

Looking at Lincoln's Transport System

Karen Lee MP Report



PUTTING LINCOLN FIRST

Introduction

Lincoln is a beautiful city. From the Cathedral to Hartsholme Country Park, we live in a city which we can all be proud of. But the difficulty is not whether there is something new to learn or discover, it's whether you can cross the city centre during peak travel times.

I have lived in Lincoln all of my life and the problems with transport have only got worse. I recognise constituents' frustrations. Our city has changed over the years, and the transport infrastructure no longer reflects our needs.

When I stood to be Lincoln's MP, one of my election pledges was to address the transport problems facing Lincoln. I formed the Lincoln Transport Taskforce to bring together local stakeholders to discuss our transport challenges. The group includes Lincolnshire County Council, Lincoln City Council, Network Rail, Stage Coach, University of Lincoln, Lincoln's Cycling Community and the Chamber of Commerce.

We are working on creating a vision for a better connected, efficient Lincoln. The evidence is clear; if we don't solve the problem now, travel issues are only going to get harder to solve.

To ensure Lincoln residents can contribute to the Taskforce's vision, I have undertaken a survey and public engagement event. This report will summarise the findings of each activity and provide conclusions which will inform the Taskforce's next steps. The scope of this report will be restricted to Lincoln's transport infrastructure, rather than addressing wider regional and national infrastructure. Therefore, this report will not confront transport issues such as rail travel, as control is beyond the power of local stakeholders.

The aim of the survey and public engagement event was to discover the attitudes of local people to the transport challenges. As Lincoln's Member of Parliament and Chair of the Taskforce, I wanted to know how local issues have emerged, especially around congestion and climate change. This informed a series of survey questions to discover current behaviour and attitude indicators. I will explain the approach to the survey and public engagement event in the data collection section. This will then inform further analysis of my findings in the subsequent chapters.

My general conclusion will not be a surprise to those living in Lincoln, the transport system doesn't meet the needs of travellers. The options aren't there; buses are deemed expensive and unreliable and cycling isn't incentivised. The urge to leave the car and travel by other means is not encouraged in Lincoln.

This report will be presented to the Transport Taskforce and will feed in to the future vision of how Lincoln's transport network should function.

Context

This chapter will summarise Lincoln's current transport situation and how people are engaging with it. Once the local behaviours and pressures are outlined, the Lincolnshire County Council Strategy will be outlined. Before proceeding to local level analysis, this section will outline the national transport situation.

National Context

Whilst this report focuses on constituents' attitudes towards local transport, this section seeks to outline relevant trends at the regional and national level.

In comparison to other counties, Lincolnshire's transport infrastructure has received less central government funding. Analysis by the Institute for Public Policy Research found that, in 2017-18, the East Midlands spent the smallest amount on transport per person of any region. East Midlands' transport spending equated to £245 per person in 2017-18, well below the UK average of £483. In comparison, the region to spend the most on transport in this period was London (£1019), and the second lowest expenditure was in the South West region (£290).

Transport expenditure in the East Midlands has also increased by one of the smallest amounts of any UK region. Since 2013-14, East Midlands' transport expenditure increased by £32 per person. By contrast, the West Midlands increased its transport expenditure by £185 per person over the same period.

Bus travel is a key element of the national transport network and account for 59% of public transport journeys. However, since 2010, bus budgets have been cut by 45%, leading to thousands of routes being cut or withdrawn.

In 2017/18, there were 75 journeys per head across Great Britain, the lowest level on record. Bus mileage in England decreased by 3.4% compared with 2016/17. In the past year to March 2018 local bus fares in England have increased by 2.8%, faster than inflation and wages.

Nationally, attitudes to cycling reflect concerns around safety. According to the British Social Attitudes Survey, 62% of Britons agree or strongly agree that "It is too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads". Nationally, there has been little change since 2011 in the frequencies per week with which people cycle, suggesting that many areas of the UK struggle to incentivise cycling.

Local Context

According to figures used by Lincolnshire County Council, the population of Lincoln makes up around 29% of the total population of Lincolnshire. The population of Lincoln is around 98,000 and the city has a population density of 2,758 people per square kilometre.

At peak times, Lincoln's road network grinds to a halt. This can be explained by 75% of commuters choosing to travel by Car. This compares to only 13% of people choosing to walk, 5% travel by bus and 5% cycle. Most concerning is that 52% of commuters who live and work within the urban area choose to drive to work.

Lincoln has comparatively high levels of cycling to the rest of the UK. The Department for Transport Active Lives Survey found that 22.4% of people in Lincoln cycle at least once a month compared to 16.9% across England. Furthermore, 17% of people in Lincoln cycle once a week compared 12% across England.

Bus patronage in Lincoln has been on a constant decline since 2010. According to research conducted by the Department of Transport, Bus Patronage has reduced by 20% between 2010 and 2018.

Locally and nationally, public transport is not being effectively utilised and engaged with. Good transport is a vital element of sustainable local communities. It creates safer communities, healthier children, equality and social inclusion, a cleaner environment and a better local economy. When transport is ineffective, all of these areas are damaged.

Lincolnshire Transport Strategy

The aim of a Local Authority Transport Strategy is to set out their policies and programmes for transport, and a set of targets which they can be measured against. An effective transport strategy identifies the challenges locally and builds a programme which addresses these problems, but also recognises future pressures. A Local Transport Strategy provides the tool to create a discussion between Local Authorities and stakeholders to shape the future of transport delivery in the community.

The Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), as leaders on transport locally, are in the process of updating their Lincoln transport strategy at the time of this reports release. The existing transport strategy was developed in 2006, updated in 2008 and reviewed in 2013.

LCC's approach is characterised by two phases: understanding past and future situations and developing and delivering options. Engagement has been central to the first phase and informs the understanding of the current and future situations. This then informs the second phase which constructs the report after an assessment of the options available.

The final Transport Strategy is underpinned by 3 areas: the economy, land use and transport infrastructure. This considers what the purpose of transport is (employment, education, retail, healthcare), where transport must access (city centre, urban areas, rural areas) and what mode of transport is available (taxi, bus, train, car, cycling). Other concerns such as climate change, an aging population and inclusion also dictate the emphasis of the final transport plan.

The County Council are currently developing an updated strategy and are undertaking a consultation process with local stakeholders, which includes the general public, businesses, local organisations and local district and parish councils. The updated strategy is expected to be published in Autumn 2019. The conclusions from this report will be fed into the Lincolnshire County Council's current consultation process.

Data Collection

My two community engagement initiatives for this report, the survey and community engagement event, were designed to include as many residents as possible in creating a vision for a better connected, efficient Lincoln.

Survey

The survey was designed to give residents a simple, user-friendly opportunity to express their opinions about transport in Lincoln. It was particularly important that the survey was easy to use, to ensure the widest possible participation across all demographics. To aid the survey's reach, it was both shared widely online (on my website and social media accounts) and physical copies were distributed to anyone who requested one. Paper copies were sent to older residents or people without internet access. In total the survey received 640 responses to the survey, representing all age ranges.

The survey was designed to be simple and quick to complete, in order to maximise participation. To best serve the Transport Taskforce's aim of creating a new vision for transport in Lincoln, the questions were focused on clearly discerning the attitudes and opinions of residents.

The questions were as follows:

1. What is your age? *Respondents were given a choice between 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74 and 75+.*
2. What is your main form of transport? *Respondents were given a choice to select one option between Car, Bus, Bike, Motorcycle, Walking, Taxi and Train.*
3. How often do you use public transport? *Respondents were given a choice to select one option between Every-day, Every week, Every month, Very rarely, Never.*
4. Are you able to travel to most places you need to access in Lincoln by bus? *Respondents were asked Yes or No and if they selected no, asked to detail what areas of Lincoln are most difficult to access?*
5. How much do you spend on transport per week? *Respondents were given a choice to select one option between £0, £1 - £10, £11 - £20, £21 - £30, £31 - £40, £41 - £50, £51+.*
6. Does public transport in Lincoln provide value for money? *Respondents were asked Yes or No.*
7. Is public transport in Lincoln punctual? *Respondents were asked Yes or No.*
8. What would make you more likely to travel by public transport? *Respondents were asked to rank: 1 = favourite, 5 = least favourite from Improved punctuality, Lower fares, More routes, Higher Frequency, Free internet access.*
9. What would encourage you to cycle more? *Respondents were asked to rank: 1 = favourite, 5 = least favourite from Cycle lanes, Park and bike facilities, Cycle to work scheme, Secure cycle storage, Cycle training opportunities.*
10. Would you be likely to use a Park-and-Ride (shuttle buses into the city centre) facility? *Respondents were asked Yes or No.*

Community Engagement Event.

The transport community engagement event was held on the 21st February. It was advertised widely both online and through volunteer-delivered leaflets. It took place at Lincoln City Football Club's Sincil Bank Stadium, a well-recognised and widely accessible venue. 64 people were present at the event.

The event's objective was to provide those living in Lincoln, and the surrounding area, with the opportunity to have their say on how Lincoln's transport system can be improved. Speakers for the event included Kate Ellis from Lincoln City Council, Matt Cranwell from Stagecoach and Mark Hollingworth from Lincoln's cycling lobby. After a talk from each of the speakers, residents were able to make their views heard and ask questions.

Survey Analysis

This section outlines the findings of the survey. It begins by summarising the sample to uncover the age and transport preferences of respondents. Afterwards, it will undertake simple descriptive analysis to understand respondent's attitudes to the local transport system.

The survey was open from the 14th January to the 25th February and amassed 640 responses. When summarising responses to the first two questions, this report will enact a simple 'rule of thumb' which sets a threshold of 100 responses as a robust category. All categories will still be analysed, but any extracted conclusions from categories below this threshold must be considered in the context of their small sample size.

Independent Variables

Age Categories

Figure 1 presents the largest respondent age category was '45-54' with 127 (19.97%). This was closely followed by '55-64' with 124 (19.50%). Conversely, the lowest response was from the age category 18-24 with only 37 responses (5.82%). The age category of '75+' received 20 more than '18-24', with a total of 57 (8.96%).

Age Category	Number	Percentage
18-24	37	5.82%
25-34	90	14.15%
35-44	100	15.72%
45-54	127	19.97%
54-64	124	19.50%
65-74	101	15.88%
75+	57	8.96%

Figure 1 shows that categories '35-44', '45-54', '55-64' and '65-74' each possess more than 100 respondents and meet the 100-response threshold set in this report. Category '25-34' falls short of this report's robust criterion by 10 respondents, but analysis will be undertaken to provide conclusions which can be considered as explanatory conclusions, rather than robust conclusions.

Furthermore, figure 1 also shows that both the '75+' and '18-24' age categories received considerably less than 100 respondents. While these sections will be analysed, any conclusions must be taken in the context of their low response.

Travel Type

The majority of survey respondents predominantly travel by car. Figure 2 shows that 58.61% (371) of respondent's main form of transport is by car. This is considerably higher than bus at 16.11% (102) and walking at 15.80% (100).

The other transport categories (bike, train and other) did not meet the set criteria. Resultantly, these categories will not be included in the forthcoming descriptive analysis. Each age category in figure 1 travelled by car considerably more than the other options, apart from '18-24' who choose to walk.

Transport Category	Number	Percentage
Car	371	58.61%
Bus	102	16.11%
Walking	100	15.80%
Bike	38	6%
Train	13	2%
Other	9	1.50%

Public Transport Use in Lincoln

Figure 3 shows that 40% of respondents very rarely use public transport. This is 16% more than those who use it every week. This report can assume that 33% (every day and every week) use public transport as a means to travel to work on a regular basis. On the other hand, almost half either never or very rarely use public transport (48%) This may be an explanatory factor of why congestion is so severe during peak commuting hours.

Frequency	Percentage	Total
Everyday	9%	57
Every Week	24%	153
Every Month	19%	120
Very Rarely	40%	252
Never	8%	53

The majority of the age categories '25-34' (49%), '35-44' (44%), '45-54' (43%) and '55-64' (46%) each 'very rarely' use public transport. The other groups behaviour which either use public transport everyday (18-24 = 34%) or every week (65-74 = 43% and 75+ = 45%) can be explained by their age i.e. young people not being able to afford cars and bus passes.

Value for Money and Punctuality of Public Transport in Lincoln

Figure 4 displays that a super-majority of respondents believe that public transport does not provide value for money. Furthermore, figure 5 also shows that a super-majority do not believe public transport is punctual.

Figure 4: Does public transport in Lincoln provide value for money?		
Opinion	Responses	Total
Yes	32%	193
No	68%	404

Figure 4 and figure 5 provide explanations to the conclusions from figure 3. The age categories '18-24', '25-34', '35-44', '45-54' and '55-64' each believe that public transport is neither punctual or nor provides value for money. This was not the case for 65-74 and 75+ who still believed public transport was not punctual but did think it was value for money. However, those 65 years old and older receive free bus travel, therefore, cost effective public transport does not concern them. Interestingly, 69% of those who travel predominantly by car believe public transport does not provide value for money and 59% believe it isn't punctual. This is the group of people who must be persuaded to use public transport and currently believe the service does not meet their needs.

Figure 5: Is public transport in Lincoln punctual?		
Opinion	Percentage	Total
Yes	39%	232
No	61%	363

Incentivising Public Transport Use in Lincoln

The previous sections of data analysis inform the assumption that poor engagement with the public transport system is because it does not provide value for money and is not punctual. Figure 6 aims to explain what would incentivise respondents to use public transport.

Unsurprisingly, a majority of respondents believe lower fares would incentivise them to use public transport more often. This is in line with the response to figure 4 which showed people do not believe that using public transport represents value for money.

Figure 6: What would make you more likely to travel by public transport?		
Incentive	Percentage	Total
Improved Punctuality	19%	98
Lower Fares	37%	199
More Routes	22%	120
Higher Frequency	22%	124
Free Internet Access	7%	38

The age categories '18-24', '25-34', '35-44', 45-54 and 55-64 each believe lower fares will incentivise public transport use. As fare prices are not issues for 65-74 and 75+, the former believes more routes would be a better solution and the latter prefers a higher frequency. 40% of respondents who travel by car believe that lower fares would incentivise them to use public transport. This may be an effective strategy to increase bus patronage.

Incentivising Cycling in Lincoln

Incentivising cycling is an effective way of reducing traffic and improving public health. Figure 7 shows that people in Lincoln overwhelmingly believe that more cycle lanes (71%) would incentivise them to travel by bike. Across all age categories, cycle lanes were seen as the most effective way to incentivise cycling. This is interesting when taken in the context of Lincoln having comparatively high levels of cycling to the rest of the UK; allowing for the assumption that there is appetite for cycling in Lincoln which needs to be met with the sufficient infrastructure.

Figure 7: What would encourage you to cycle more?		
Option	Percentage	Total
Cycle Lanes	71%	371
Secure Cycle Storage	14%	73
Park and Bike Facilities	8%	38
Cycle Training Opportunities	7%	34
Cycle to work schemes	5%	25

Park and Ride

Park and Ride facilities, alongside a value for money bus network, may relieve the congestion in Lincoln at peak travel times. However, figure 8 shows that respondents believe they would be unlikely to use the service. This result was reflected across all age categories. However, when only analysing responses from those that drive, 52% said they would not use the service. This is a 6% reduction from responses of the overall sample.

Figure 8: Would you be likely to use a Park-and-Ride (shuttle bus service into the city centre) facility?		
Option	Percentage	Total
Yes	42%	262
No	58%	368

This may be explained by a proportion of the respondents living in the city centre, as the park and ride would be situated on the outskirts of the city. Furthermore, a park and ride facility would require a behaviour change supported by incentives, i.e. reliable and cost effective.

Community Engagement Event

This section will outline the key discussion topics of the community engagement event. The community engagement event raised three areas of concern: cycling, bus routes and 'political courage'.

The audience predominantly asked questions relating to cycling in Lincoln. There was a keen interest in increasing cycling, but there were concerns regarding the infrastructure currently in place.

Numerous attendees questioned how the cycling infrastructure could be improved, especially outside schools, the train station and in rural areas. Furthermore, there were health and safety concerns regarding cycling on paths in residential areas, and along Skellingthorpe Road and St Mary's road. While there was an acknowledgement by all that more needed to be done to improve the system and maintain health and safety, it was also stated that there is no easy fix. Mark Hollingworth's noted that while a successful cycling infrastructure had worked in Germany, it did take 20 years to implement a cycling strategy and influence behaviour.

This led on to a discussion about how the cycling infrastructure could be improved. More than one attendee questioned what progress had been made thus far. The panel highlighted that through engagement events such as this one, which highlights concerns which are fed back into the Transport taskforce, they were being heard by local stakeholders. More so, those on the panel acknowledged that the taskforce did accept that the current situation is not acceptable. Kate Ellis noted that there are critical points which require investment and stakeholders are listening more now than they had before.

Another attendee noted that the need to incentivise cycling had never been more important due to the threat of climate change. Any reforms to the transport infrastructure must be underpinned by sustainable solutions. I agreed and noted that it is central to the taskforce's vision planning. Kate Ellis also highlighted that it is built into the City Council's modelling phase which tests potential solutions.

Bus routes were also a central discussion point of the event. Numerous attendees raised problems with bus routes in Bracebridge Heath. One attendee was extremely critical of public transport access to Bracebridge Heath on an evening, which he said was non-existent. This was followed by the point that houses are being built in Bracebridge Heath and they require additional public transport to meet the area's demands. Matt Cranwell from Stagecoach disagreed and said the research that they had undertaken did not support the creation of additional bus routes, but they will monitor the situation.

Finally, the idea of 'political courage' was raised numerous times throughout the evening, in reference to the courage of local stakeholders to take difficult decisions to rebalance the transport infrastructure away from cars and in favour of public transport. This approach can be supported by a pedestrianised city centre which actively removes cars from the centre. The panel all accepted that political leadership was necessary at all levels. The taskforce, which brings together all those with influence, is that vehicle for change. Once the taskforce

has created a vision for Lincoln, which is informed from group members various consultations (including this document), there will be a bidding process undertaken to put into action the improvements needed. I noted that it's important to get that vision right, and in line with the needs of people of Lincoln.

Written Submissions

To allow for more detailed submissions than permitted in the survey, I also welcomed written submissions either via email or post.

Bus Travel

Bus travel in Lincoln was the issue which was raised most frequently within the written submissions. Within this, the two most commonly raised concerns were the poor value of money provided by bus travel and the limited coverage provided by Lincoln's buses.

Most constituents who wrote about bus travel expressed their concern at the value for money provided by Lincoln's bus system. To give one example, a constituent noted that it costs their family £104 a month to send their two children to school on the 643 service from Skellingthorpe, a service which is also criticised for a severe lack of punctuality.

Many respondents also raised concern regarding the lack of coverage provided by Lincoln's bus service, with many residents reporting difficulty when accessing Skellingthorpe. A frequent complaint was the fact that bus travel is reduced after 6pm, which either prevents residents from travelling within the city or incentivises them to drive and contributes to traffic issues. Many residents, including several pensioners, said that this lack of coverage reduced their independence.

Regarding potential solutions, one resident said that they believe Lincoln would benefit from a tram electrification plan like Sheffield and Manchester. Another suggested that tickets should be applicable across different companies, to avoid the current situation where if a delayed bus doesn't turn up customers have to pay again if the next bus to arrive is from a different company. Another suggestion was for dogs to be consistently allowed on buses. A common recommendation was that the council should re-introduce the over 60's bus pass, after the concession was taken away when the government raised the state pension age to 66.

Another frequent policy suggestion was to improve democratic accountability and state or council ownership of local bus services. As one resident put it, "perhaps if the utilities were brought back into nationalisation, like they were designed to, the fares taken would pay for the energy, investment in future advances and developments, wages, and maintenance." Another resident cited the award-winning municipally owned bus service in Reading: "We recently moved here from Reading where the council run the bus service and it is really good. They have low fares and the service is frequent. Would it be possible for Lincoln council to run the local buses?"

Cycling

Cycling was one of the most frequently raised topics within the written submissions. Numerous constituents argued for more cycle lanes, with one resident going as far as saying 'I have a bike, but to be honest I am too scared to cycle on the roads.'

Suggestions included improvements to existing cycle paths, measures to prevent vehicles from blocking cycle paths, and introducing signage to encourage cyclists to use existing lanes rather

than cycling on busy roads. One respondent specified that signage would be useful at the cycle path near the Carlton Centre.

The wide interest in cycling reflects the fact that many respondents stated that environmental concerns are a priority. Multiple residents expressed a desire for Lincoln's transport system to reduce its carbon footprint and to move away from fossil fuels and towards more sustainable energy sources.

Other respondents suggested that there should be more provisions to take bikes on trains and local buses. Another proposal was for more safe storage for bikes, including better sign-posting to the storage available in the car park at St Marks. One constituent suggested introducing a more comprehensive bike and helmet hire within the city. It was also recognised that problems with cycling infrastructure are not unique to Lincoln, and that more funding and minimum standards are urgently required from the Department of Transport.

It should be noted that concerns were raised that increased cycle lanes should not be at the detriment of further narrowing Lincoln's roads. Several constituents expressed a desire for Lincoln's roads to be widened. One constituent suggested that the A15 should be duelled, and another suggested that the road between Skellingthorpe and Doddington Road junctions be duelled, although it was recognised that this would be a long-term and costly endeavour.

Traffic and Parking

The following areas were highlighted by constituents as being particularly prone to traffic jams at peak times:

- 'At rush hour it is virtually impossible to get onto (or over) the bypass from Skellingthorpe road as traffic going south from Carlhome road roundabout sits on the roundabout over the exit from Skellingthorpe road.'
- The Skellingthorpe/Tritton Road junction.
- The A46 Lincoln bypass from Skellingthorpe to Birchwood.
- The A607 between Harmston and Bracebridge Heath.
- The traffic lights between Yarborough Road/West Parade and Carholme Road/Brayford Way and Burton Road.
- The 3-lane changeable section from Lindum Hill to Canwick Hill.

Several residents also raised concerns regarding parking in Lincoln, with one resident arguing that 'parking is the main problem for car users living in the city.' Suggestions included an extension of parking permits on the Burton road area to support those visiting the doctors, dentist and local community. Another constituent expressed outrage at the fact that nurses have to pay for parking during their shifts at Lincoln hospitals. One resident raised the issue of residents parking permits, which do not apply on Sundays or after 6pm, which is often when working people return home.

Conclusions

The opinions and views of Lincoln residents who participated in my community engagement initiatives reflect that our city's transport system is not working for too many people.

A clear conclusion is that Lincoln residents predominantly travel by car, and do not feel incentivised to use alternative forms of transport. 59% of survey respondents said their main form of transport is by car, and this was echoed in concerns raised by the written submissions and community engagement event. 40% of respondents very rarely use public transport, which must be a contributing factor to severe congestion during peak commuting hours.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that the causes of Lincoln's transport issues can partly be explained by a perception that public transport does not provide value for money. 68% of survey respondents said that they did not believe public transport in Lincoln did not provide value for money, whilst 'lower fares' was the most popular incentive to encourage residents to use public transport more often.

Lincoln residents also raised multiple concerns about the punctuality and coverage of local transport in Lincoln. 61% of survey respondents said that they did not find public transport in our city to be punctual, whilst multiple written submissions raised concerns about the unreliability and early finish times of local buses.

However, it must be noted that a majority of survey respondents said that they were able to access most places in Lincoln by public transport. It should also be concluded that a clear majority of participants did not express enthusiasm about a park and ride facility, which perhaps reflects the city-centre nature of traffic flows in Lincoln.

A key conclusion, therefore, is that a widespread poor perception of the value for money and punctuality of public transport in Lincoln has a prohibitive effect on alternative methods of transport that could alleviate city centre congestion.

Another clear conclusion is that Lincoln residents are concerned about public health and environmental concerns. Carbon reduction and air quality were two of the most frequently raised concerns during the community engagement event and in the written submissions. Survey respondents overwhelmingly (71%) believe that more cycle lanes would incentivise them to travel by bike.

This report has enabled many Lincoln residents to have their voices heard regarding transport in our city. It is crucial that the views of residents are central in shaping the next steps of our Transport Taskforce.