



CTA Manifesto 2024

Discussion Paper #4

**Accelerating Community-Led
Climate Action**

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Accelerating Community-Led Climate Action

National Challenges

The UK is committed to ending our contribution to climate change [by 2050](#). But if we are to achieve net zero carbon emissions, we need to decarbonise transport, encourage modal shift and accelerate community-led climate action.

Community Transport can make a major contribution by transitioning to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), as well as by encouraging and empowering more people and communities to travel more sustainably, leaving the car behind with local bus services, shared transport like community-owned car clubs or active travel projects like cycling classes or e-bike hire schemes.

Transport is our [largest source of emissions](#), with road transport responsible for the greatest share. Over half of domestic transport emissions are [now from cars](#). Existing policies and plans prioritising car use and new road building will lead to a [22% increase in traffic between 2025 and 2060](#). More than 40% of annual car sales are now of [heavier, high-polluting SUVs](#), a doubling on a decade ago. Our children are exposed to unsafe air pollution levels in [71% of our towns and cities](#).

We need to reduce car use and carbon emissions to prevent rising levels of air pollution, congestion and ill-health. London has targeted a [27% reduction in car use by 2030](#), while the Scottish Government aims to [reduce car use by 20% by 2030](#). Every community in the UK should be accessible, liveable and walkable with plenty of space for safe walking, wheeling and cycling.

Community Transport's transition to zero-emission fleets is well underway. Operators are increasingly replacing older petrol and diesel buses, minibuses, cars and vans with cleaner, greener electric alternatives. [In Scotland, 18% of our sector's fleet is now electric](#), partly thanks to funding from the Scottish Government through the [Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund](#).

However, there has been no similar funding in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, where there is an urgent need for greater public investment to unlock further and faster progress. ZEVs are typically 50% more expensive than their petrol or diesel equivalents, while Community Transport vehicle costs, in general have [soared by 17% over the last 12 months](#). The up-front capital costs of ZEVs are prohibitive for many local, non-profit operators with small-scale funding, shoestring budgets and minimal reserves, creating a major net zero funding gap.

A lack of charging infrastructure and concerns about battery power and range are also preventing some operators from joining the transition, particularly in rural, remote or island communities. Every operator in every community needs to have confidence that they can deliver a reliable service with ZEVs.

Meanwhile, **there is a lack of supply of electric wheelchair-accessible vehicles (eWAVs),** such as minibuses with ramps and tail lifts, which are widely relied upon by Community Transport to support disabled passengers. The [eWAV market still needs to develop](#) to meet the specific and diverse needs of our sector with its focus on accessibility. Most eWAVs have to be retrofitted,

adding further complexity and cost for operators. In addition, [supply chain issues continue to grow](#), with most operators now waiting a year or more for delivery of vehicle orders.

The minibus market is not niche. It is sizeable and significant. Since 2020, minibuses have represented around 60% of the nearly [4,000 new bus and coach registrations in the UK every year](#). **There is an important role for central government** in encouraging and activating the electric minibus market, including by increasing supply through a rolling programme of investment in the Community Transport sector's transition to zero-emission fleets.

However, while ZEVs are part of the solution, they will not be enough to get us to net zero. Expert analysis suggests that many journeys will need to shift from the private car to public or shared transport, and that doing so will have [positive benefits for accessibility, equity, jobs, public health and productivity](#).

Community Transport is an essential partner for the next UK Government to deliver net zero in a way which ensures that no one and no community is left behind.

Car ownership is very unevenly distributed across the population with many groups disadvantaged by a lack of access, particularly [lower income households, people with disabilities and younger people](#). 40% of disabled people in the UK have no access to a private vehicle, which can [restrict their freedom, independence and mobility](#) without accessible transport on their doorstep.

Community Transport operators across the UK are working to make sustainable transport services accessible, affordable and attractive to everyone. [Community-owned buses, car clubs, electric vehicles, Demand Responsive Transport \(DRT\) and walking, wheeling and cycling projects](#) are **empowering people to take climate action regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, geography or income.**

Securing developer contributions for local projects like **community-owned shared bikes, e-bikes and cars can make a massive contribution** to encouraging sustainable travel behaviours and preventing [car dependency](#) or [forced car ownership](#) in new neighbourhoods.

New neighbourhoods must be designed to be more accessible, attractive and sustainable places to live, with amenities and public services like shops, schools, parks and libraries within easy walking, wheeling or cycling distance. 41% of disabled people say that [inaccessible streets](#), such as pavement parking, a lack of dropped kerbs and uneven surfaces, have prevented them from completing their journey and reaching their destination.

Community Solutions

We're calling on the next UK Government to:

- ✓ **Work with and invest in Community Transport to design and deliver local sustainable transport solutions** which harness the full potential of [community-led climate action](#) to increase modal shift, reduce private car use and reduce carbon emissions.

- ✓ **Invest in Community Transport’s transition to zero-emission fleets** and engage with the automotive industry to prevent the development of electric minibuses and electric Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles from lagging behind.
- ✓ **Reform and strengthen the planning system to secure developer contributions for Community Transport**, such as community-owned shared bikes and cars, in new neighbourhoods to prevent forced car ownership, reduce car dependency and encourage sustainable and active travel.
- ✓ **Ensure that local authorities planning [Clean Air Zones](#) or [Low Emission Zones](#) work closely with Community Transport to develop their plans** – including consideration of appropriate exemptions and investment plans for fleet replacement.

Join the Campaign for Change

Make Your Voice Heard

Visit www.ctauk.org/manifesto2024 to learn more about how you can be part of our campaign for change.

Show Your Support

Spread the word and show your support for our Manifesto by sharing it on social media. Remember to tag us [@CTAUK1](https://twitter.com/CTAUK1) on X (formerly Twitter) and use the hashtag [#CommunitySolutions](https://twitter.com/CommunitySolutions).

Get In Touch

If you'd like to talk or collaborate, email us at policy@ctauk.org to arrange a conversation with one of our team about how we can work together.

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