birmingham, where multilingual transport materials are widely used, show that targeted language support can significantly improve users' ability to travel independently (Transport for West Midlands, 2026; Haylett, 2018).

A centralised, easy-to-navigate information platform, similar to Hertfordshire's Intalink, could further streamline access to network-wide information and improve consistency across operators (Intalink, 2026).

Table 7: Perceived Potential Benefits & Impacts

Short Term (0-12 Months)	Medium Term (1-3 Years)	Long Term (3+ Years)
• Improved clarity of transport information for passengers • Increased confidence among new and infrequent users • Reduced uncertainty when navigating routes and services • Enhanced accessibility through multilingual and visual resources	• Increased public transport usage, particularly among underrespresented groups • Improved passenger satisfaction and journey experience • Greater independence for users with language or accessibility barriers • Strengthened alignment with inclusive transport objectives	• Sustained improvements in accessibility and social inclusion • Broader and more diverse public transport user base • Contribution to reduced car dependency and increased sustainable travel • A more equitable, user-friendly, and connected transport network

Additional Recommendations

Beyond the central proposals, several quick, low-cost steps could further improve accessibility. Colour-coded stickers on stops and buses would allow passengers, especially newcomers or those with limited English, to identify their route at a glance. Introducing small "You Are Here" panels or arrows that show direction of travel would help users navigate unfamiliar stops more easily. At busy interchanges, volunteers or staff could run short navigation-support pop-ups, offering real-time help with routes and ticketing.

Consistent icons representing key destinations such as hospitals, colleges, or airports would make it easier for passengers to recognise where a service goes without needing to read detailed text. Low-cost tactile markers, including raised route numbers or textured edges on signs, would support visually impaired users. Adding short "quick tips" on signage, such as how to signal a stop or tap to pay, could also build confidence among new, younger, or anxious travellers. These small steps can meaningfully improve clarity and usability without large-scale investment.

Table 8: Perceived Challenges to Implementation

1. Digital Exclusion	While QR codes provide significant benefits, reliance on digital tools may disadvantage individuals without access to smartphones or digital literacy. Ensuring that physical resources remain available is essential to maintaining inclusivity.
2. Information Overload & Design Challenges	Providing too much information, or presenting it in a complex format, may overwhelm users rather than assist them. Careful design - prioritising clarity, simplicity, and usability - is critical.
3. Resource Maintenance & Updates	Both physical and digital information systems require ongoing maintenance to remain accurate and effective. Without regular updates, there is a risk of outdated or inconsistent information reducing user trust.
4. Coordination Across Stakeholders	Successful implementation will depend on collaboration between local authorities, transport operators, and community groups. Aligning priorities and ensuring consistent delivery across the network may present organisational challenges.

CONCLUSION

Improving bus sign accessibility offers a practical and achievable opportunity to make public transport in Gloucestershire more inclusive, intuitive, and user-friendly. Insights from the Youth Workshops and supporting evidence highlight the need for clearer visual design, stronger multilingual support, and accessible digital tools. The proposed measures, combined with low-cost, incremental improvements, promote confident system navigation for passengers. Successful implementation will require a balanced mix of physical and digital resources, ongoing collaboration between stakeholders, and thoughtful design. With these elements in place, Gloucestershire can significantly enhance passenger confidence, broaden access, and strengthen progress toward social inclusion and sustainable transport. Ultimately, improving accessibility is not just about better signs but furthering the mission of creating a transport environment that is welcoming, equitable, and easy to use for all.

2. Active Travel

Overview

The Youth Workshops demonstrated strong enthusiasm for increasing active travel among children aged 4–10 in Gloucestershire, highlighting it as an opportunity with significant long-term benefits. Encouraging walking, cycling, and scooting from a young age can improve health outcomes, build lifelong physical activity habits, and strengthen children's sense of connection to their communities (Telama, 2009). Participants also noted that encouraging active travel to key public transport interchanges could support wider sustainable travel behaviours by helping children grow comfortable navigating the network.

These aims align closely with national initiatives such as the NHS Better Health programme, which promotes healthier lifestyles through coordinated action across families, schools, and local institutions (NHS, 2021). Workshop participants stressed that a Gloucestershire-specific approach could enhance these ambitions by making them more locally relevant, engaging, and visible. A recurring theme was the importance of embedding initiatives in familiar neighbourhood settings such as parks, libraries, community centres, and local landmarks to ensure that active travel feels both accessible and meaningful. Participants also expressed strong interest in using gamification to make active travel fun and motivating through challenges, rewards, and interactive elements, an approach shown to increase physical activity levels (Harris & Crone, 2021).

> "GETTING KIDS ON THE BUS AT AN EARLY AGE PROMOTES INDEPENDENCE. WHEN I USED THE BUS AS A KID IT GAVE ME THE FREEDOM TO GET AROUND."
>
> *– Workshop participant, December 2025*

This brief sets out a practical, community-based approach to promoting active travel in Gloucestershire. By combining gamified participation, strong local engagement, and integration with public transport, the proposed measures aim to foster healthier lifestyles, build sustainable travel habits, and support a more active and confident generation.

Evidence-Based Recommendations

Gamified Active Travel Scheme

The core recommendation is the introduction of a gamified active travel scheme encouraging children to explore their local areas and engage in regular physical activity. Children would visit designated community hubs such as parks, libraries, and community centres where they could collect rewards such as stickers or badges. These hubs would provide motivation, celebrate progress, and make participation tangible. Including key public transport interchanges as part of the scheme would help children become familiar with buses, trains, and multimodal journeys while reinforcing links between active travel and sustainable transport, reflecting evidence that gamified systems can successfully promote behavioural change (Harris & Crone, 2021; Stuerck, n.d.).

Schools would play a central role in distributing rewards and promoting involvement, ensuring that children from all backgrounds can participate. Over time, the scheme could expand to include community events, competitions, and recognition programmes to maintain engagement and celebrate collective achievements. Ultimately, the aim is to create a fun and supportive environment that encourages healthy routines and builds confidence in navigating local surroundings.

Integration with Public Health and Community Initiatives

A second recommendation is to integrate the scheme with existing public health and community programmes, particularly the NHS Better Health initiative. By aligning with established frameworks, the scheme can benefit from existing infrastructure, partnerships, and public awareness (NHS, 2021). Gloucestershire County Council and local schools would play key roles in coordinating delivery, ensuring that active travel efforts complement wider health, wellbeing, and educational priorities.

This integrated model strengthens the scheme's sustainability by embedding it within existing systems rather than introducing standalone interventions. It also reinforces the connection between physical activity, children's wellbeing, and long-term sustainable travel behaviours.

Evidence-Based Design and Inclusive Participation

A third recommendation is to ensure that the scheme is firmly grounded in evidence and designed for inclusivity. Research shows that early engagement in physical activity strongly influences behaviour later in life (Telama, 2009), and that gamification can successfully increase activity levels in children, as demonstrated by programmes such as Beat the Street (Harris & Crone, 2021). However, evidence also highlights challenges: children may try to bypass physical activity to collect rewards (Ahn et al., 2019), and participation can be shaped by factors such as neighbourhood infrastructure and parental capacity (Panter et al.,2008).

To address these issues, the scheme must promote genuine activity, appeal across different backgrounds, and remain accessible to all. This includes designing rewards and activities that are age-appropriate, gender-inclusive, culturally sensitive, and adaptable to various local contexts. Ensuring that participation does not rely heavily on parental involvement will be particularly important for equitable access, given evidence that socio-economic factors influence participation in active travel (Panter et al., 2008).

Supporting Measures and Implementation Approach

Delivering the scheme effectively will require strong collaboration and phased implementation. Key steps include establishing community hubs; developing an engaging, easy-to-manage reward system; partnering with schools to distribute materials; piloting the scheme in selected areas to test and refine the approach; and ensuring clear communication with parents and communities. The scheme is intentionally low cost and designed to fit within existing community structures—schools, libraries, and community centres already provide ideal platforms.

In the longer term, a digital component could be added to enhance the gamified experience. This might include interactive maps, progress tracking, or digital badges. While such features would require additional resources and technological capacity, they offer potential to increase engagement and maintain children's interest over time, reflecting wider evidence on gamification and digital engagement in physical activity (Stuerck, n.d.).

Table 9: Perceived Potential Benefits & Impacts

Short Term (0-12 Months)	Medium Term (1-3 Years)	Long Term (3+ Years)
• Increased awareness of active travel opportunites among children and families • High initial engagement thrugh rewards and gamified participation • Strengthened connections between schools, communities, and local hubs • Improved confidence in navigating local environments	• Increased levels of physical activity among participating children • Development of regular active travel habits • Greater familiarity with public transport interchanges and services • Enhanced community engagement and participantion	• Sustained improvements in children's health and wellbeing • Long-term behavioural change supporting active and sustainable travel • Increased public transport use linked to active travel habits • Stronger, more connected, and health-conscious communiites

Additional Recommendations

Alongside the core proposals, several small, low-cost measures could make active travel more appealing for families. Bus and rail providers could introduce colourful "walking lines" or chalk footprints guiding children from stations and bus stops to nearby schools and parks. Occasional "walk to your stop days" or "car-free mornings" could encourage families to walk the last part of their journey, supported by small rewards.

Additional actions could include extra scooter parking racks, temporary "slow zones" in busy walking areas, and pop-up stalls offering hi-vis stickers, reflectors, and safe route maps. Rail and bus providers could also include gentle nudges on posters or digital screens—such as "It's a 7-minute walk to the park" or "Why not walk the final stop?"—to encourage active choices in a supportive way.

Table 10: Perceived Challenges to Implementation

1. Safety Concerns & Parental Perceptions	Parents may have concerns about children's safety when engaging in active travel. Ensuring clear communication and emphasising that participation can be supervised and adapted to individual circumstances will be important.
2. Inequalities in Particpation	Access to active travel opportunities may vary depending on neighbourhood infrastructure and parental support. Without careful design, the scheme could risk unequal participation. Strong school involvement and inclusive design can help mitigate this.
3. Risk of Superficial Engagement	There is a possibility that participants may focus on rewards rather than genuine physical activity. Designing the scheme to prioritise meaningful engagement and sustained behaviour change will be essential.
4. Resource Coordination & Long-Term Sustainability	While the scheme is low cost, it requires coordination between multiple stakeholders, including schools, local authorities, and community organisations. Maintaining long-term engagement and updating the scheme over time will require ongoing commitment.

CONCLUSION

Gloucestershire has a significant opportunity to promote active travel among children in an engaging, inclusive, and sustainable way. Insights from the Youth Workshops, supported by a evidence from previous comparable initiatives, show the potential of gamified and community-based approaches to foster healthy habits and confidence in using public transport. By embedding the scheme within existing structures and designing it for broad accessibility, the initiative can support meaningful improvements in health, wellbeing, and sustainable travel behaviour. With careful planning, collaboration, and ongoing evaluation, Gloucestershire can cultivate a more active, confident, and connected generation.

3. Travel Anxiety

Overview

Travel anxiety has become increasingly recognised as a significant factor influencing how people interact with public transport (Faulkner et al., 2022). While traditional considerations such as cost, frequency, and physical accessibility remain important, growing evidence emphasises the impact of psychological comfort on travel behaviour, with groups such as women and young independent travellers particularly effected (Mackett, 2019). These concerns can arise at many stages of a journey such as during trip planning, navigating unfamiliar routes, waiting in poorly lit areas, or travelling alone, thereby illustrating that solutions must extend beyond improvements to any single mode of transport.

Addressing travel anxiety presents a meaningful opportunity to improve the passenger experience, enhance inclusivity, and create a more welcoming transport environment (Faulkner et al., 2022). This brief proposes the creation of an intermodal safety network centred on a real-time assistance helpline. The aim is to provide consistent, accessible support throughout the full journey, giving passengers clear pathways to reassurance whenever needed. Through thoughtful design and collaboration, such an approach can help build confidence, improve perceptions of safety, and encourage more people to use public transport with ease.

> "HAVING A SERVICE THAT YOU COULD TALK ABOUT MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT WITH WOULD MAKE GOING FROM BUS TO TRAIN OR VICE VERSA LESS INTIMIDATING."
>
> *– Workshop participant, December 2025*

Evidenced-based Recommendations

Intermodal Assistance Helpline

The core recommendation is the introduction of an integrated assistance helpline forming part of a wider intermodal safety network. Phone support networks, like those put forward by our Forum members, are not only a common tool for service provision in transport but any industry dealing with customer support more generally (Chicu et al., 2019). This service would give passengers immediate access to trained staff who can offer real-time guidance, reassurance, and practical support throughout their journey, whether they are using buses, trains, or navigating key interchanges. By operating across multiple platforms including mobile apps, QR-linked webpages, station signage, and ticketing systems the helpline aims to provide continuity of care from origin to destination.

The purpose is to reduce uncertainty and support passengers during moments of anxiety, turning potentially stressful experiences into manageable ones. It is important to note however that a public information campaign promoting such a service would be vital to uptake, given such a campaign may not only increase familiarity and trust in the service, but that underutilization of such services has most commonly been the result of unawareness of their existence (Mackett, 2019).

> "I JUST WANT TO TALK THROUGH THE JOURNEY WITH SOMEONE WHO KNOWS BUSES AND TRAINS BETTER THAN I DO."
>
> *– Workshop participant, December 2025*

Staff Training and Quality of Support

High-quality staff training is essential for the effectiveness of any helpline (Faulkner et al., 2022). Research on phone-based support services shows that their success depends heavily on staff communication (Mackett, 2019). Forum participants emphasised the need for patient, clear, and empathetic interactions, particularly when engaging with anxious travellers. Investment in specialised training, such as de-escalation techniques, active listening, and trauma-informed communication, would ensure that staff are equipped to support a wide range of situations (Faulkner et al., 2022). Positive, reassuring interactions can play a crucial role in building long-term trust and encouraging people to continue using public transport (Mackett, 2019).

Complementing Existing Safety Initiatives

The intermodal network is intended to complement existing support systems, not replace them. Current initiatives such as help desks, travel guidance materials, and Passenger Assist already provide valuable assistance (Mackett, 2019). However, these often rely on passengers actively seeking help in visible or formal ways, which may feel intimidating for those experiencing anxiety (Faulkner et al., 2022). The proposed network offers a more discreet, flexible, and continuous form of support that can be accessed independently (Mackett, 2019).

Importantly, the proposal recognises that travel anxiety extends beyond transport infrastructure itself. Many challenges arise in the “last mile”—getting to and from stops or stations (Mackett, 2019). By considering the full journey, the network aligns with broader efforts to improve local environments, complementing measures such as improved lighting, enhanced CCTV coverage, and increased staff presence (Faulkner et al., 2022).

Table 11: Perceived Potential Benefits & Impacts

Short Term (0-12 Months)	Medium Term (1-3 Years)	Long Term (3+ Years)
• Increased passenger reassurance and confidence when travelling • Improved access to real-time support during journeys • Greater awareness of available safety and support resources • Enhanced perception of safety across the transport network	• Increased independent travel amng perviously hesitant users • Improved passenger satisfaction and trust in transport providers • Greater inclusivity, particularly for vulnerable or anxious travellers • Strengthened integration of support across different transport modes	• Sustained increases in public transport use • Long-term improvements in perceptions of safety and accessibility • Contribution to wider goals such as social inclusion and reduced care dependency • Development of a more supportive, user-centred transport system

Additional Recommendations

Alongside the main proposals, transport providers and local officials can take several simple, low-cost steps to reduce travel anxiety. One option is to introduce “what to expect” posters at stops and stations—friendly, visual guides showing boarding steps, how to request assistance, and what happens during the journey. These can demystify public transport and help new users feel more in control.

Creating small calm zones at stops featuring better lighting, seating, greenery, or shelter can make waiting feel safer and more comfortable. Transport staff could also offer occasional “meet the driver” or “meet the conductor” sessions, giving anxious or inexperienced travellers a chance to ask questions before travelling alone. Positive reassurance cues, such as small stickers or signage reading “The driver is here to help” or “Staff available at the next station,” can support passengers without requiring additional staffing.

Table 12: Perceived Challenges to Implementation

1. Measuring Impact & Outcomes	The effects of interventions targeting psychologival factors can be difficult to quantify. Changes in confidence, perception, and behaviour are often gradual and complex, requiring qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation methods.
2. Resources & Staffing Requirements	Establishing and maintaining a high-quality helpline service requires investment in staffing, training, and infrastructure. Ensuring consistent service quality over time will be essential.
3. Awareness & User Engagement	For the service to be effective, passengers must be award of its existence and feel comfortable using it. Clear communication and accesible design will be critical to encourage uptake.
4. Coordination Across Systems & Stakeholders	Delivering an intermodal network requires coordination between transport providers, local authorities, and partner organisations. Aligning systems and responsibilities may present organisational challenges.

CONCLUSION

Travel anxiety is an often-overlooked barrier to public transport use, yet addressing it is essential for building a more inclusive, supportive, and user-centred transport system. This brief proposes an intermodal safety network built around a real-time assistance helpline, supported by accessible information and high-quality staff training. By complementing existing initiatives and filling current gaps, this approach offers a comprehensive framework for improving passenger confidence, enhancing perceptions of safety, and encouraging greater use of public transport. With careful design, strong collaboration, and ongoing evaluation, the proposed interventions can deliver lasting benefits for communities across Gloucestershire.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

A central finding is the transformative impact of youth-led inquiry in shaping credible, practical transport solutions. The workshops provided a structured yet creative space for participants to articulate their lived experiences, identify daily challenges, and define aspirations for a better transport system. Crucially, they moved beyond sharing opinions to analysing barriers, assessing feasibility, and developing informed recommendations. Their proposals balanced creativity with realism, combining innovative ideas with practical, deliverable solutions, from integrated ticketing and cycling improvements to accessibility measures, active travel schemes, and initiatives to reduce travel anxiety. This highlights a key lesson: when young people are trusted with responsibility and supported by expertise, they produce ideas that are both imaginative and grounded in wider policy priorities, including climate resilience, accessibility, and fairness.

Translating Youth Insight into Policy Recommendations

The second phase deepened this impact. Through university placements with the University of Gloucestershire, young ambassadors developed early insights into evidence-based policy briefs, drawing on research, case studies, and stakeholder input. This process strengthened their skills in analysis, communication, and policy development, reflecting the interdisciplinary demands of modern transport systems. Vision 2225 demonstrates that youth engagement can simultaneously support innovation and build the next generation of transport leaders.

The recommendations also reveal strong alignment between youth priorities and contemporary transport challenges. In Oxfordshire, participants emphasised multimodal, low-carbon mobility, highlighting integrated ticketing, flexible passes, and high-quality cycling infrastructure, alongside the importance of affordability and ease of use. In Gloucestershire, the focus centred on accessibility, confidence, and community connection, with proposals including multilingual information, clearer mapping, QR-enabled updates, and approaches to reducing travel anxiety. Together, these recommendations reflect a clear understanding of transport systems as social spaces that shape confidence, independence, health, and wellbeing.

A recurring theme across both counties was the importance of “small wins”: low-cost, achievable interventions such as clearer signage, improved lighting, QR codes, and better wayfinding. These proposals reflect a pragmatic perspective that prioritises immediate, meaningful improvements to everyday experience, offering a valuable complement to longer-term infrastructure investment.

The programme created meaningful opportunities for young people to engage directly with transport stakeholders, bridging the gap between lived experience and system delivery. By presenting and discussing their ideas with professionals, participants were able to strengthen and refine their recommendations, ensuring they reflect both user needs and the practical context in which change must take place.

WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TRUSTED WITH RESPONSIBILITY AND SUPPORTED BY EXPERTISE, THEY PRODUCE IDEAS THAT ARE BOTH IMAGINATIVE AND GROUNDED IN WIDER POLICY PRIORITIES...

Ultimately, Vision 2225 demonstrates that youth engagement is not supplementary but essential to designing effective, inclusive, and future-ready transport systems. Young people bring insight into emerging travel behaviours, alongside the curiosity and adaptability needed to respond to long-term challenges around sustainability, digital integration, and equitable mobility.

In summation, Vision 2225 provides a compelling case for embedding youth participation within transport planning. The programme strengthened youth voice, developed skills, and produced practical, evidence-informed recommendations capable of shaping local mobility systems. Its success offers a clear and transferable model for stakeholders: embed youth voice early, invest in their development, and create meaningful pathways for participation in decision-making. Doing so will not only improve the inclusivity and responsiveness of transport systems, but help ensure they are designed for the needs of those who will rely on them most in the decades ahead.

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Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire Community Rail Partnership (GOCRP) is a grassroots organisation, working to strengthen our community's relationship with train travel and public transport in our region. We do that by engaging with and listening to our community and visitors, to understand their needs, thoughts and opinions on travelling by rail and other sustainable modes of public transport. When we build trusting and confident relationships, we can bring about lasting change for the future.
We also drive research-led initiatives, influence policy and work closely with industry partners, stakeholders and local government to create a system that is inclusive for all – today, tomorrow and for the future.

GCRP
Gloucestershire
Community Rail Partnership

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