

CAR FREE LOW CARBON TRAVEL FOR LONGDENDALE AND GLOSSOPDALE

Travel Experiences - Summary of Visitor Results

Summary

Three issues stood out for visitors: the almost complete lack of public transport to visit Longdendale, particularly from the north; the dangerous junctions on the A628T road; and a lack of easily accessible and up-to-date travel information for all modes.

The majority of people do not consider travelling by bus or train as there is no convenient service – the only service is an infrequent Friday-only service from Holmfirth. Although the train service from Manchester to Glossop/Hadfield is used and essential for those without access to a car, the train journey from the Huddersfield area was particularly tortuous requiring three different trains. The majority would consider public transport if it was as direct, convenient and affordable as using the car, particularly if a bus allowed circular walks, was ‘hail and ride’ and ran into late summer evenings. The alternative of Park and Ride would be considered depending on its location.

Keen Sheffield cyclists are able to find off-road or quiet routes but for others, cycling in from elsewhere, off-road infrastructure is required to remove the sense of road danger. Several people are disappointed at the lack of space for carrying bikes on buses and trains. E-bikes are not popular.

Background

The Future of Longdendale survey showed that the majority concern was with travel and reducing the impact of cars and lorries on people and the environment.

In that context the travel questionnaire aimed to ascertain what changes in travel people would be prepared to make to leave the car at home to visit the area. All of the answers were collected during Covid-19 restrictions, either Tier 4 before Christmas (2020) or complete lockdown in the New Year (2021). Respondents were asked to consider their pre-Covid travel experiences. The visitors who responded to the Longdendale survey primarily came from the east, South Yorkshire (40%), from the west, Greater Manchester (25%), with the remainder spread evenly from further north, from Derbyshire (south and east of Glossopdale) and Nottinghamshire, and from much further afield throughout the UK.

Whilst there were opportunities to extend the reach to residents through local groups and contacts, reaching visitors was more difficult. We asked town councils

(Stockport and Penistone), parish councils (Langsett and Holmfirth), posted on local Facebook pages, and contacted ramblers and cycling groups. We also scrutinised national and local 'Visit' and National Trails websites to identify the information available to reach Longdendale and Glossopdale.

To date the travel experiences of 34 visitors (Greater Manchester 6; South Yorkshire 10; West Yorkshire 8; Hayfield 1; Hope Valley 5; Chisworth 2; Bakewell 1; long distance 1) have been collected; 6 were interviewed (one using Zoom), 5 posted on the online forum, 15 filled in forms and 8 sent an email. One non-driver responded. Several people commented on the future for the A628T, finding alternatives through the Peak District unsuitable and the M60/M62/M1 route much further, often also congested and contributing to carbon emission and noise.

Results

What changes in your travel would you be prepared to make to leave the car at home when visiting Glossopdale and Longdendale? [e.g. use train or bus/car share/use a car pool/ cycle from Glossop/Hadfield/Penistone rail stations/use a hail and ride bus service through Longdendale from railway stations]

Nearly everyone is prepared to consider public transport if it is frequent, super punctual, clean, direct, quick and convenient. Travel by car offers a direct journey without waiting *'In reality, it would need to be an outstanding public transport service to persuade me to visit from south Manchester without a car'*. The costs were noted – *'it used to be £1 for daily Roamer 7 days a week from Sheffield into the Peak District'*.

Currently there are too many connections to make from both east and west. *'It would mean planning my visit better, the decision is often taken on the morning of the visit'*.

For those travelling from some distance away the car is the only viable option in terms of time and cost but *'I always attempt to park slightly away from Longdendale and cycle / walk into the area'*.

If you drove to the area, did you consider travelling by bus or train?

The majority of people did not consider travelling by bus or train as there is no convenient service. Using the train from Holmfirth would require 3 changes Holmfirth to Huddersfield, to Manchester, to Glossop – *'all day gone'*. A more frequent bus service from Holmfirth at weekends would allow people to visit either location.

If you did, which service was it?

The three services that were mentioned are the 61X from Hayfield, the X57 from Sheffield to Manchester and the 351 Holmfirth Glossop bus – a Friday only service. There is support for the X57 – ‘*very pleased to see it is a bike carrying service*’. The 351 had only a few services in each direction which made a decent day’s walking impossible. One person used it for shopping in Glossop.

Visiting from Trafford ‘*I prefer (instead of driving congested roads) to take the train from Manchester, an excellent, electrified service, half hourly, enabling one to alight at Hadfield (for the Trans Pennine Trail or the reservoirs), Glossop or Dinting. And, if you have a TfGM bus pass, you can travel for free off peak, even though the destination stops are in Derbyshire!*’

What stopped or would stop you from using the bus or train to visit Glossopdale and/or Longdendale? [e.g. cost, convenience, unreliable/ infrequent/no services, no nearby bus route or rail station where you live]

The key reasons quoted are lack of services, complexity of connections e.g. having to go into Manchester and catch a second train if using the train from Sheffield, inconvenience and the infrequency of the Friday-only service from Holmfirth. From the north, to use the train would necessitate a journey to Marsden, then via central Manchester to Manchester Piccadilly, then to Hadfield or Glossop. ‘*Lengthy and time consuming*’. Where there are no trains, e.g. Bakewell, ‘*to get there by bus would take hours*’. Even shorter, more local journeys from Hayfield and Chisworth were difficult - ‘*Would have to change buses to get to destinations so less convenient - could be cold and wet. Also timing as I can travel at my convenience rather than, say, having to wait for half an hour for the next bus/train.*’ ‘*Cars are the most convenient form of transport by a massive margin*’. However, the one or two who rely on public transport would not make the journey without it.

‘*Getting to Glossop or Hadfield is a lengthy trek from Sheffield involving travelling via Man Piccadilly. Re-opening the Woodhead railway would make that easier but there would either not be a trail to travel on, or it would be a less pleasant experience being next to the railway. Bike-carrying buses would seem to me to be the solution here*’.

What would encourage you to use the bus or train? [e.g. more services, cost, frequency of service, fast coach service, links with other modes e.g. hail and ride service from Glossop or Hadfield station, e-bike or cycle hire and/or car hire at Glossop or Hadfield, Barnsley, and Penistone station, more facilities for bikes on trains or buses]. There is now a new bus service from Sheffield to Glossop x57 – what would encourage you to use it?

One respondent stated climate change, others direct services, with reliable connections and an affordable service that ran into late summer evenings; hail and

ride; a bus service from nearby rail stations into Longdendale that must be an integrated service that limits waiting. Two respondents need more information of frequency, cost and regularity of bus services. More capacity for bikes on trains is required.

Other suggestions included a rover ticket to allow for circular walks across bus operators, a pick-up-and-drop-anywhere service with links to bike hire – *‘so long as you know the bus will be there to pick you up at the end... Maybe some pre-booking’*; and *an app so you could rely on bus times’*.

Two people would not be encouraged by anything and would stick with using their cars.

If there was a bus service from where you live to Longdendale what would encourage you to use it? [e.g. cost, frequency of service, drop you/pick you up anywhere in Longdendale, links with other modes e.g. cycle hire, demand responsive flexible buses]

This idea is popular – *‘that would be amazing’*, *‘with maybe some customised open top buses with rules for open windows and ventilation on the lower deck’*.

What stops you from cycling into Glossopdale or Longdendale? [e.g. safety, distance, weather]. If there was bike hire / e-bike hire near where you lived would you cycle?

Nearly half of respondents are deterred from cycling by traffic. *‘Frightened by traffic’*, *‘goods vehicles passing in close proximity’* *‘wouldn’t cycle on A57, madness of drivers who use it like a race track’*, *‘lack of confidence’*, *‘interest in e-bikes to do the distance but only if safe’*; volume of traffic (lorries in particular) and the poor state of the roads (pot holes). Even experienced cyclists would prefer to ride off-road on the National Cycle Route 62 than to risk the main A628 road. *‘I consider the road to be dangerous and intimidating for cyclists because of the absence of a dedicated cycleway, and the risk of speeding cars and lorries being too close to me in situations where cyclists have no “escape’*.

Segregated routes are popular *‘but need a wide cycleway so can overtake safely - if lane is too narrow worry that I might wobble into the road’*; need a map of safe routes from the station if you are going to hire a bike at the station. The weather and time of day are also deterrents. Cycling in to Longdendale to walk is not on due to the distances involved and the lack of secure places to leave the bike. *‘I would worry about the risk of theft or damage to my bike.’*

Access from Huddersfield, the Holme and Colne Valleys is particularly problematic due to the traffic on the Holme Moss road, the junction with the A628T (see below) and the distance.

Several people noted the difficulty of carrying bikes on bus and trains. *'Cycles on train are much more difficult now, you can't just turn up unless you have a folding bike (who can afford one of those at a thousand pounds each), you have to let them know in advance via social media. And they can only take 2 normal bikes; need to follow Scotland who have folding seats to make room for bikes. Rail companies have concentrated on investing in cycle parking at stations so you leave your cycle behind, instead of investing in bikes on trains.'*

E-bikes are not popular and do not address the safety issues, although 2 people would like to try one.

Three cyclists use routes from Sheffield. One put his bike on the train from Sheffield, got off at Chinley and cycled the Pennine Bridleway and Trans-Pennine Trail back to Sheffield. Another had done several trans-Pennine journeys either travelling to Stockport, or to Manchester Airport (it's only a few miles) and cycling back to Sheffield via the Trail. *'The TPT is of mixed quality along this stretch, but Tameside country park and the Hyde Greenway are good. Subsequently you have a couple of stiff climbs on rough tracks and sections on main roads before you drop down to Glossopdale (an alternative might be possible via Gamesley sidings) where you cut through some housing before another on-road section to Hadfield. Here there is a lengthy detour via Tintwistle which I can't see the point of so I head for Hadfield station where I can get on the Longdendale trail. The surfaces on this aren't brilliant but it's far preferable to the alternative of the A628T or even the A57 via Glossop.*

Getting up onto the moors at Ironbower is a challenge - it is practically impossible to cycle up the steep track although not that far to push. There is a gentler gradient from Woodhead Bridge but getting this entails a lengthy ride along the A628T unless you have come from Holme Moss, and the bridleway has a poor surface. Subsequently you have two crossing of the A628T to negotiate before you can descend to Dunford Bridge where the Trail improves a lot. If I was travelling across by bike on road I would go via Chinley and Rushup Edge.'

A third respondent cycled along the Trans Pennine Trail and then over NCR 62 through Longdendale and onwards to Manchester recently. *'This was thoroughly enjoyable, and in places is attractive because it is a rugged and remote off-road route on the section over the moorland tops. But in places it is a little too rocky, eroded and steep for all users to feel they can ride it safely. In other places, particularly through Hadfield, Gamesley, Broadbottom and onwards, it is somewhat erratic, badly*

signposted and quite hard to follow. I got badly lost several times during my onward journey from Glossop to Manchester and became quite tired and disillusioned'.

If you travel by private car would you consider Park and Ride? Where would it be most conveniently located for you? Would you consider hiring a car, sharing a car (once it is safe to do so) or using a car club?

A third of respondents [12] would use Park and Ride, however it needs to be better/more convenient than just doing the whole journey by car. *'If I am driving from Wilmslow to Glossop then why not carry on to my destination?'* The most convenient locations from Sheffield would be where the Trans-Pennine Trail comes into Sheffield at Deepcar station Stocksbridge, or at Flouch, Langsett, Dunford Bridge, Salter's Brook Bridge, Torside, Crowden, Holme Moss, or somewhere near Glossop or Penistone. One person queried the viability of Park and Ride in a rural setting.

For access from Huddersfield, the Holme and Colne Valleys it would be impractical. If it had to be on, for example, the line to Hadfield and Glossop a significant car journey would be involved. There would be *'less CO2 driving straight to Torside'*.

One respondent noted that cars have been churning up rural roads and verges. *'There is a need for additional sensitively landscaped parking areas, similar to those by the Monsal Trail at Hassop Station and the field by the Robin Hood inn at Baslow'*.

If car hire were available at/nearby stations would you use it?

Car hire would only be considered by two people, car sharing by local rambling groups and friends. One person would consider using a car club.

If your mobility is impaired or access is difficult for you what are the three most important things that would help you to visit Longdendale and/or Glossopdale?

Direct services; segregated cycle routes; toilets (which exist already); more buses on more days of the week with options for later returns.

Widening of some footpaths and adoption of 'Miles without stiles' walking routes for easier access for those with mobility problems, wheelchairs or push chairs.

Three issues for visitors stood out – (a) the almost complete lack of public transport to visit Longdendale particularly from the north; (b) dangerous junctions on the A628T road; and (c) a lack of easily accessible and up-to-date travel information for all modes of public transport.

(a) *'Access from Huddersfield, the Holme and Colne Valleys to this north western part of the Peak District and beyond is, in my view, a significant problem without viable alternatives. Traffic issues in Longdendale in particular are always seen in the context*

of movement along the A628T from Manchester to Sheffield areas and vice versa. The north-south movements are never taken into account. I am located south west of Huddersfield and would visit the area for walking, cycling on the Trans Pennine trail and around the various reservoirs etc and when passing through on longer journeys to e.g. Buxton and beyond. The shortest route is via Holme Village and Holme Moss and then via Torside’.

‘You may say what about alternative routes by road – e.g. via Standedge, Uppermill, Stalybridge then east into Longdendale or Glossop, but this is both substantially longer and the latter part also very congested. Travel to Penistone and then a bus service perhaps would also be substantially longer’.

‘Travel by train would entail a 4 mile car journey or hour walk to Marsden, then via central Manchester and train to Hadfield or Glossop and not in my view realistic. I can’t see anywhere that park and ride could be located which would help’.

(b) Safer junctions on A628T was mentioned by people visiting from the Huddersfield and Holmfirth area. *‘Living on the edge of the Peak District, I find access rather restrictive, either over Holme Moss or on Mortimer Road, both difficult journeys, especially in winter’.* *‘Apart from the obvious weather conditions affecting Holme Moss, the right turn onto the Woodhead Road is a nightmare, I dread it, one has to observe the bridge in advance as you approach the junction and it is still risky, a total blind spot. On the return journey the turning onto Woodhead from the dam is almost as difficult’.* *‘I am a keen Peak District walker and tend to use Mortimer Road off the A616 and avoid the Glossop route even though it is shorter. I also sometimes use the A635 instead. I travel for many miles to avoid the Holme Moss road and the right turns’.*

‘My motivation in filling in the questionnaire was to flag up the highly dangerous junctions of the A6024 and B6105 with the A628. Heavy and in some cases fast traffic makes both these junctions lethal - both roads join the A628 at acute/oblique angles. Coming from Holme Moss there is virtually visibility to the east and limited to the west and coming from Torside there is virtually no visibility to the west and by trying to get a better angle of view you limit the width of the road for those coming from the east and turning towards Torside. Irrespective of longer term and wider network issues around traffic in this corridor the failure of the government and local authority to make these junctions safer should not be tolerated. Damage to walls in the vicinity of the A6024 junction in particular shows the severity of the problem’.

(c) The single most important issue for one person was information. What is needed is *‘something akin to Alpine websites – not trying to sell you anything, informing and educating, just presenting the opportunities all in one website – how to get there, where you can park the car and the costs, what public transport is available and the*

timetables, bike hire, maps of where to go what to see, finally where to eat and stay, and so you can see it all on a phone, tablet, computer – Cairngorms, Snowdonia, Dartmoor and Exmoor are getting there. Here in the Peak District they make it as difficult as possible to visit. The bigger the info gap the more likely you are to drive and park anywhere. There's nothing in Sheffield station but once you get to Edale there are signs – but you have to get to Edale to see them!

One respondent who has stopped using the bus because the services in western Sheffield had deteriorated so much, had given up looking at timetables. *'I am therefore "out of the loop" in terms of awareness of timetable information, visits to the local travel interchange, etc. I am probably now in the circular situation of assuming that bus services are poor, and therefore not making the effort to acquire up-to-date information about improved services. Could Peak Park custodians help sceptics like me by mounting a public relations drive to reassure us to try the bus again if things are improving?'*