Agenda Item No:	7	
Committee:	**Cabinet**	
Date:	12 May 2022	
Report Title:	Fenland Transport Strategy – progress update	

1 Purpose / Summary

1.1 To update Cabinet on the progress of the Fenland Transport Strategy.

1.2 To update Cabinet on the proposed stakeholder and public engagement timetable as outlined in the report.

2 Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

2.1 Note progress to date on the development of the draft Fenland Transport Strategy and its contents, and to note the next steps for the development of the strategy towards adoption in 2023.

2.2 Note the proposed stakeholder and public engagement timetable as outlined in the report.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	Key/10FEB22/01
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Chris Seaton, Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage
Report Originator	Wendy Otter, Transport Development Manager
Contact Officers	Wendy Otter, Transport Development Manager Belinda Pedler, Senior Transport Officer Phil Hughes, Acting Assistant Director
Background Papers	• Draft Fenland Transport Strategy • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport Plan (LTP): https://mk0cpcamainsitehdbtm.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/transport/local-transport-plan/LTP.pdf • Future Transport Priorities paper to CCC Highways and transport Committee 7 December 2021 Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings (cmis.uk.com) • Fenland Accessibility Report: Appendix to this report

Report

3 Background

3.1 In partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) as Highway Authority, Fenland District Council has adopted transport strategies for Chatteris, March Whittlesey and Wisbech. These strategies were adopted between 2010 and 2014 and are considered to need a refresh. However, it is also considered that any future strategy must include the rural areas along with the market towns.

4 Transport Strategy Development

4.1 Prior to 2017, the County Council produced an LTP (Local Transport Plan) in its role as Local Transport Authority. Since 2017 the responsibility for production of the LTP has passed to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). The CPCA is now developing a Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) which covers the requirements of the LTP. *"Connectivity has been added to the title of the plan to recognise how important the internet is now on transport. With greater trends towards working and learning from home, as well as social and leisure activities, shopping and accessing services, quality and accessibility of digital infrastructure has an impact on the amount of travel taking place"*[1].

Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council is supporting this work.

4.2 The County Council, as the Local Highway Authority, continues to produce transport strategy documents which are aligned with the emerging vision and objectives of the CPCA's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan refresh, and reflect the County Council's investment priorities and future aspirations. Where possible the County Council works in partnership with the District Council. Strategy work is carried out to support and complement Local Plans and to review and propose transport improvement schemes for investment.

5 District-based Transport Strategies

5.1 CCC District-based transport strategies set out detailed policies and an action plan for transport investment in each district. Schemes contained in the action plans are then eligible for LTP Integrated Transport Block funding. Funding bids can also be submitted to the CPCA, Government and other bodies for delivery of schemes, and contributions from developers can be secured against schemes where they relate to development.

5.2 Work to refresh the Fenland Transport Strategy commenced in late 2019. However, work was largely paused due to the pandemic, the subsequent redeployment of staff and reduced capacity in the CCC transport strategy team.

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[1] https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/news/still-time-for-public-to-have-say-on-regions-transport-future/

5.3 Member Steering Groups (MSG) were established early in the development process to guide the work and provide local input and expertise. The Fenland MSG has met twice prior to the pause, and since the relaunch in 2022 has met twice again. During this time work on the Accessibility Report was carried out and Member and key stakeholders were engaged via email in this process.

5.4 The Fenland Strategy MSG has two Members from both CCC and FDC. The MSG is supported by officers from CCC, FDC and the CPCA.

5.5 Each area has its own unique challenges and opportunities that need to be considered as strategies are developed. Work on the strategy is being co-ordinated with the Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire as well as the CPCA's update to the LTCP. There are also links to the Fenland Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aid Strategy adopted by Cabinet in November 2021.

6 Transport Strategy for Fenland – progress to date

6.1 Work to date has concentrated on developing an evidence base for the development of the strategy. In the early Member Steering Groups access to key services was identified as the major transport challenge in Fenland. Therefore, there has been a particular focus on the production of an Accessibility Report (see the appendix to this report) to help inform the identification of future schemes and interventions.

6.2 Alongside this, County Council and district council officers have worked closely with the Member Steering Group to develop a set of draft objectives for the strategy. A draft transport strategy for Fenland has also been developed

6.3 The MSG met on 18 January 2022 to provide up to date feedback on the objectives that had been drafted and to shape the development of strategy work going forward. The MSG also met on 1 February 2022 to agree the updated vision and draft policies for the Fenland Transport Strategy.

6.4 The County Council Highways and Transport Committee supported the draft Fenland Transport Strategy at its meeting on 8 March 2022.

7 Future work

Member Steering Groups will be held regularly and throughout the process to ensure the continued involvement and input of local Members. Furthermore, all opportunities will be taken to align this work with the development of the Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire and the CPCA's LTCP. This may include joint public engagement events and sharing of data and information. There will also be alignment to the FDC adopted (November 2021) Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aid Strategy.

8 Stakeholder Engagement and preparation of action plans

8.1 Stakeholder engagement will take place to inform the further development of the strategies and a draft action plan.

8.2 It is anticipated that stakeholder engagement will take place largely online with the option of telephone contact where online access is not possible. At each Member Steering Group, district council members and partners will input into the arrangements for stakeholder engagement over the coming months.

8.3 As far as possible, stakeholder engagement activities will be co-ordinated with those for the Active Travel Strategy to limit potential consultation fatigue. Further discussions with the CPCA are ongoing to align engagement activities with those being planned for the LTCP.

9 Public Consultation

Public consultation is planned to take place later in the year to seek views on and input into the draft strategy and action plan.

10 Next Steps

10.1 The next steps for the strategy development work are set out below:

FENLAND	
Accessibility Report / evidence base	Complete
Agree Draft vision and objectives	March 2022
Draft Strategy	March 2022
Stakeholder engagement	Summer 2022
Progress update	CCC Highways and Transport Committee July 2022
Public consultation	Autumn / Winter 2022
Adoption	2023

10.2 A minor progress update will be taken to CCC Highways and Transport committee in July 2022. This is aligned to other district transport strategies that are in preparation.

11 Reasons for recommendations

11.1 Delivery of the Corporate priority – Economy. Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district. The Fenland Transport Strategy, once finalised and adopted, will set out the key transport infrastructure improvements required across Fenland.

11.2 Significant work has been undertaken to produce the draft strategy with substantial input from the Member Steering Group. As further work and consultation progresses members retain the opportunity to make representations to shape the strategy throughout 2022. It should be noted that the final version of the strategy will set the transport context for future years.

12 Consultation

Please refer to the main body of the paper above, the recommendations and the draft strategy document.

13 Implications

13.1 Legal Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

13.2 Financial Implications

Funding for the district transport strategy work comes from the CCC Integrated Transport Block Strategy Development budget. As such there are no specific financial implications for FDC.

13.3 Equality Implications

Equality Impact Assessments are being undertaken for the draft strategy. CCC Officers are leading on the delivery of the project with support from FDC Officers.

14 Appendix - Fenland Accessibility Report

Fenland Accessibility Report

Final Draft
February 2022

Contents

1.1 List of Figures

1.2 List of Tables

Chapter 1 Introduction

Access to services and facilities is a key challenge in any rural area. The movement of people, goods and services is essential for everyday life and wellbeing, making such journeys in rural areas can be difficult. Discussion in 2019 about a Transport Strategy for Fenland brought accessibility issues more sharply into focus for North Cambridgeshire, raising questions about the specific accessibility issues that any Transport Strategy for Fenland might need to address.

Whilst significant accessibly planning work was undertaken in the early 2000s, two decades have since passed. The transport landscape has changed markedly but the level of accessibility planning research has not kept pace. To adequately support the development of a new Transport Strategy for Fenland it was decided that new accessibility research was needed.

1.1 What is Accessibility?

"Accessibility is the extent to which individuals and households can access day to day services, such as employment, education, healthcare, food stores and town centres.[1]"

Research shows that there are five key barriers to access:

- the availability and physical accessibility of transport;
- the cost of transport;
- the location of services and opportunities in inaccessible places;
- people's concerns about safety and security when travelling;
- limited travel horizons (people's unwillingness or lack of confidence about travelling beyond a certain distance from home).[2]

Access and transport are key issues in a rural area such as Fenland, especially when 20% of all households do not own to a car. Accessibility planning to support Local Transport Plan (LTP) 1 between 2006 and 2011 has played a significant role in Fenland transport strategy work for our most rural areas since that time. It is however acknowledged that the transport landscape has changed significantly since that time. More up to date evidence and supporting materials are needed to establish the current accessibility position and to develop proposals to address these issues.

A list of key services is provided below:

employment centres; primary schools; secondary schools; Further Education institutions; GPs; Hospitals; food stores; town centres; railway stations: (Peterborough, Kings Lynn, March, Manea, Whittlesea)

It is acknowledged that people experience specific access challenges due to differing mobility needs. We fully recognise a person's experience, and that access opportunities and challenges will be unique to them. Below are a small number of examples of access needs.

- Some people may live physically close to a bus stop, but if the bus service and stop infrastructure does not meet their needs, they will be unable to access the bus service
- Particularly in rural areas people live too far away from bus and railway stations to walk or cycle to them. They therefore have difficulties getting to locations where they can catch buses and trains

[1] Accessibility Statistics Guidance p2
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/372139/accessibility-statistics-guidance.pdf

[2] Accessibility Planning Policy: Evaluation and Future Direction p6
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3190/accessibility-planning-evaluation-report.pdf

- There are also nonphysical aspects such as being unfamiliar with public transport and having concerns about how to use such services e.g. which is my bus stop or platform, will I make my connection on time because the first service is running late, knowledge of how to use the railway passenger assist scheme
- Public transport staff training on differing accessibility requirements and providing support to customers with differing needs
- It is also recognised that transport services may be available but not be at suitable times or destinations to be useful. This is especially the case for medical appointments (or similar) where a day and time will be given that is specific to an individual person

It is also acknowledged that alternative modes of transport are always going to be compared with the convenience and speed of using a private car (if available).

1.2 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to highlight the accessibility challenges that are faced in the Fenland District of Cambridgeshire. To support the development of the Fenland Transport Strategy this report will focus on the following areas:

- Provide context about the earlier accessibility planning research and its key findings. This will also be supported by other related information that has a significant impact on accessibility such as health, education, deprivation and demographics
- Provide context through setting out the current transport challenges in Fenland
- Undertake new research though GIS mapping and criteria-based assessments of transport services in the Fenland towns and villages
- Set out some recommendations and conclusions to inform the development of the Fenland Transport Strategy.

This report will be technical in nature but be written in a way that will make it as useful and readable to a wide audience.

1.3 The Fenland Transport Strategy & its Objectives

This report will mainly be used to support the development of the Fenland Transport Strategy (FTS). The FTS will address current and future transport pressure in and around the district to help support growth in Fenland with the purpose of providing a policy framework and Action Plan of potential transport improvements/interventions for the area, addressing current and predicted future transport problems. The FTS will also be consistent with wider suite of transport strategies that are being developed across the area including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's (CPCA) Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP). The FTS will also support the developing Fenland Local Plan to take account of the committed and predicted levels of growth, detailing the transport infrastructure and services necessary to deliver this.

The development of the FTS is being led by a Member Steering Group (MSG) comprised of elected Councillors from Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. Officer support is provided from Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the CPCA. It was clear following the first two MSG meetings that there was a need for a different approach when developing the FTS. It was agreed that the main transport challenge in Fenland was accessibility to services. The FTS vision and objective are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Fenland Transport Strategy Vision and Objective.

The Transport Strategy Fenland is adopting an approach which is centred on the delivery of a primary vision which is supported by four objectives. The objectives are interdependent and will require all to be achieved to ensure the vision is successfully achieved. Within the Fenland Transport Strategy the aim is to identify limitations, understand challenges, consider schemes and develop a forward-thinking strategy to help Fenland grow. Transport significantly affects people's quality of life and their ability to access employment, recreational facilities, healthcare and education, and is critically important to the economy.

The MSG also discussed the rural nature of Fenland which creates accessibility challenges for those without access to a private vehicle which tend to be people with protected characteristics. Moreover, the high dependence of private vehicles makes meeting core objective three (climate change) difficult too. Rurality also makes delivery of traditional public transport services a challenge. The dispersed nature of communities in rural areas means that it is often not viable for commercial bus operators to run traditional services, and even when they do, frequencies often do not allow people to access the services they need at the times they need. Furthermore, long journey times and poor reliability can often make trips by bus an undesirable choice for many people, particularly for the journey to work.

Chapter 2 Context

There are several important factors which contribute in whole or in part to the accessibility issues within Fenland District. Key headline information about these matters is set out in this chapter of the report.

2.1 Rurality and non-car ownership

Fenland is a rural district of some 200 square miles. It has four market towns and over 30 villages and small settlements. Opportunities to travel without a car are significantly worse in 2020 than in 2004 - 2006 when the earlier research and strategy were being developed. Approximately 20%[3] of all households do not have own a car in Fenland, these figures remain relatively unchanged from previous data e.g. 2011 Census.

2.2 Socio-economic context

There are non-transport related matters which strongly affect accessibility such as age, employment, health, rural poverty, and disability. Fenland district has challenges related to these factors which are important when addressing accessibility. Many of these factors have already been widely researched and considered in detail on websites such as Cambridgeshire Insight.

2.2.1 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) Report

In September 2018 the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review was published. Also known as the CPIER report, the Executive Summary concluded the following in respect of the fens:

"The history of the fens is a story of dramatic transformation. As they were drained from the 17th century onwards, land became available for agriculture, and close links to the sea enabled commerce. This brought great wealth to the region as landowners prospered and led to the formation of market towns, which across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region account for almost 25% of the population. It is impossible to make blanket statements about these towns – some are thriving (particularly those with easier connection to Cambridge), while others are struggling. The fens must also be considered as one of the UK's greatest natural assets with a rich wetland ecosystem which affords great leisure opportunities. We argue that the value of this natural capital must not be overlooked.

The fens are, however, in some ways the most challenged economically... Many market towns have lost their former glory and struggle to attract or retain young people. The development of the knowledge economy, with its high premium on proximity and agglomeration, has left rural communities struggling to maintain distinctive high-value industries. Steep reductions in the price of agricultural output have led to consolidation among farming businesses. Much of the need for low-cost labour has been met by migrants, leaving business with a challenge as Brexit looms. We urge businesses in the fens to tackle low labour productivity by investing in the skills of their workers. There is immense potential for the fens to be renowned as the apex of British agricultural production and for an attractive way of life in thriving market towns".

The full version of the CPIER report can be found from the following website link:

https://www.cpier.org.uk/final-report/

2.2.2 Economic Activity and Employment

A large amount of the data below was produced for the business case for Wisbech Rail Reconnection[4]. Gross Value Added GVA is a measure of an area's economic productivity, the contribution it makes to the

[3] 2011 census

[4] Wisbech Rail Full Business Case Final https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1969/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx

economy. The Fenland district accounts for 12% of the CPCA area's total population but 8% of its employee jobs. Fenland is behind Cambridge, Peterborough and the wider CPCA area in its contribution to the CPCA's overall GVA and GVA per capital (per person).

Table 1: Key economic indicators

	Fenland	Cambridge	South Cambridgeshire	Peterborough	CPCA	East	UK
Population, 000s, 2017	100.8	124.9	156.7	198.9	847.2	6,168.4	66,040.2
Employees, 000s, 2017	36.0	104.2	84.9	116.5	447.0	2,756.0	27,062.0*
GVA, £m, 2016	£2,288	£5,127	£4,591	£5,439	£23,743	£147,384	£1,729,092
Economic activity rate (16-64 population), %, 2018	80.0%	79.5%	85.5%	79.3%	82.2%	80.8%	78.3%
GVA per capita, £, 2016	£22,837	£38,900	£29,343	£27,595	£27,965	£24,041	£26,339
GVA per filled job, £, 2017	£52,587**	£52,587**	£52,587**	£45,528	£50,775	£50,398	£54,330
Resident median annual pay, £, 2018	£27,755	£33,173	£37,411	£25,301	£30,859	£31,033	£29,574
Workplace median annual pay, £, 2018	£21,900	£33,199	£ 35,349	£27,238	£28,704	£ 29,128	£29,574

Source: Population Estimates 2017, Annual Population Survey (APS) 2018, Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2017, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2018, Regional gross value added (balanced) by local authority in the UK, Regional gross value added (balanced) by Combined Authority in the UK, Sub regional productivity: labour productivity indices by UK NUTS2 and NUTS3 subregions, all ONS. *Data for UK. **Data for Cambridgeshire County Council.

Source: Table 2.1 Wisbech Rail Full Business Case page 34

As set out in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Economic Review (CPEIR) report there are some wider factors linked to GVA as follows:

- there is a £200 gap between mean weekly salary in Fenland and the South of Cambridgeshire
- Wholesale and distribution make up 33% of Fenland turnover
- Agri-tech makes up around 17% of Fenland turnover

The above information is an indication of lower pay and employment sectors with high accessibility requirements.

Lower incomes and economic inactivity can lead to poorer accessibility. The cost of public transport is raised as an issue by local people. From local survey work we also know that many people walk or cycle long distances to employment where cost is a factor. In some cases a larger than average proportion of household income is used to purchase and support the costs of operating a car, due to the rural nature of Fenland.

2.2.3 Education

Compared with other areas in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough educational attainment is lower in Fenland and people of working age are also less likely to be in employment.

- The Fenland GCSE grade A* - C level for Maths and English is 52.2% statistically significantly worse than found nationally.[5]

[5] Cambs Insight JSNA Core Data Report Fenland Summary 2018 https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/jsna/published-joint-strategic-needs-assessments/

- 31% of the working age population in Fenland have no qualifications[6]

Low educational attainment can limit access to employment and therefore impact on accessibility due to lower income. Employment may be available, but a person is unable to travel to and from the work if their lower income affects their ability to travel due to cost.

2.2.4 Demographics

All the information below was provided from the Cambridgeshire County Council's Research Group. The Group produced population and dwelling stock (homes) forecasts for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough the ones below are forecasts from 2018, the latest available[7].

Fenland's population was 98,262 at the 2011 census, with the 2019 estimate being 101,850. This is forecast to increase to 116,900 in 2036 a 19% increase see Figure 2 below. It can be seen the most significant growth is forecast to be in ages groups 65 and upwards. This is something which needs to be considered and accounted for from an accessibility viewpoint.

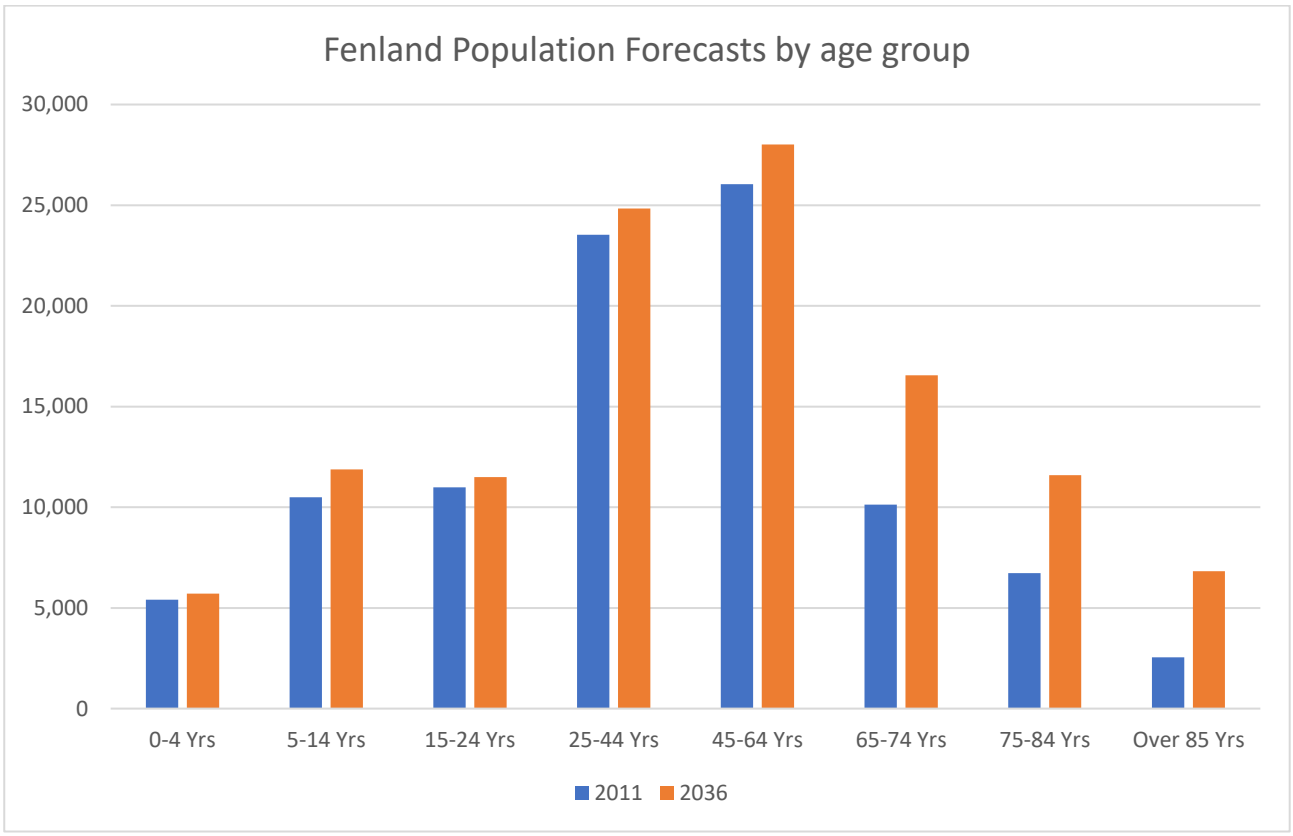

Figure 2: Fenland Population Forecasts by age group 2011 and 2036

[6] Cambs Insight Socio Economic Report 2011 https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Fenland-District-Report-2011.pdf

[7] Population and Dwelling Forecasts 2018 https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/dataset/2018-based-population-and-dwelling-stock-forecasts-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough

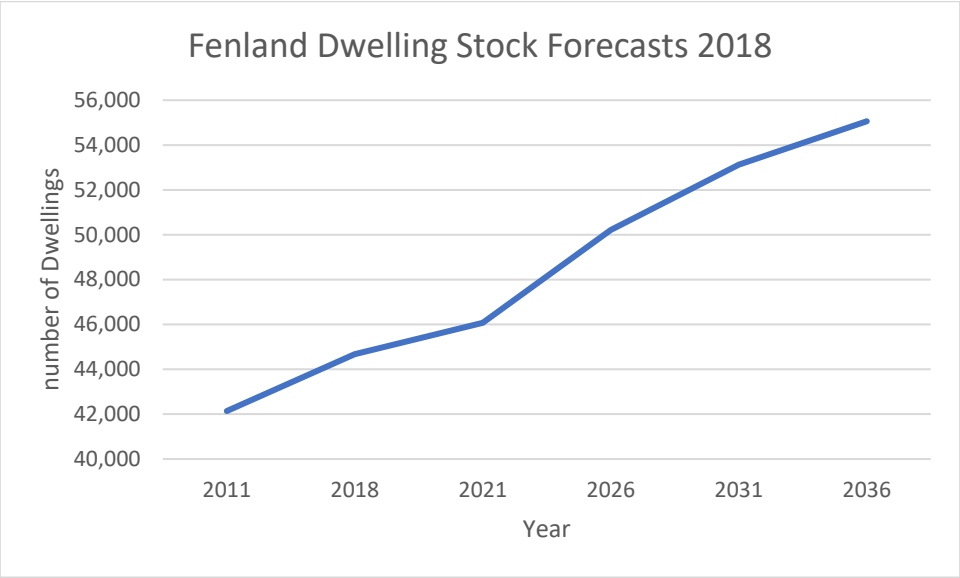

Figure 3: Fenland Dwelling Stock Forecasts
Source https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/dataset/2018-based-population-and-dwelling-stock-forecasts-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough

Figure 3 above shows the forecast increases in dwelling stock across the district from 2011 to 2036. Between 2021 and 2036 there is a forecast increase of nearly 9,000 dwellings or nearly 600 additional dwellings per year.

2.2.5 Deprivation

The main measure of deprivation is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)[8]. This is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and it encompasses a wide range of an individual's living conditions. The 2019 IMD is based on 39 separate indicators from within seven distinct domains of deprivation which are combined and weighted. The seven domains are:

- income;
- employment;
- health deprivation and disability
- education, skills training;
- crime;
- barriers to housing and services;
- living environment.

The Office for National Statistics breaks down the country into areas known as Output Areas to assist with data analysis[9]. The smallest classification of these is Lower Super Output Area (LSOAs). The IMD data shows that Fenland has 12 (out of a total of 55 in Fenland) in the 20% most deprived nationally. Within Fenland there are pronounced clusters of people experiencing multiple sources of deprivation in and around both Wisbech and March.

Life expectancy is lower in Fenland. There are higher than average levels of physical inactivity in adults and emergency stays in hospital.

[8] The English Indices of Deprivation 2019
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3190/accessibility-planning-evaluation-report.pdf
[9]https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/censusgeography#:~:text=Output%20areas%20(OA)%20were%20created,UK%20at%20the%202001%20Census.

Figures 4 and 5 below all show the IMD deprivation across Fenland in comparison to the wider area of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. They also provide a comparison between the data from 2015 and 2019. The areas in red are the most deprived with the least deprived in blue. Further information about the housing and services domain which specifically includes access can be found in Chapter 3.

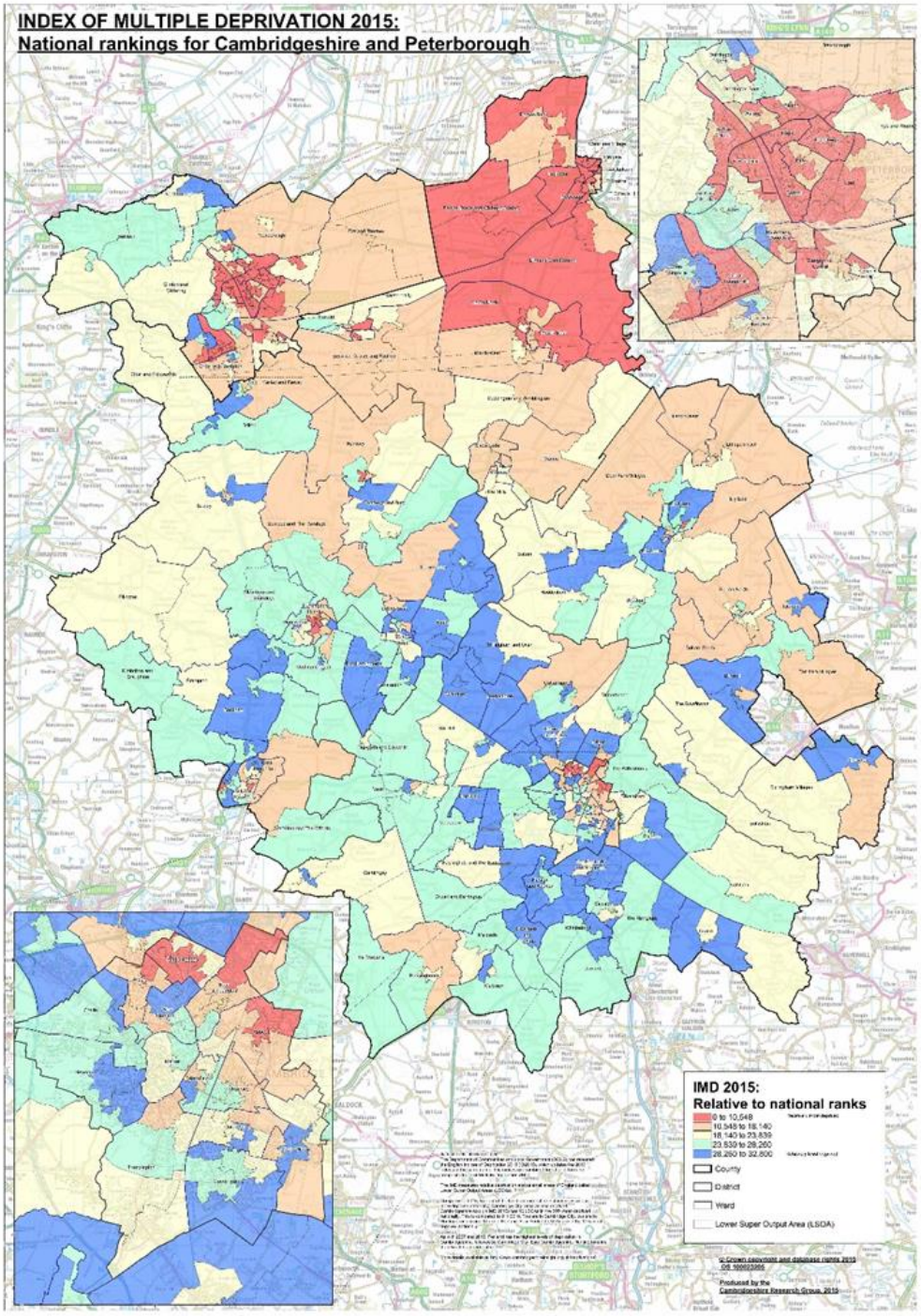

Figure 4 – IMD 2015 Rankings for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire
Source: Cambridgeshire Insight Open Data - https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/

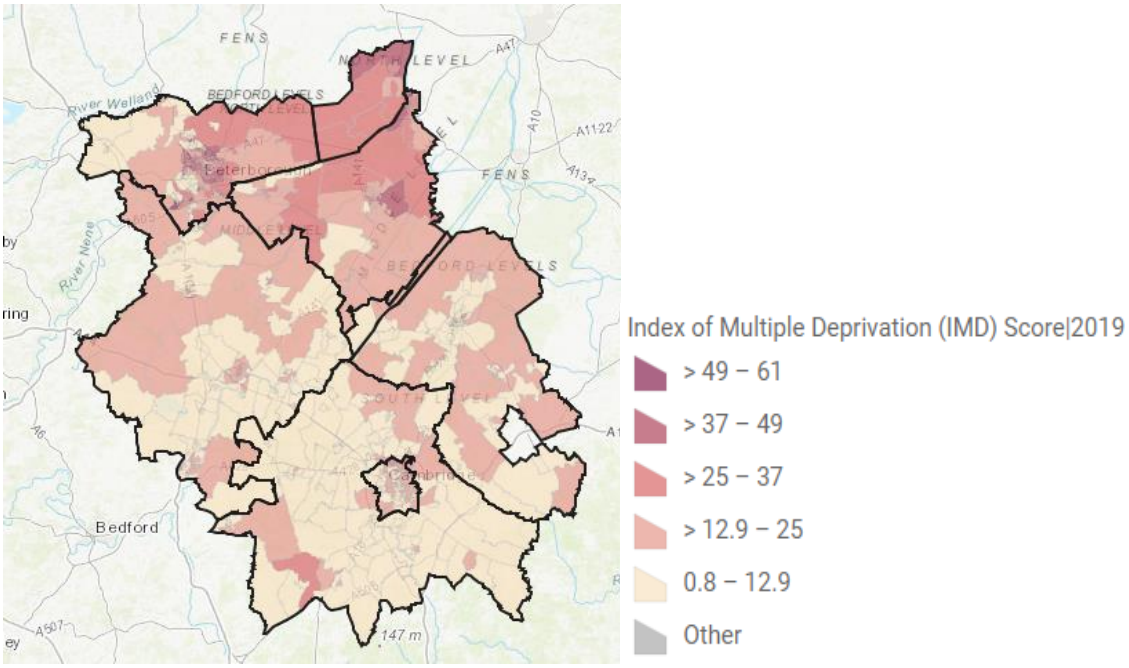

Figure 5: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019. Source: English Indices of Deprivation- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019

2.3 Bus services and bus service network changes

Bus services have been in decline in Fenland. This is due to a variety of factors including commercial viability of operating bus services in rural areas and a reduction in funding available to support bus services. This creates a cycle of reducing bus use and services. With fewer services they are less attractive for passengers and with fewer passengers there is less revenue to support services.

Bus services have become more expensive since 1987 when compared to both rail and motoring (see Figure 5). It should be noted that this includes coach fares which see seasonal trends for price increases in the summer and December which has contributed to some increases when local bus fares have remained fairly constant.

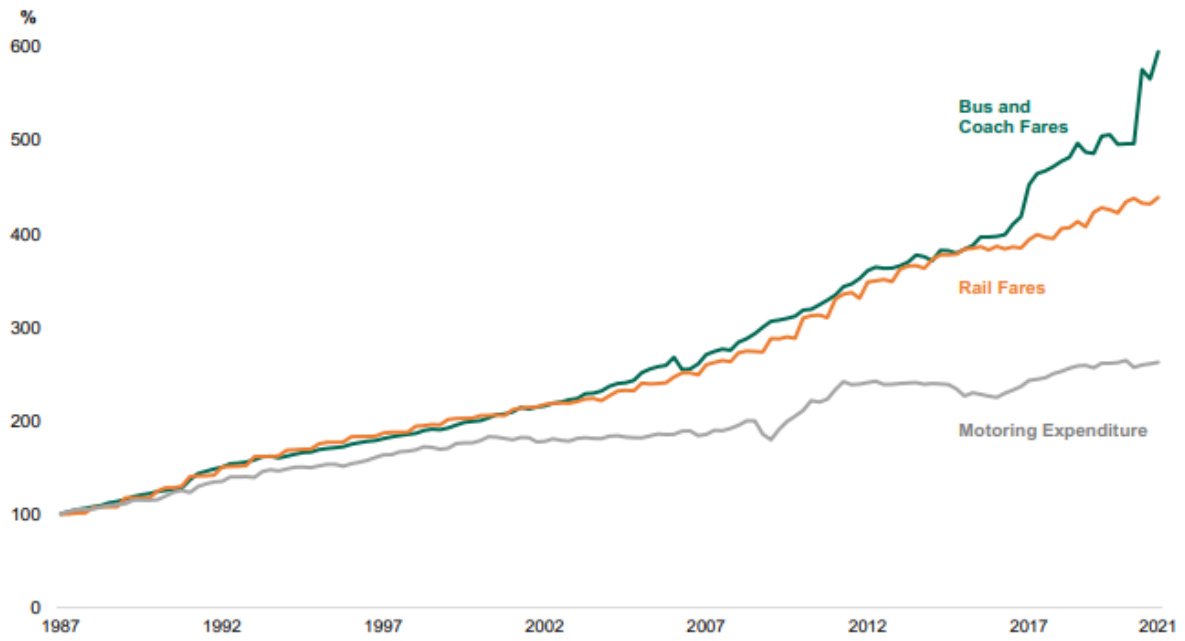

Figure 4: Retail Price Index for bus and coach fares, rail fares and motoring expenditure, UK quarterly since March 1987 Source Chart 13https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1030718/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2021.pdf

Between 2006 and 2019 there has been 2 or 3 changes of ownership of the main bus company serving Fenland District, this has resulted in ongoing timetable changes and reduced frequency. Since around 2015 some services have been considered no longer commercially viable. Stretched County Council budgets have been finding funds for short periods of time to subsidise some essential services. There is limited confidence in the network due to timetable changes and uncertainty around whether services will continue in future. Local people are concerned and in some cases are having real difficulty accessing work and education. The table below shows some examples of service changes.

Table 2: Bus Service Changes

Place	Bus Service in 2010	Bus Service in 2021	Comments
Chatteris	Services to Cambridge were direct and hourly. Services to Peterborough were direct but irregular throughout the day. Services to Huntingdon direct	No direct services to Cambridge, change at Ely or St Ives. V2 bus service every 2 hours operates between March- Chatteris and St Ives and change to busway service A/B. Services to Ely less than 2 hourly. Only 2 direct services to Peterborough for commuting. For most journeys change at March. Services to March less than 2 hourly. See below.	Continuous concerns being raised by the Town Council and by residents. Access to employment and education are regularly raised as an issue.

Place	Bus Service in 2010	Bus Service in 2021	Comments
		Services to Huntingdon direct, every 2 hours. Only 1 per day to the railway stn.	
March	Services to Cambridge - see Chatteris above. Services to Peterborough are 2 hourly direct. They include the former March Town service, so the journey is long.	Services to Cambridge - see Chatteris above. Services remain unchanged from 2010 but are not competitive. See comments section	The journey to Peterborough is approx. 1hour 20 minutes against 35 minutes by train.
Murrow	Weekly service to Peterborough on Wednesdays Regular service to March and Wisbech including links at Guyhirn for the X1 to Peterborough.	Thursday shopper service to Wisbech. 1 journey each way.	There have been changes to Murrow bus service include increased frequencies of service but each time services have been reduced due to low demand.
Parson Drove	Weekly service to Peterborough on Wednesdays Service into Wisbech Monday – Saturday. Around 4 journeys each way per day.	As Murrow above.	The loss of a regular weekday bus service coincided with increases in the use of community transport.

2.4 Bus Trips

A brief review of the national context shows that bus passenger journeys have been in decline since around 2014/15 see Figure 5. There was a sharp drop in journeys in 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It should be noted that approximately half of bus journeys in England take place in London.

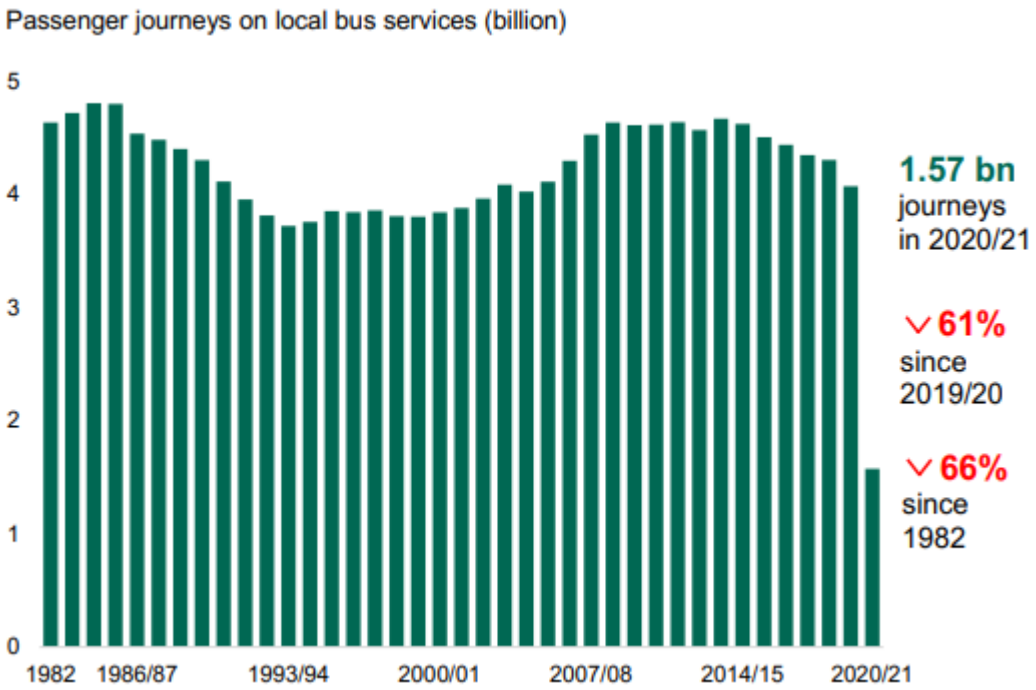

Figure 5: Local bus passenger journeys in England, 1982 to 2020/21 Source: Chart 3 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1030718/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2021.pdf

The most relevant information available is the Cambridgeshire bus patronage information that used to be reported at National Indicator 177 Local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area.

Taken from the County Council Corporate Performance Report 2019-20 Quarter 3[10] it states that:

"Bus patronage is a key outcome of the partnerships between local authorities and bus operators, which together play an important role in delivering better local transport services and are supported by public funding.

This indicator measures the total number of local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area each year. Local bus services are defined for the purposes of this indicator as those using one or more public service vehicles for the carriage of passengers by road at separate fares where the stopping places, or journey length, are less than 15 miles (24 kilometres) apart.

There were 17.48 million bus passenger journeys originating in Cambridgeshire in 2018-19. This represents an increase of 1.1 % from 2017-18, but a decrease of 6.6% from 2016-17; this general pattern of a fall in journeys can be attributed to a cut in bus services in the county and also a general pattern nationally of people using public transport less. The slight increase from 2017-18 may be due to the removal of parking charges for passengers using the park and ride services.

[10] https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Performance-indicators-Q3-2019-2020.pdf

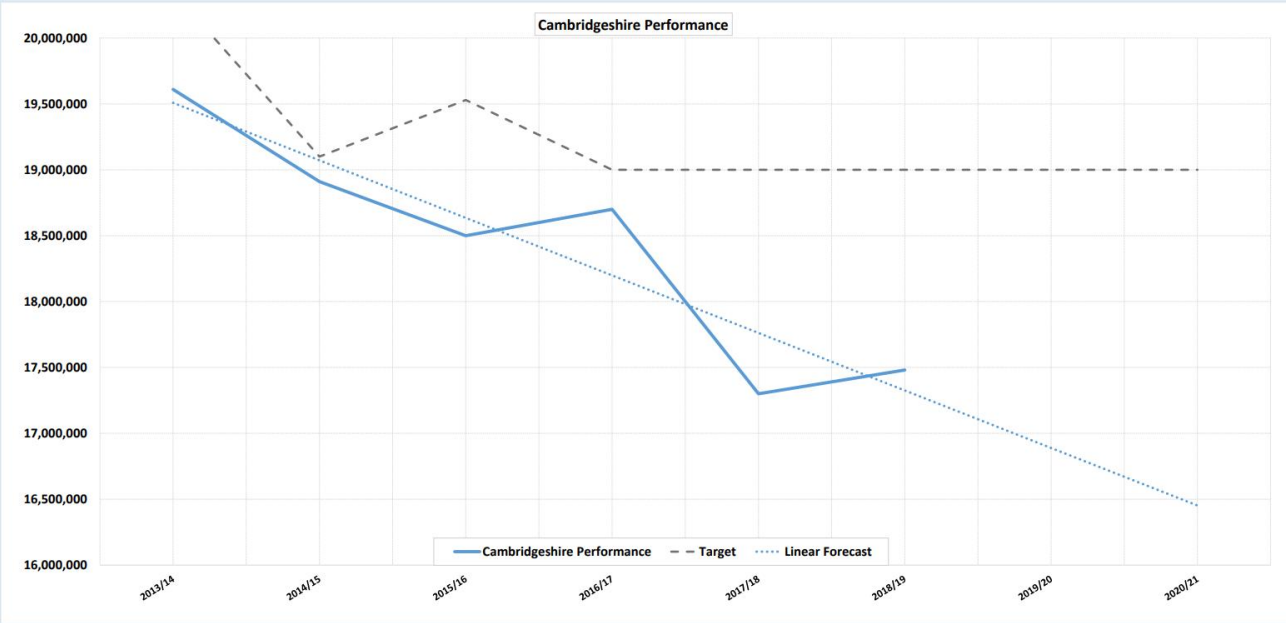

Figure 6: Bus Patronage in Cambridgeshire Source: Corporate Performance Report 2019-20 Quarter 3[11]

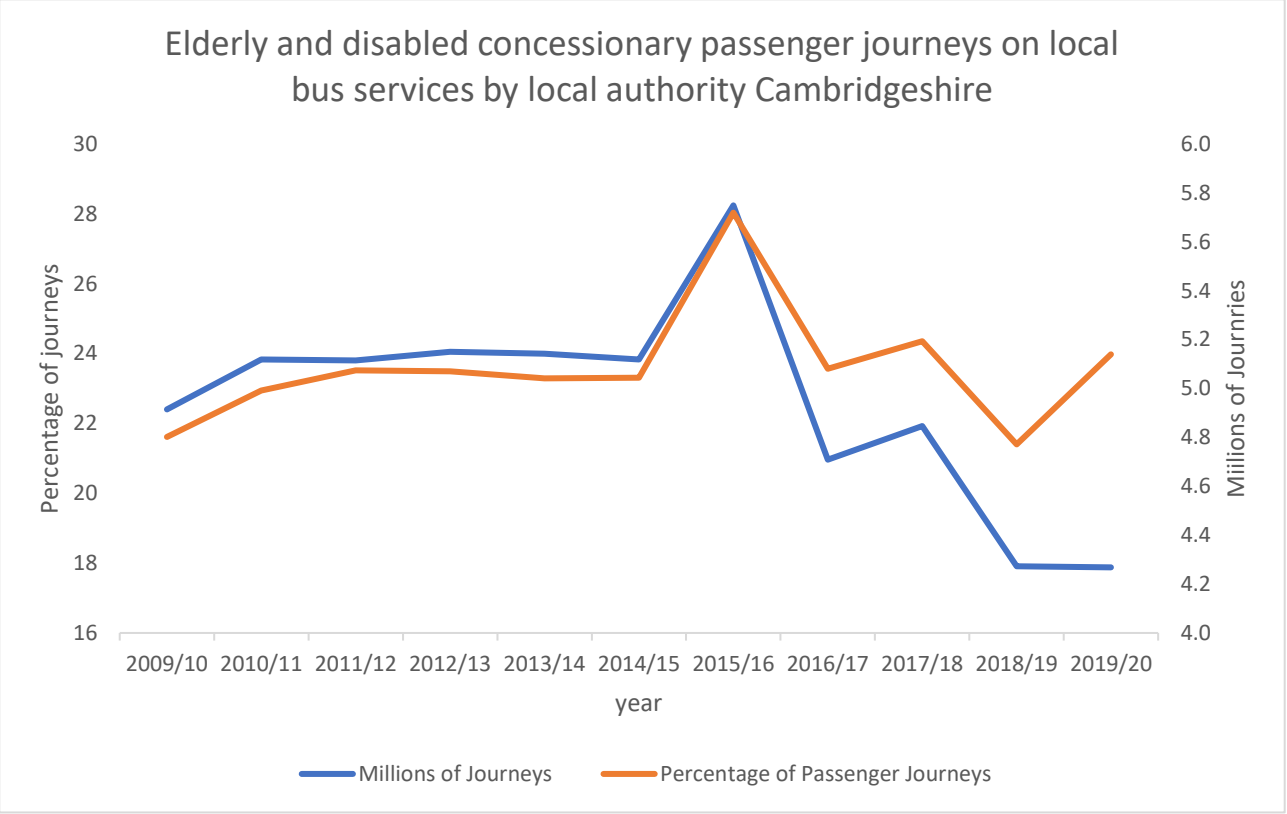

Figure 7: Concessionary passenger Journeys in Cambridgeshire
Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys

There are several aspects to note regarding concessionary fares in a Fenland context. Many people are eligible for a concessionary bus pass but not all of them can use them due to the availability or ability to access bus services across the district. Looking at Figure 7 it is likely that the decline in concessionary fare use on local bus services is linked to a decline in bus services across Fenland. Concessionary fares pass use on dial-a-ride services is different across Cambridgeshire dependent on the district you are in. Within

[11] https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Performance-indicators-Q3-2019-2020.pdf

Fenland concessionary fare passes can be used to pay completely for a dial a ride service with the County Council paying half the fare and the other half being covered by Fenland District Council.

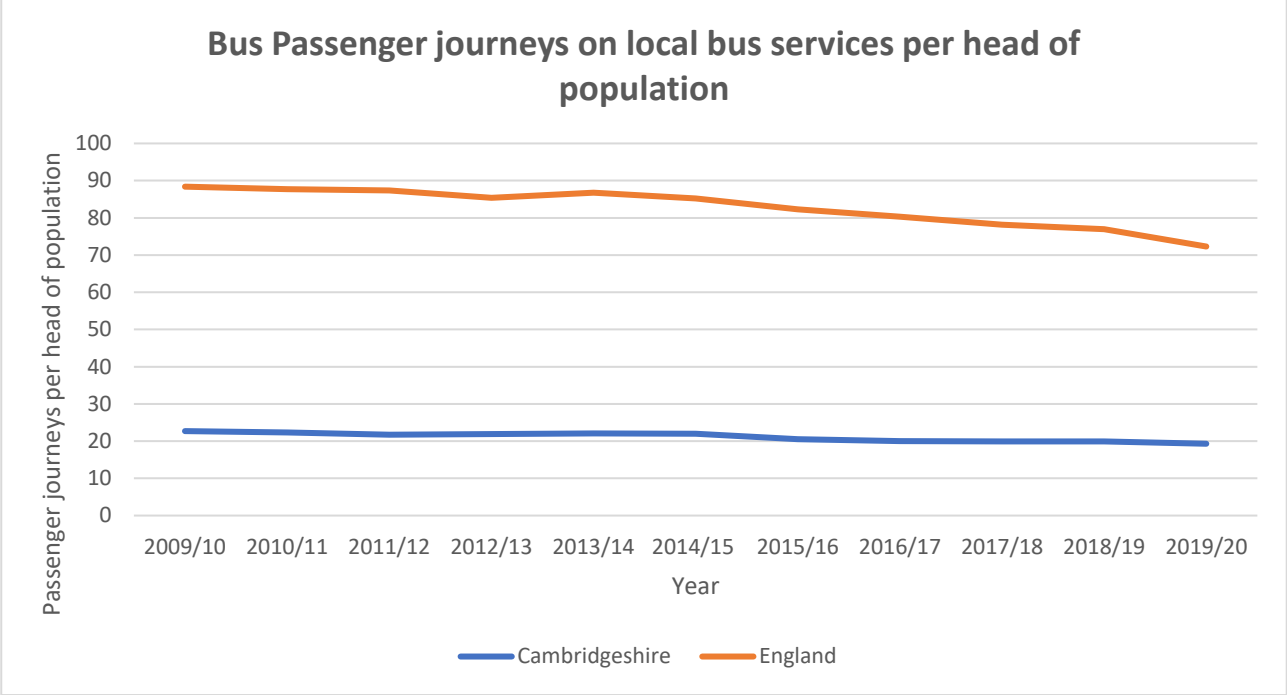

Figure 8: Bus Passenger Journeys on Local Bus service per head of population
source: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys

Figure 8 shows that the number of bus journeys per head of population are a lot lower in Cambridgeshire when compared to the English average. There is a slight decline for both England and Cambridgeshire, but this is more pronounced in the former.

2.5 Community Transport

2.5.1 Dial a Ride

Limited and infrequent bus services across much of Fenland along with an aging demographic has generated a strong reliance on dial-a-ride services. Information in Figure 9 and Figure 10 show passenger numbers for dial-a-ride over the course of the last decade.

Dial-a-Ride "is a pre-bookable scheduled service operating throughout the Fenland Area currently five days a week, providing a door-to-door service for individual people unable to utilise conventional public transport services. You must be a member of Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT) to use this service. This service is based on a timetable/route and users holding a valid Cambridgeshire County Council bus pass can travel for free."[12] Dial-a-Ride services need to be booked in advance and the booking must be made before 3pm before the day of travel.

Dial-a-Ride services operate across Fenland. More information about services and timetables are available on the FACT website- fact-cambs.co.uk FACT Community Transport also operate group hire services and dial a car to enable more specific journeys to take place that meet the needs of specific groups (young people's organisation, local club or society) or for an individual. E.g. hospital appointment.

[12] http://www.fact-cambs.co.uk/

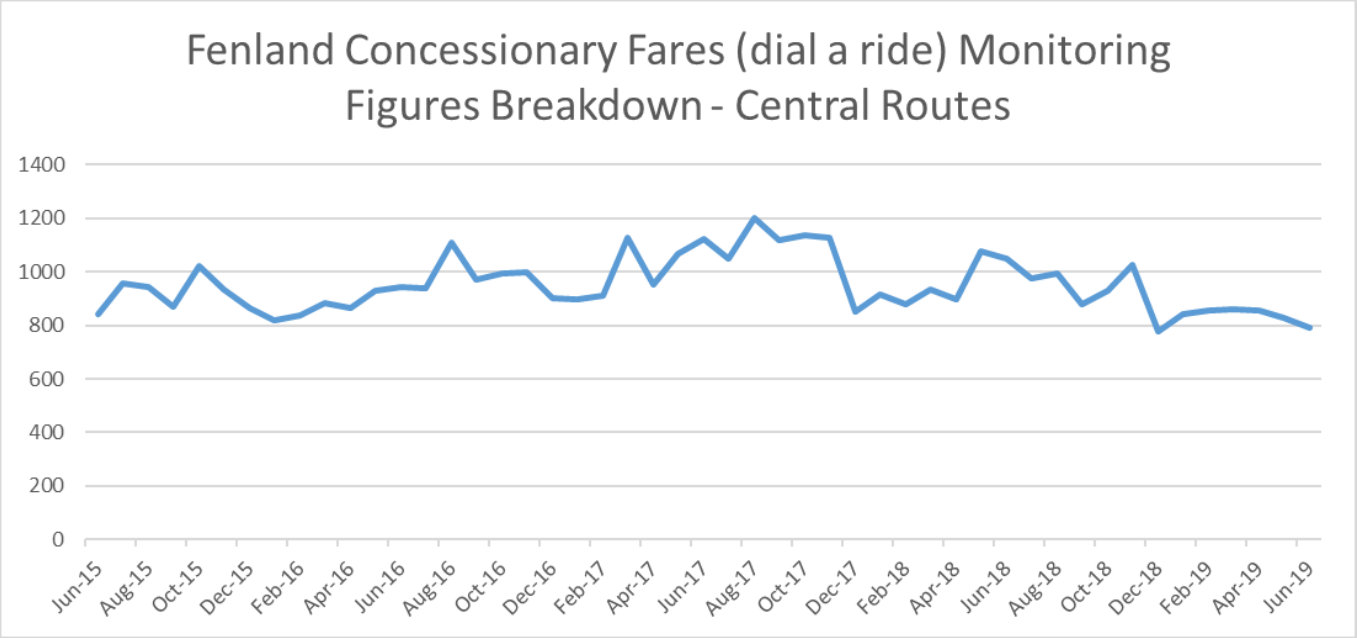

Figure 9: Fenland Concessionary Fares (dial a ride) Monitoring Figures Breakdown for Central Routes, covering Welney, Christchurch, Manea, March, Chatteris, Doddington and Wimblington

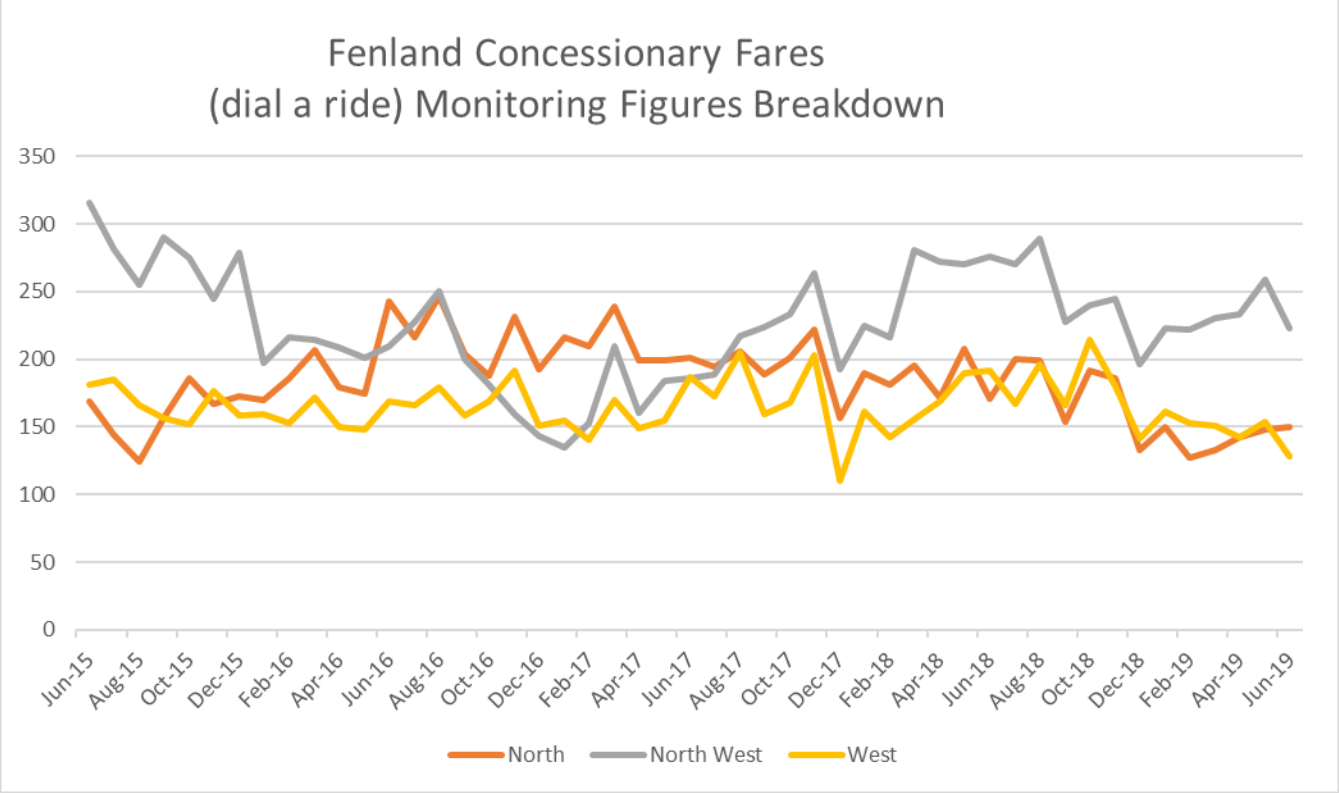

Figure 10: Fenland Concessionary Fares (dial a ride) for:
North routes (Walsoken, WIsbech, Walpole Highway, Elm, Emneth, Friday Bridge, Tydd St Giles)
West routes (Benwick, Turves, Coates, Eastrea, Whittlesey)
North West routes (Murrow, Parson Drove, Gorefield, Leverington, Wisbech St Mary, Guyhirn, Newton)

The data shows that for Central routes, there has been a slight uptake on dial-a-ride journeys over the course of the decade, with the vast majority of users alighting in March. The North West and West routes

have largely retained a similar level of patronage over the decade, with the North route reporting a dip in patronage in 2019 compared to the start of the decade.

2.5.2 Community Car Scheme

There are several community car schemes that operate across Fenland. Combined, these schemes provide coverage across the whole of Fenland. The details of these schemes are available online at https://www.fenland.gov.uk/communitytransport. Community car schemes are for those who have difficulty using public transport or have no access to public transport. They offer a pre-booked door-to-door service for people who have no other way to make essential medical or social trips. Schemes are run by volunteers, and passengers pay toward the cost of their journey. Trips depend on driver availability and passengers are asked to book with as much notice as possible.

Community car scheme journeys are particularly suitable for people who need to travel for a specific appointment time. Due to the limited availability, it is often difficult to get to a medical appointment by public transport. The benefit of a car scheme journey is that you can be taken door to door and drivers will usually wait for you so there is no delay once an appointment is finished.

Community car schemes were originally designed for short essential journeys. Over time however, there has become a greater reliance on these schemes, especially for longer journeys. NHS policies relating to patient services at specialist centres, freedom of choice in respect of hospitals and tightening criteria for eligibility of patient transport (NHS provided transport for appointments) are having a significant impact. The NHS has no legal requirement to get a patient to a medical appointment.

The impact of these policies means that volunteer drivers are making longer journeys to assist people. For each session they are available they are assisting fewer people due to the length of journey. Fewer volunteer drivers want to travel further afield which also creates difficulties.

Figure 11 shows the change in community car scheme use across four districts in Cambridgeshire. Although there has been a slight decline in the number of journeys in Fenland, there is an ever-increasing reliance on this scheme. Figure 12 shows that over time there has been an increase in trips made for medical journeys and hospital journeys, highlighting the importance of these schemes.

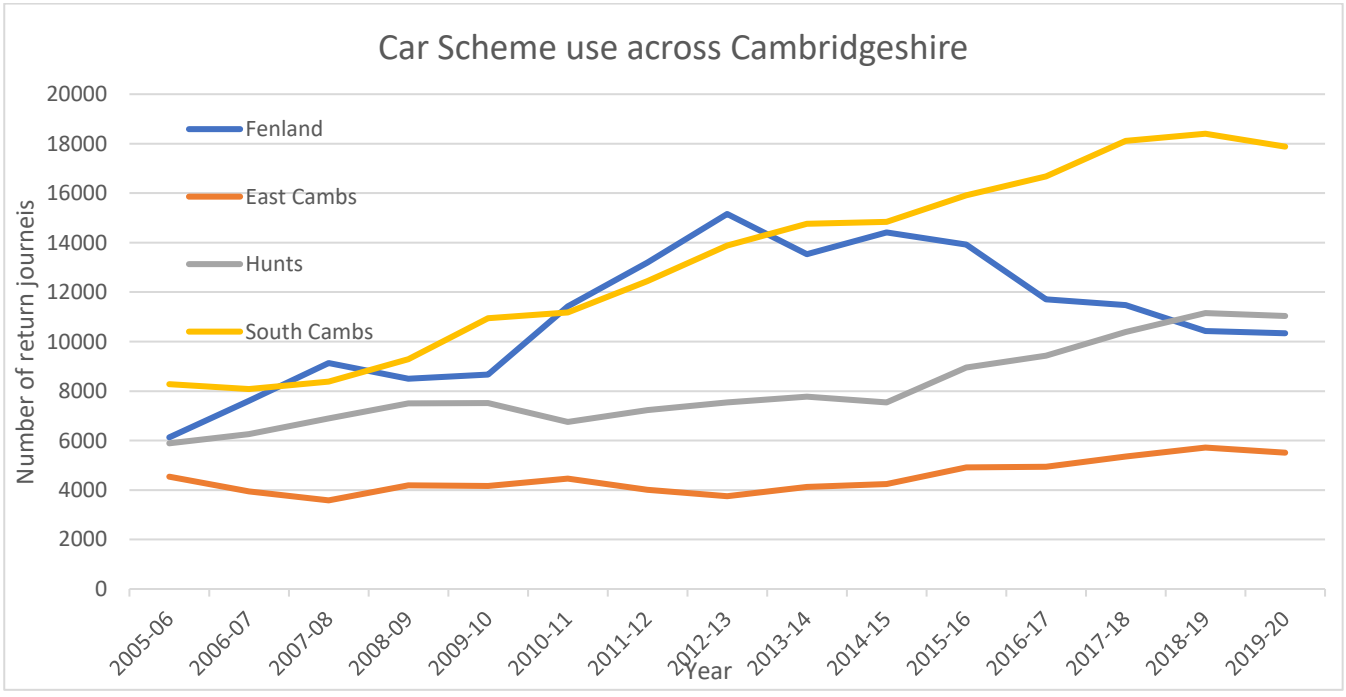

Figure 11: Car Scheme use across Cambridgeshire over time

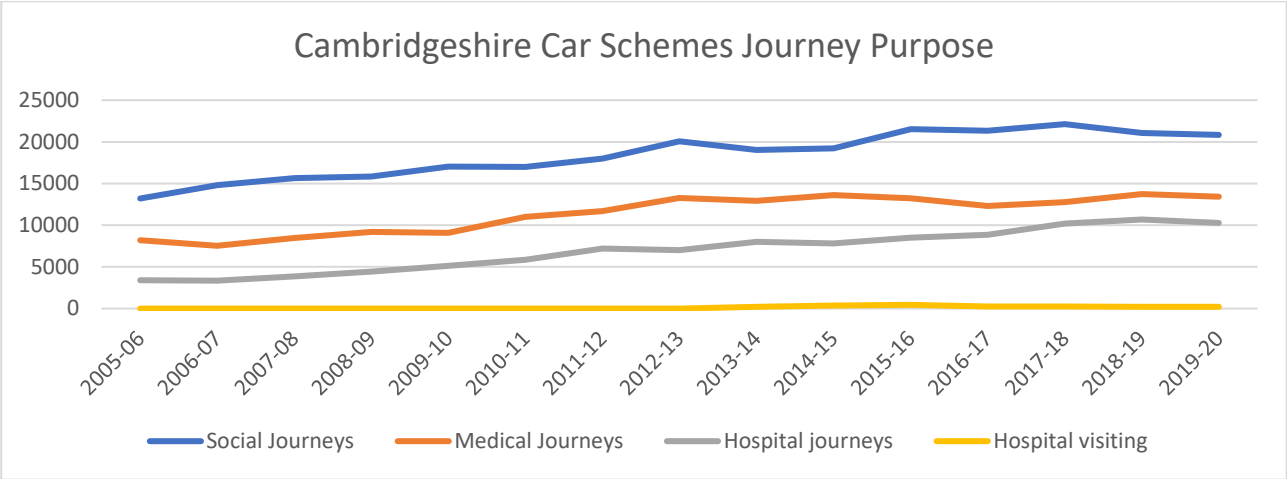

Figure 12 Cambridgeshire Car Schemes by Journey Purpose

Hospital Journeys are trips to hospital appointments,
Hospital visiting are trips to visit somebody in hospital

2.6 Railway Journeys

The following details estimates of rail patronage to and from stations in Cambridgeshire from data on station entries and exits collected by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR)[13]. The 2018/19 data, published in January 2020, shows continued growth in rail use to and from most stations in the county.

Use of stations in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough grew by 3.9% from 2017/18. There was a 1.4% increase in entries and exits at the three Fenland stations (March, Whittlesea and Manea).

Rail use from March slightly increased, and Whittlesea saw a small decline in patronage. However, the strong growth in rail use from Manea following the introduction of the regular two-hourly stopping service in 2015/16 has continued, with a 19.2% increase in entries and exits from 2017/18 to 2018/19. Rail use from Manea station has grown by over 400% in the past five years.

[13] https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage/

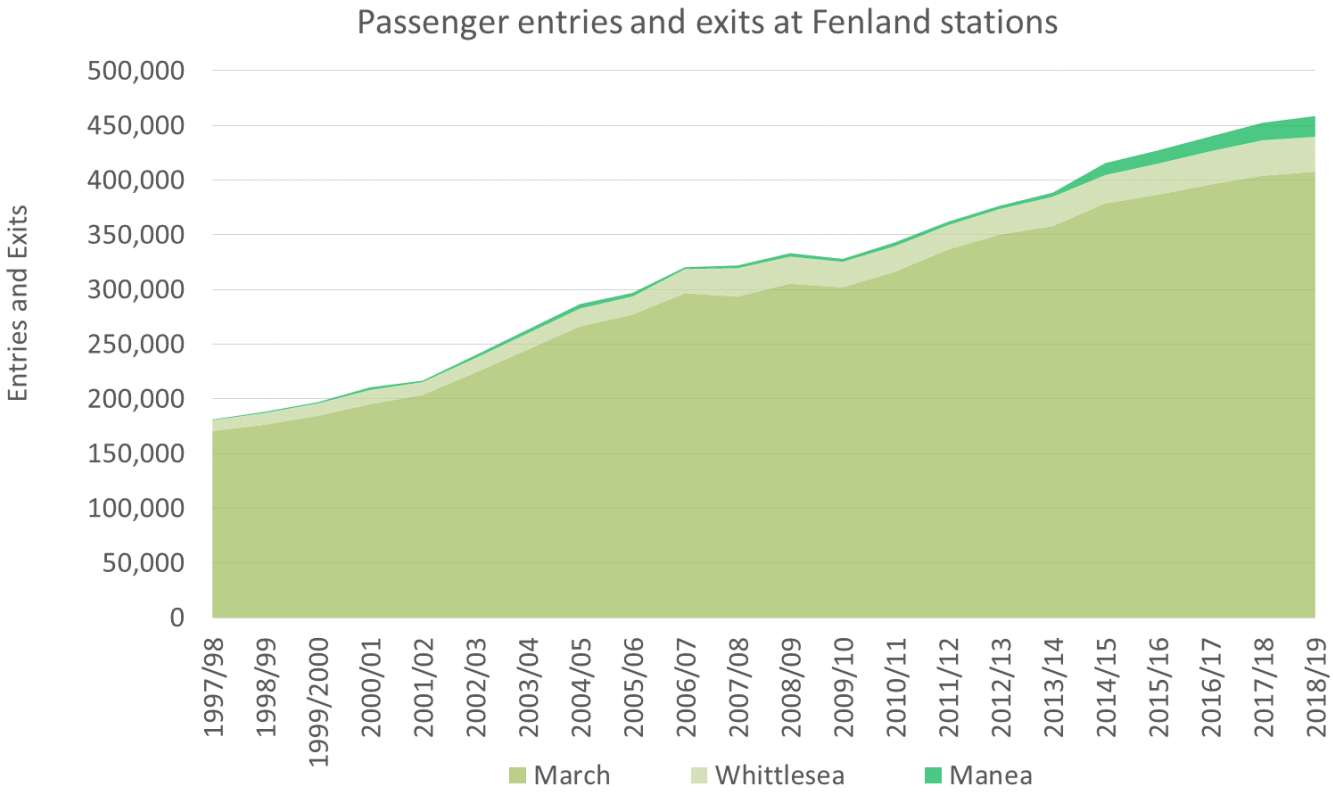

Figure 13: Rail Trips in Fenland 1997 to 2019

2.6.1 Railway Journeys and Covid-19

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and travel restrictions have had a major impact on rail travel and people's attitudes towards it. The Department for Transport (DfT) have been carrying out research into this through a programme called All change, Travel tracker these reports are available online[14]. DfT have also conducted research into people's confidence in using public transport during the Covid-19 pandemic[15]. This research found, "there was no substantial evidence for modal shift for commuters – instead simply lessening the use of transport."

Looking at passenger rail journeys: "A total of 182 million rail passenger journeys were made in Great Britain in 2021-22 Q1. This is more than five times the 35 million journeys made in 2020-21 Q1 when travel restrictions were most severe and the most journeys since the start of 2020-21. Nevertheless, usage remains considerably lower than before the pandemic with the 182 million journeys this quarter equating to 41.6% of the 437 million journeys made in the same quarter two years ago (2019-20 Q1)."[16]

Looking at station usage figures from the annual estimates of the number of entries/exits Table 3 shows that use of the three Fenland stations fell by approximately 77% between 2019-20 and 2020-21. Figures are not available for 2021-22 yet so in cannot been seen if entries/exits have increase following the lifting of travel restrictions related to Covid-19.

[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-travel-behaviour-during-the-lockdown?
[15] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/confidence-in-using-public-transport-during-coronavirus-covid-19
[16] https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/media/2010/passenger-rail-usage-2021-22-q1.pdf

Station name	2020-21 Entries and exits - TOTAL	2019-20 Entries and exits - TOTAL	Change %
March	87,832	385,956	-77%
Whittlesea	8,026	35,230	-77%
Manea	3,910	18,834	-79%

Table 3 Estimates of Station usage in Fenland Source: Office of Road and Rail[17]

[17] https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage

Chapter 3 Baseline 2006 Accessibility Research

Between 2004 and 2006 there was significant new thinking from Government concerning deprivation and access. This led to new government guidance and new approaches. For the first time in any detail, transport policy would have a significant focus on access. Local Transport and Highway Authorities were required to have accessibility proposals. As the first of its kind this provided a baseline of the then current picture. It also enabled us to monitor progress over time. Please also refer to section 122.2.5 as it details the process as to how deprivation was being measured.

3.1 Accessibility and Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004

In 2004, the first Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) was published, this is the baseline information for the IMD. The 2004 IDM contained seven domains of deprivation, (income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment, and crime. The housing domain includes accessibility. Below are figures showing a comparison with the rest of Cambridgeshire. For Fenland this shows that a significant proportion of the district is in the bottom and lower quartiles for this domain. This is signified by the red colour on each map. It shows that compared with the rest of Cambridgeshire there is significant deprivation in Fenland.

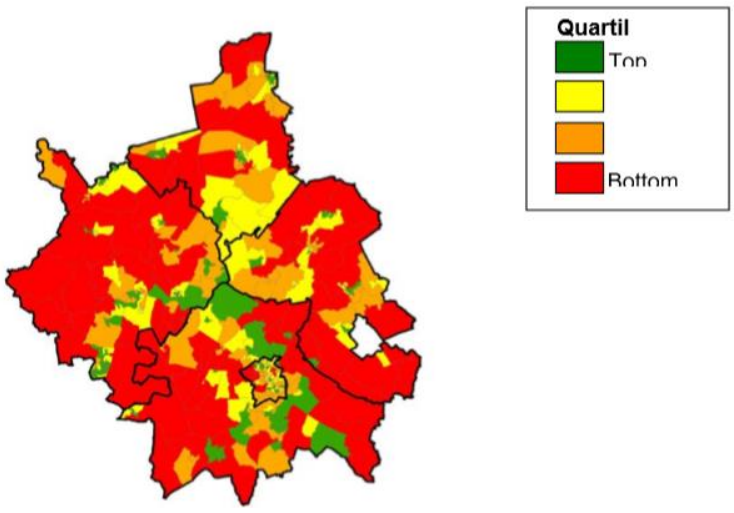

Figure 14: Barriers to housing and services domain demographic in Cambridgeshire in 2007

- Large areas of the county are in the bottom quartile due to the distances they are from services such as GP practices, shops and Post Offices.
- The rural character and sparse nature of the district means that access to services is an issue for many residents.
- A significantly lower proportion of Fenland residents have access to a car or van, in comparison with other districts in Cambridgeshire.

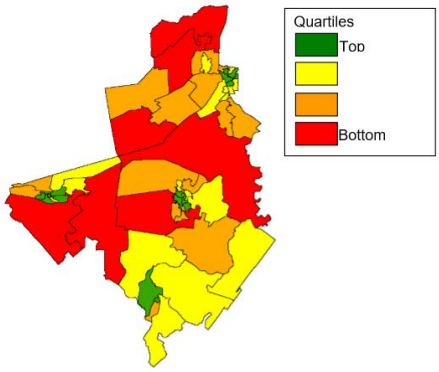

Figure 15: Housing domain demographic for Fenland in 2007

- Housing and access to services are the second worst domain for Fenland. The most deprived is health and education
- Within the county, Fenland is the fourth worst district in terms of the housing domain IMD

The Transport Issues in Fenland Evidence Base Report (2007) considers transport, deprivation and age issues. Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004 Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary, Elm and Christchurch and Roman Bank are the most deprived in relation to access to services. All of these wards are in the top 5% nationally for this barrier. As these wards are more rural in terms of their location, public transport is also more limited.

Section 4.2.5 of this report provided further IMD data but this time from 2019. It should be noted that compared with the 2004 and 2007 data the high levels of deprivation remain.

3.2 2006 Accessibility National Context

In February 2003 the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Social Exclusion Unit published its report *Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion*. A full copy of this report can be found at

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/---invest/documents/publication/wcms_asist_8210.pdf

This report identified key problems such as access to work, education, healthcare and food shopping, particularly if you do not have access to a car. The report focussed on changes over the previous 50 years creating a circumstance whereby people must travel further to access essential services and the impact of increased car use has on non-car owners. The report highlighted the need for a new strategy, policy changes and a new local authority-led approach to accessibility planning through LTPs.

In 2005 DfT produced Accessibility Planning Guidance for Local Authorities. The guidance sought to set out a cross-Government strategy for improving access to the services with the greatest impact on life opportunities- jobs, health care, learning, and food shops. Each Accessibility strategy was expected to include the following aspects:

- Be set in the context of the wider vision and objectives for that area

- Aim to improve accessibility for all, but particularly for disadvantaged groups and communities Focus on accessibility to employment, learning, health care and food shops together with other services and opportunities of local importance e.g. leisure facilities
- Set out accessibility priorities within the five-year period
- Provide targets for improving accessibility, with clear linkages to wider strategy, and key areas of deliver
- Include a series of more detailed local accessibility action plans
- Show how accessibility considerations are to be incorporated into wider policy and scheme development and delivery in transport, land-use planning and non-transport schemes.

A full copy of the Accessibility Planning Guidance can be found on the National Archives website at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110720231329/http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/accessibility/guidance/gap/accessibilityplanningguidanc3633_pge_4-.html?page=4

3.3 LTP1 – Cambridgeshire Accessibility Strategy

As defined by national guidance (see above) a strategy for accessibility was developed as part of LTP1 2006 – 2011. An initial stage of the process was mapping showing the potential or limitation of access to key services. The mapping and wider evidence-based work was finalised in 2005 with a report titled *Moving People? Moving services? Moving Stories!*

A county-wide accessibility workshop was held in 2005 during which it was agreed that the 9 least accessible wards in Cambridgeshire should form part of the Accessibility Action Plans. For Fenland this included Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary (specifically the village of Murrow) and Manea. For each of these areas a more detailed assessment was undertaken, and an action plan developed. This plan included recommendations on public transport, access to health services, the need for case studies and questionnaires from residents and cost of transport information. The need for more flexible rail ticketing was highlighted.

3.4 Accessibility Fenland Local Context, Research in Murrow and Manea 2006

The villages of Murrow and Manea were identified as the least accessible places in Fenland. Additional accessibility research was required in both places. This led to the Murrow Transport Project and a working group project with young people in Manea. Both projects focused heavily on survey work and obtaining the views of local people. Access to education and transport issues for young people was a key consideration. Action plans were developed, and they formed part of the Action Plan within the LTP1 Accessibility Strategy. The Action Plans contained the schemes/projects that were going to assist with the delivery of the LTP1 strategy.

For Murrow, The Fenland Transport and Access Group (TAG) completed significant work with local bus companies to ensure that there was a regular service from the village to Wisbech. Significant work was undertaken to produce local timetables. Volunteers and Local Councillors distributed information around the village and contacted people whom they knew would benefit from the service. Despite this, within months of a new bus service commencing it was being withdrawn or amended due to a limited use. Due to the fact that there are people with access needs in Murrow, the level of use of the dial-a-ride service remains high compared to other villages. Concerns were raised about young people being trapped within their village and unable to socialise with friends outside of school. Attempts to establish a youth bus project enabling young people to travel in the evenings and at weekends were unsuccessful as we were unable to appoint a scheme co-ordinator.

For Manea, attempts to amend and improve the bus service have been limited. Changes of bus company ownership have typically come with a reduced service to and from Manea. Attempts to set up a Youth Bus project enabling young people to travel as a group of friends was sadly unsuccessful. Work with Manea Youth Club to offer training for the young people in how to use the project and book the bus was well attended but despite one group trip, this service was heavily promoted but the project was withdrawn due to a lack of use. The biggest transport change however was at the end of 2013. Manea has a railway station and Greater Anglia made the decision to introduce their 2-hourly service at Manea Station, Monday to Saturday. From May 2020, the Sunday service also stopped every 2 hours at Manea. Use of Manea Station has gone from around 3,000 journeys per year to just under 16,000 a year in 2018/19. As Manea now has a train service 7 days a week from early morning to well into the evening, outside of the market towns it is probably the most accessible place in Fenland now for the majority of users.

The above projects highlight the challenges of trying of deliver regular and affordable public transport in a rural area. The bus service research also highlighted that even where residents were stating additional services were badly needed, these comments didn't translate to bus use when additional services became available. This initial accessibility research was completed several years ago, Chapter 6 will bring the research up to date and provide a comparison on both sets of data.

Chapter 4 Accessibility Research and local evidence 2006 - 2020

After the initial accessibility work was carried out in 2006 (as detailed in Chapter 3 above) there was a need to carry out further research as the accessibility situation can change over time. This can be due to a range of factors including demographic, social economic factors and changes to transport services. The below summarises work carried out from 2006 to 2020. Chapter 5 provides detail on how the latest accessibility work was carried out.

The topics covered in this section are:

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which investigated transport and health in three areas: access to transport, active transport and air pollution
- Bus service reductions and their impacts on accessibility
- The formation of the Fenland Transport Access Group (TAG)
- The impact of Covid-19 pandemic
- Devolution and the way forward for bus policy and strategy.

4.1 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Transport and Health

Accessibility mapping completed more recently in 2015 showed a more up to date but worse accessibility situation when compared with the period between 2004 and 2006. The County Council Public Health Team completed a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on transport and health. The main research as part of this JSNA is broken into three sections– access to transport, active transport, and air pollution. A summary document is also available. Access to these reports can be found from the following website links:

Transport and Health JSNA summary Document: http://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Transport-and-Health-JSNA-2015.pdf

Transport and Health JSNA full report: https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/jsna/published-joint-strategic-needs-assessments/

An important quote from the Access to Transport JSNA is as follows:

“Transport barriers are not experienced equally through the population. Factors that may make people vulnerable to transport barriers include:

- Those who may be socially excluded (or in lower socioeconomic groups).
- Those living in rural areas.
- Those without cars or stopping driving.
- Those lacking the knowledge or skills and confidence to use available modes of transport.”

Key issues raised in the Access to Transport JSNA are as follows:

- There is strong evidence linking an absence of transport and increased levels of social isolation
- Problems with transport provision and the location of services can reinforce social exclusion
- People living in villages and dispersed areas travel 10,000 miles per year on average compared with 6,400 miles per year in urban areas
- On average household transport expenditure accounts for 17.7% of total expenditure for rural residents compared with 14.5% for urban residents

Community transport has expanded due to cutbacks in mainstream transport and a reduced commitment by the health service to provide non-emergency patient transport

Specific data and information relating to Fenland includes:

- Much of the Fenland area has long travel times to accident and emergency, with over 90-minute journeys
- There are high numbers of people in Fenland with a limiting long-term illness that have no access to a car and reliant on public transport
- The JSNA report considered a range of matters to assess the impact of access to health care in wards across Cambridgeshire. Three wards in Wisbech (Hill, Medworth and Waterlees) and March East were in the top 10 worst affected wards in Cambridgeshire
- In 2010 Peterborough Hospital moved to a new location away from the City Centre. Survey work linked to the JSNA has shown that 43% of residents in Whittlesey found it difficult, very difficult or impossible to access the hospital in its new location

Through the JSNA process stakeholders have identified several options for addressing transport disadvantage in Cambridgeshire:

- A system-level perspective on health and transport planning, specifically ensuring that transport issues are given sufficient prominence within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group System Transformation programme.
- The exploration of additional bus provision or novel alternatives to increase the levels of non-private transport options. This could include more effective use of current assets such as school buses or taxis.
- Alternative models of supporting health, benefitting from opportunities such as integrated care and tele-health and digital solutions in reducing need to travel to health services.
- Further analysis of travel to GP practices and other forms of health services, including out-of-hours services, and more detailed qualitative inquiry work with local residents who face transport barriers in travelling to health services.

4.2 Bus Service Reductions and Transport Poverty

Nationally there has been much written about local bus service reductions and the impact on local communities. Below is a small selection of key articles and reports that have been produced. It would not be possible to produce a full list of such articles here, a review of the information in these website links does though give a good overview of the key issues.

- Bus Service Reductions – The Impact on Passengers. Transport Focus (2012): https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/bus-service-reductions-the-impact-on-passengers/ "Transport Focus, formerly Passenger Focus, is the independent watchdog representing the interests of Britain's rail passengers, bus and tram passengers in England (outside of London) and passengers on scheduled domestic coach services in England. It also represents users of England's major roads (the 'strategic road network'). Transport Focus offers advice to the public and takes up passengers' complaints that train companies have failed to resolve. It aims to secure improvements, influence decisions and get the best deal for passengers and road users with an emphasis on evidence-based campaigning and research."[18]

Locked Out: Transport Poverty in England. Sustrans (2012):

[18] Text taken from https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/transport-focus

This research sets out that Fenland District is the worst affected area for transport poverty in England. Transport poverty has strong links to poor transport accessibility.

Transport poverty refers to households and individuals who struggle or are unable to make the journeys that they need. There are several definitions, but they tend to comprise low income, poor availability of public transport and needing a long time to access essential services.

Information released by Sustrans at the time the research was completed stated the following:

"35 million people face the risk of debt just getting around

- *One and half million in England at serious risk of 'transport poverty'*
- *Almost half of English local authorities have areas at 'significant risk'*

The analysis for this study combined three indicators of transport poverty:

- areas of low income (where the costs of running a car would place a significant strain on household budgets);
- areas where a significant proportion of residents live further than a mile from their nearest bus or railway station; and
- areas where it would take longer than an hour to access essential goods and services (as identified by the Department for Transport) by walking, cycling and public transport.

Using these indicators, communities were identified as facing a 'low', 'medium' or 'high' risk of transport poverty.

The 'Locked Out' research identified the top 10 worst affected local authorities as:

Local Authority	**% at serious risk**	**# at serious risk**
Fenland	49	44,599
Eden	41	21,027
South Holland	33	28,167
Hambleton	32	28,402
Torridge	32	20,934
Basildon	31	54,352
West Lindsey	31	27,584
Ryedale	31	16,344
North Norfolk	29	29,765
Breckland	26	33,430

Table 4 Locked Out- 10 worse affected local authorities
Source: Sustrans Locked Out Transport Poverty in England

Summary report
https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/3706/transport-poverty-england-2012.pdf

- Buses in Crisis (2018) - A report on Bus funding across England and Wales 2010 – 2018. The Campaign for Better Transport: https://bettertransport.org.uk/buses-in-crisis-2018

- Bus journeys fall by 90 million a year – BBC News 30.1.2019: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-47045872

The lack of a detailed and ongoing evidence base at the local level is a barrier to addressing transport and accessibility issues for local communities. In more recent years there has been less of a direct focus on accessibility and accessibility strategies at all levels. Less funding locally and nationally for revenue projects has also limited opportunities for funding to support projects.

It is suggested that there were also some gaps in the research. Whilst there was a focus on the cost of transport, there was limited focus on wider social and economic impacts.

4.3 The Fenland Transport and Access Group

Considerable effort has been made since the original research highlighted in Chapter 3 was completed to address accessibility issues in Fenland. The Fenland Transport and Access Group which has been in existence since before 2004, can assist with helping residents to find transport for many journeys, however this does not address the deficiencies that exist within the network. The Fenland Transport and Access Group also known as TAG aims to: "Ensure that there is one integrated approach for transport and accessibility in the Fenland area, one approach to address the challenges of a local rural transport network".

The TAG membership draws together professional experience from transport planning, public and community transport operation, assistance to people to enable independent living and elected members. The group is aiming to ensure that transport is available to meet the basic needs of all residents. TAG support is more limited without funding and specifically where revenue funding is required for public transport services. The TAG has been successful in helping people make journeys using existing transport available in Fenland but there are limits to what can be achieved without more funding.

The TAG has had several successful achievements relating to accessibility including:

- Publication of the Fenland Transport Directory – a booklet which promotes the public transport on offer and signposts people to where they can obtain further information such as timetables
- Publication of a series of case studies under the title Getting from A to B – each case study provides a real-life scenario where a resident has difficulty accessing transport. The case study sets out the key issues and the type of transport that can help
- Accessibility mapping linked to concession bus pass holders in 2010. This enabled work with the bus operators to install new bus stops along routes to greatly improve the number of dwellings within 400 metres of a bus stop
- Significant promotion of community transport to enable access for medical journeys
- Successful delivery of the Wisbech Travel Choices project which established local community transport champions across Wisbech and encouraged people to try alternative transport
- Worked with partners to initially establish the Hereward Community Rail Partnership (CRP) which was formally launched in October 2012. The CRP has since been instrumental in achieving the now two hourly railway service to and from Manea, 7 days a week. Additional stops at March as part of the Liverpool – Norwich service, including at lunchtime to facilitate half day journeys
- Working in partnership with GP surgeries and Wisbech Hospital a large research project demonstrated the difficulties of accessing healthcare without a car and strong reliance on family support for transport.

4.4 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic

At any time there are a wide range of factors affecting accessibility and not all of them are about transport. The biggest and current example is coronavirus. Whilst it is unclear what will happen in the future regarding the pandemic there is no doubting that the 2020 accessibility "picture" was very different to what we have come to expect in recent decades. The impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on rail travel are discussed above in section 2.6.1.

Messages such as stay at home, work from home, do not use public transport, safe travel on public transport and walk and cycle more are all having a significant impact on how we travel. Whilst travel reduced during 2020 it is currently very unclear what any future travel patterns might be. It is not possible to know at the present time whether travel habits in future will return to a similar pattern to those before coronavirus or whether they will be very different. What is certain though is that residents, businesses, and visitors will still need access to essential services. There will still be an accessibility need in some form and as local authorities we must ensure that we fully support our local communities in this respect.

What might all this mean for accessibility in Fenland? Whilst this is also unknown there are some factors to be mindful of and consider.

- There is no doubt that public transport has seen very limited use due to coronavirus restrictions. The Government are supporting bus and railway companies with emergency measures, although this is unlikely to be the case indefinitely. With Fenland bus service viability being challenging in more normal circumstances there could be significant risk to our services
- Social distancing measures on public transport are impacting viability due to numbers of seats having to remain empty. This could also put Fenland bus, railway and community transport services at risk
- The Government Emergency Active Travel Fund to encourage walking and cycling has seen investment in new cycle parking in the market towns and new signing close to schools in March. Plans are under consideration to develop a walking and cycling and mobility aids improvement strategy for Fenland and Cambridgeshire Active Travel Strategy that will set out clear guidance and inclusive active travel.

Whilst the exact accessibility situation on the ground is unclear, the October 2020 National Travel Survey (NTS)[19] provided some statistical information from across England. The website link below details the full report. The survey was completed between May and July 2020, with a sample size of 2,688. Here are some key details from the data that might give clues to the accessibility situation

- 39% of people walked more
- 38% of people cycled more
- 65% of people only left their homes for essential travel and exercise
- 14% travelled for work outside the home
- People on lower incomes (£25,000 per annum and under) were stricter about not going out. They were mostly only going out for essential exercise

The NTS is regularly updated and the latest information is available online[20]. The National Travel Survey 2020 was published in September 2021 and headlines are:

- Average trips per person per year 2019-2020 were 22% down
- Modal share is dominated by the car, making up 58% of all trips in 2020 and 81% of all miles travelled
- Many more walking trips were made in 2020 than 2019. There was a 6% point increase to 32% of all trips

[19] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-attitudes-study-wave-4-provisional
[20] National Travel Survey - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- On average, women made more trips than men (755 vs 722) but men overall travelled further 4,777 miles compared with 3,901. "This is reflected in the number of commuting trips, where men made an average of 105 commuting trips per year (a decrease of 45% on 2019), compared to women who made an average of 77 commuting trips per year (a decrease of 57%)"[21]

4.5 Devolution and the way ahead for bus policy and strategy

In 2017, devolution was secured and an elected Mayor was appointed, signalling the commencement of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. This new authority became the passenger transport authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough including Fenland.

In 2017 the then Mayor commissioned a strategic review of Bus Services across the Authority Area. The scope of this review inclued:

a) Current bus service provision: ascertain the level and nature of both commercial and subsidised bus provision with the CPCA.

b) Strategic options for bus services of the future: identify and evaluate examples of best practice that may be appropriate for consideration within the CPCA area in the short term (5 years). The review will differentiate between the potential range of bus services and consider alternative delivery models.

c) Assess operational models: it is envisaged that the study will consider the opportunities and constraints resulting from the Bus Services Act 2017.

d) Transition arrangements: An outcome from this study will be to identify potential transition arrangements that might be put in place until such time as the strategic options identified are further developed and implemented. It is, therefore, important that the study considers the cost of implementation, likely levels of future subsidy and potential sources of funding. This study will also consider the phasing and implications of moving from the 'as is' bus service to alternative delivery models.

An initial high-level report concerning the strategic review of bus services was discussed at the Combined Authority Board meeting in January 2019. This review set out a high-level approach but also concluded that further work was required. The CPCA commissioned a Bus Reform Task Force whose role is to consider and recommend appropriate reforms to bus services, strategies and public information[22]. . They want to establish a new model which will see improved accessibility for all residents. The 2020 impact of coronavirus is also an important consideration and in September 2020, the then Mayor issued a statement stating that unless there is greater use of existing bus services some may be lost. Further details can be found about this Combined Authority work from their website as set out below. The work of the Bus Task Reform Group and future approaches to bus service delivery are expected to be available also through the CPCA website although the current timetable is uncertain. Below are links to CPCA papers providing key updates on the bus task report work.

Strategic Bus Review pages 101 – 135 – Paper from CPCA Board Jan 2019
http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/assets/Combined-Authority/agenda-document-pack-30.1.19.pdf

Bus Task Reform Paper pages 307 – 311 – Paper from CPCA Board March 2019

https://tinyurl.com/y4as54sa

Bus Task Reform Paper from CPCA Board September 2020

[21] 2020 National Travel Survey Main Results (publishing.service.gov.uk)
[22] https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/what-we-deliver/transport/buses/bus-reform/

tinyurl.com/46w67f6y

Bus Strategy Update CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee January 2021

tinyurl.com/1pm7uy3k

This report details the following information: “The Mayor, after consulting the Board, has decided to tender a second new trial bus service giving direct links from March, through Wimblington, Doddington, Chatteris, Warboys to St Ives. This will support an area that is significantly underserved by public transport and faces linked issues of deprivation. Through ticketing with the busway will provide an express link into Cambridge and onwards to Addenbrookes.”

Following this work, in March 2021 the Department for Transport published the ‘Bus Back Better’ policy paper[23]. “This National strategy sets out the vision and opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered.” This policy sets out the desire for every local transport authority and bus operator in England to be in a statutory enhanced partnership or franchising arrangement. Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP) were required to be submitted to the Department for Transport by the end of October 2021. The CPCA BSIP is available here[24] alongside a notice confirming that it is preparing an assessment of a proposed bus franchising scheme.

The CPCA Bus Service Improvement Plan aims to achieve:

- More reliable bus services
- Faster journey times by bus
- More passengers using buses
- Greater satisfaction with services amongst passengers

The key elements of the BSIP are showing below:

[23] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better

[24] https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/what-we-deliver/transport/buses/bus-reform/

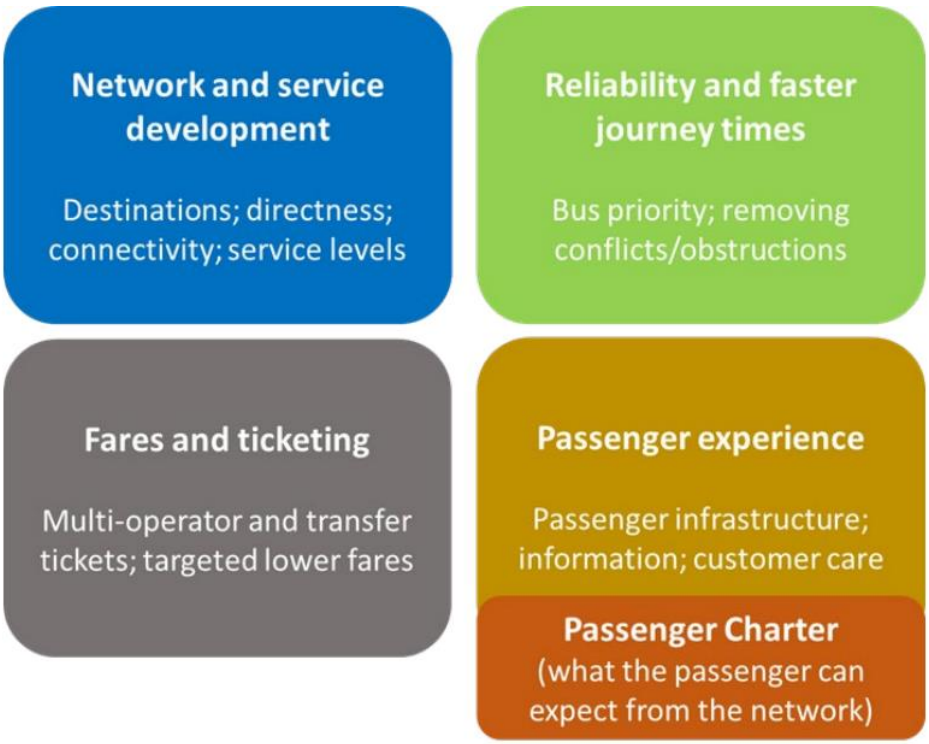

Figure 16: BSIP key elements for delivery
Source CPCA BSIP figure 4.1

The proposed service frequencies on the new local bus network is shown below:

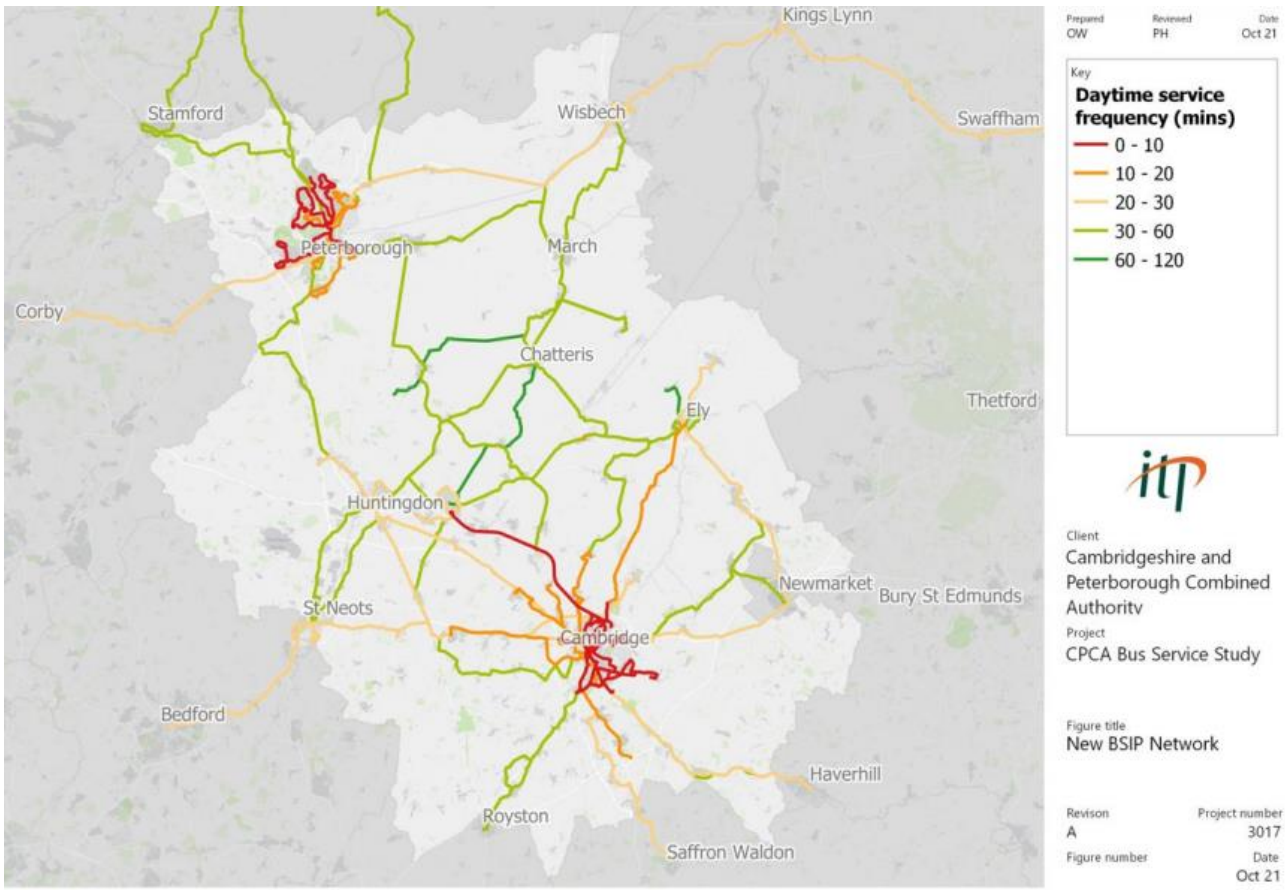

Figure 17: Service frequencies on new local bus network.
Source CPCA BSIP figure 4-4

4.6 Journey time statistics, England 2019

In November 2021 the Department for Transport published journey time statistics[25]. These present estimates of travel times from where people live to key local services. Statistics are published at national, regional, local authority and small Census area (Lower Super Output Area) level, for eight key local services by four modes of transport.

The statistics are designed to represent idealised journeys which are completed at the following times:

Tuesday in the second week in October during the 'morning peak' between 7am and 10am.

	Average Journey time of 8 key services (minutes)**			
Region	**Public transport / Walking**	**Cycle**	**Car**	**Walking**
Fenland	27.27	25.55	12.73	40.10
Cambridgeshire	25.54	21.69	12.27	40.47
East of England	20.75	18.64	11.30	34.13

[25] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/journey-time-statistics-england-2019/journey-time-statistics-england-2019

England	17.90	15.58	10.27	27.96

Table 5 Average minimum travel time to reach the nearest key services** by mode of travel (average of 8 key services), 2019*

** A maximum value of 120 minutes is used where journey times exceed 120 minutes. This means that for some service by mode combinations (particularly for walking and smaller destination sets), the average provided is lower than would actually be the case in reality.*

*** Key services: The average of minimum journey times to (1) medium sized centres of employment (500-4999 jobs), (2) primary schools, (3) secondary schools, (4) further education, (5) GPs, (6) hospitals, (7) food stores and (8) town centres. Data source government Journey Time Statistics datasets jts0101, jts0103, jts0104*[26]*.*

It can be seen from Table 5 that average journey times by all modes of transport to key services are on average higher in Fenland than Cambridgeshire, the East of England and England. The exception is for walking which is slightly higher on average in Cambridgeshire than in Fenland.

[26] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/journey-time-statistics-england-2019/journey-time-statistics-england-2019

Chapter 5 How the 2020 research was undertaken

5.1 Introduction

The 2020 research comprises several different elements, the largest of which is the new mapping work. The mapping work provides a very clear visualisation of the different accessibility challenges across Fenland. It also shows how accessibility is very variable across the Fenland district depending on which key services are being accessed. They enable an assessment to be made of changes over time and can be compared to the original 2004 and 2006 work.

Other elements forming part of this research are active travel, digital connectivity and details of the engagement process with key stakeholders. The coronavirus pandemic has led to a significant increase in focus on walking and cycling. Such information in this research could help to provide a better baseline from which to assess walking and cycling in Fenland into the future. At the time the original research was undertaken digital connectivity was in a very different place to now. Access to IT facilities including 4G networks offers different opportunities to work and access goods and services without travelling. However it is noted that the ability to access services online also varies person to person and is dependent on multiple factors. Understanding this pattern will help to assess accessibility into the future.

Local communities are served by a wide range of organisations providing goods and services, deliveries and information provision. All of these have an impact on accessibility. Local organisations working in the community also have good knowledge of their customers and their ability to travel. Giving key stakeholders (e.g. the TAG and Parish and Town Councils) an opportunity to comment on this research is considered essential due to their local knowledge. We want to ensure that the research accurately portrays what is happening in the Fenland towns and villages. This approach is intended to provide specific evidence which supports the research work.

5.2 Elements covered by the 2020 research

This section sets out details as what is covered in this research.

5.2.1 Accessibility mapping

New maps have been produced to give a visual representation of accessibility across Fenland. A range of maps have been produced with a specific focus on accessibility to essential services. This includes access to town centres, hospitals and schools. The maps show the most and least accessible services across Fenland according to the journey purpose.

The mapping shows accessibility based on different types of transport. A mode of transport was chosen for each map depending on the essential service being accessed. This is to reflect the rurality of Fenland and the low population density. For example, journeys to primary schools which are typically close to neighbours have been measured using walking and cycling accessibility. Journeys to specialist hospitals including Accident and Emergency were measured using car journeys. This reflects the fact that such facilities are a considerable distance away from Fenland.

It is though recognised that some journeys are made by different modes of transport. It is also acknowledged that personal circumstances e.g. mobility may dictate a journey time. For example, a short journey by walking of cycling for one person may not be possible for someone else. Whist the maps therefore are generalised, much of the written information to support the maps will provide commentary on travel by other forms of transport. One such example is the use of public transport timetables to compare journey times.

The new mapping is set out in chapter 6 of this report.

5.2.2 Active Travel

In some cases, and for some people active travel - walking and cycling and other modes that involve activity - are a good solution to meeting their travel needs. In Chapter 7, information is provided on current levels of active travel across Fenland. In general, levels of active travel in Fenland are low. This information can be used when developing the Fenland Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aids Strategy and the Fenland Transport Strategy. The new maps provide a good visual representation to show that access to some facilities and services can be made easily on foot or by bike subject to suitable infrastructure and personal ability.

5.2.3 Digital connectivity

It was recognised that not only physical accessibility was important but there is also a need for good digital connectivity to allow access to services. This is particularly relevant with the Covid-19 pandemic and the increasing numbers of people relying on digital connectivity for work, education, shopping and leisure from home. It is impossible to tell what the future will bring but it is likely that working from home will be increasingly common, so demand for high quality digital connectivity is still going to be a key element of access to work. It is important to note that digital connectivity has many aspects, which include: access to a broadband/mobile service, the ability to pay for the services, the skills to use the service and device to access the service. This highlights how many different aspects of digital connectivity are available. Chapter 8 provides more detail on digital connectivity in the Fenland district.

5.2.4 Mapping Methodology

The maps were produced using computer and GIS technology.

An isochrone map is a map showing areas related to isochrones between different points. An isochrone is defined as “a line drawn on a map connecting points at which something occurs or arrives at the same time” (iso = equal, chrone = time).

Isochrone maps in the context of transport planning are essentially maps of accessibility where travel time is used as the cost metric. Isochrone maps can be created for different modes of transportation e.g. foot, bicycle, motor vehicle. Generally, the output of an isochrone map for transport will show how far (in distance or time) certain points are from each other.

Route Finder (a software tool which uses existing road networks) has been used to prepare the accessibility maps which show how the towns/villages are accessible to key services by walking, cycling and public transport. Based on the location of the main facilities in Fenland, the different maps show what can be reached within certain timescales. This can then be used to highlight areas which have long travel times to key services.

When looking at public transport, Route Finder has been used to work out how people could access the bus stops in the main towns/villages of Fenland. This then needs to be compared with services at this bus stop as whilst it might be possible to access a bus stop from a particular area it might not be well served by buses. Internet research was carried out to find bus and train table information which is summarised in chapter 6 below.

5.2.5 Stakeholder engagement

As part of this work in 2021 a draft version of the report was circulated to key stakeholder. Chapter 10 provides more information about this process. The purpose of this was to ensure that all topic areas were covered and to make sure that if stakeholders had any additional information it could be included. Evidence from local communities and local organisations to support and comment on the research is essential.

The report will be updated after the stakeholder engagement in 2021. Following this the report will be used to develop the Fenland Transport Strategy and this will be the time when the wider public will have the opportunity to comment and feed into this report.

Chapter 6 2020 Research

This chapter assesses the most recent accessibility evidence highlighting current issues. Due to the changing nature of public transport services in particular as we recover from the pandemic, it is important to understand this chapter is correct as of December 2021.

The main aim of these accessibility maps is to identify the areas with low access to public transport services or key facilities as well as to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of the network.

The maps show a range of different access options and provide a large amount of information regarding public transport (bus and train) availability. As with any information on a public transport services this just provides a 'snapshot' in time. Generally, information taken from November 2020 using pre Covid-19 timetables has been used throughout this report.

Maps relating to the following services are included:

- Accessibility to Hospitals
- Accessibility to Market Towns
- Accessibility to Education
- Accessibility to Bus Service
- Accessibility to Train Stations

6.1 Hospital accessibility in Fenland by Car:

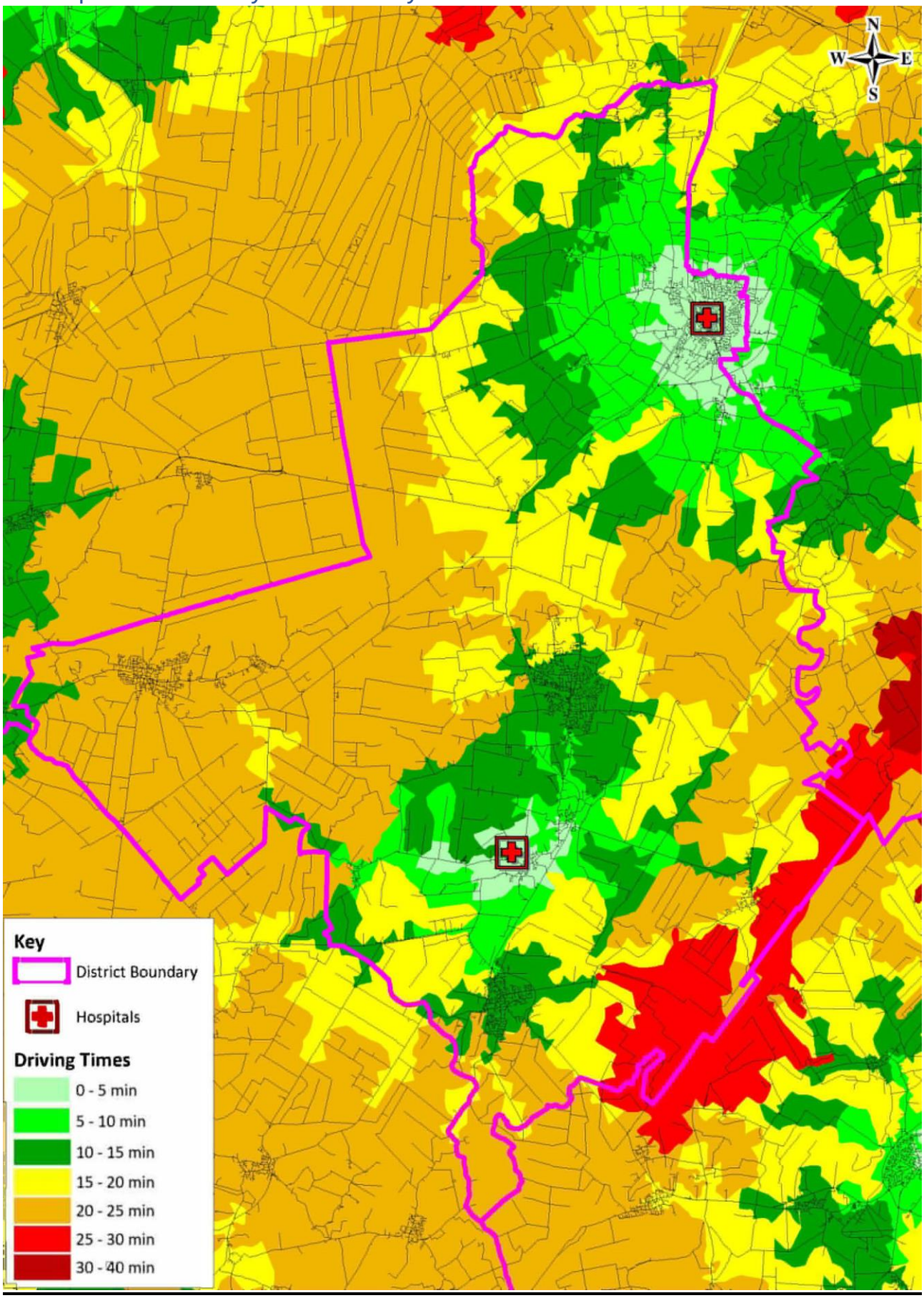

Figure 18: Hospital accessibility in Fenland by car

Figure 18 shows access from within Fenland to Doddington and Wisbech Community Hospitals which are minor injury units, and do not offer specific specialist services by car. Access to hospitals is a key issue raised by local residents and therefore these two hospitals provide an important medical lifeline. However residents need to access other hospitals outside of the District for more specialist care. The map shows accessibility using a car. Whilst Wisbech hospital is close to the bus station it requires access over a busy dual carriageway. Doddington being on the edge of a village with limited bus services is much harder to access without a car.

This map shows that Wisbech residents have good access to the hospital which is centrally located within the town. March and Chatteris residents are at least a 10 to 15minute drive from Doddington hospital. As this facility is located in a village its more difficult to access without a car. Whittlesey has the poorest access (at least 20 minutes) to these community hospitals but perhaps may look to Peterborough for such facilities.

The villages Doddington and Wimblington being in closer to Doddington Hospital have better access. The other villages have much poorer access being at least 20 minutes away. Manea has the poorest access to a community hospital being at least 25 minutes away.

Bus access to these community hospitals is "patchy" and as neither location has a railway station there is no access by train. Wisbech Hospital is located within the centre of the town and close to the bus station. There are crossing facilities for pedestrians to get across the A1101 dual carriageway, but this is not the easiest of routes. Residents in Guyhirn and Thorney Toll have bus access every 30 minutes into Wisbech. There is hourly bus access to this hospital from March. Communities such as Friday Bridge and Elm between March and Wisbech along with Manea an Benwick have two hourly access. Due to bus timetabling though, medical appointments would have to take place within a tight timescale to ensure a return journey could be made for the two hourly access.

The village of Doddington despite its close proximity to the towns of Chatteris and March has limited bus access. Journeys to March are approximately every 90 minutes with services linking Chatteris and Wisbech to Doddington being every two hours. The main bus stop is within the centre of the village and is some distance from the hospital. The pedestrian route to the hospital does not have a footpath all the way along either and is possibly not walkable by many people.

<u>The maps below do not make any reference to NHS provided transport services to which availability is varied and dependent on strict criteria.</u>

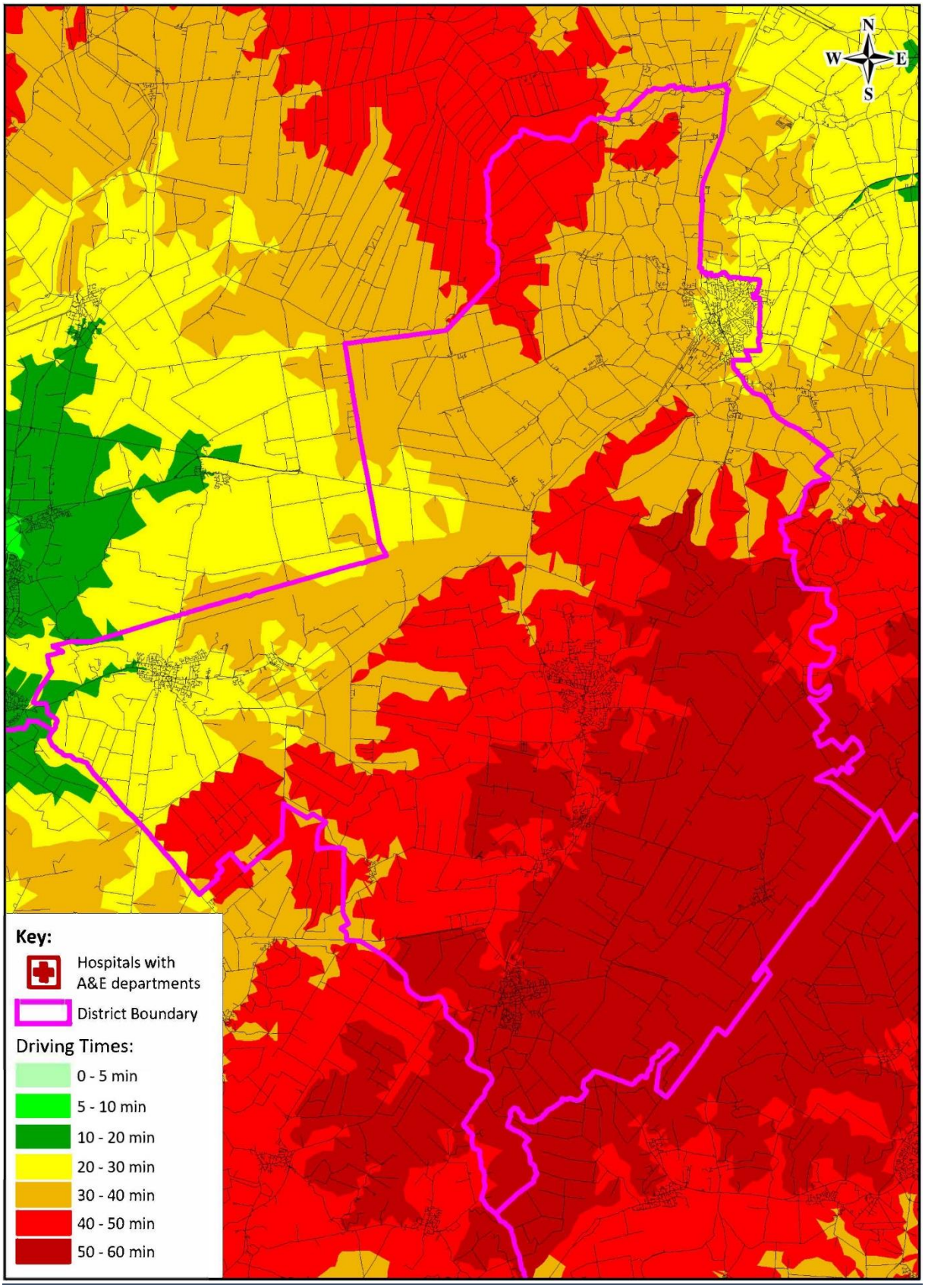

Figure 19: Accessibility to Hospitals with A and E departments zoomed in by car

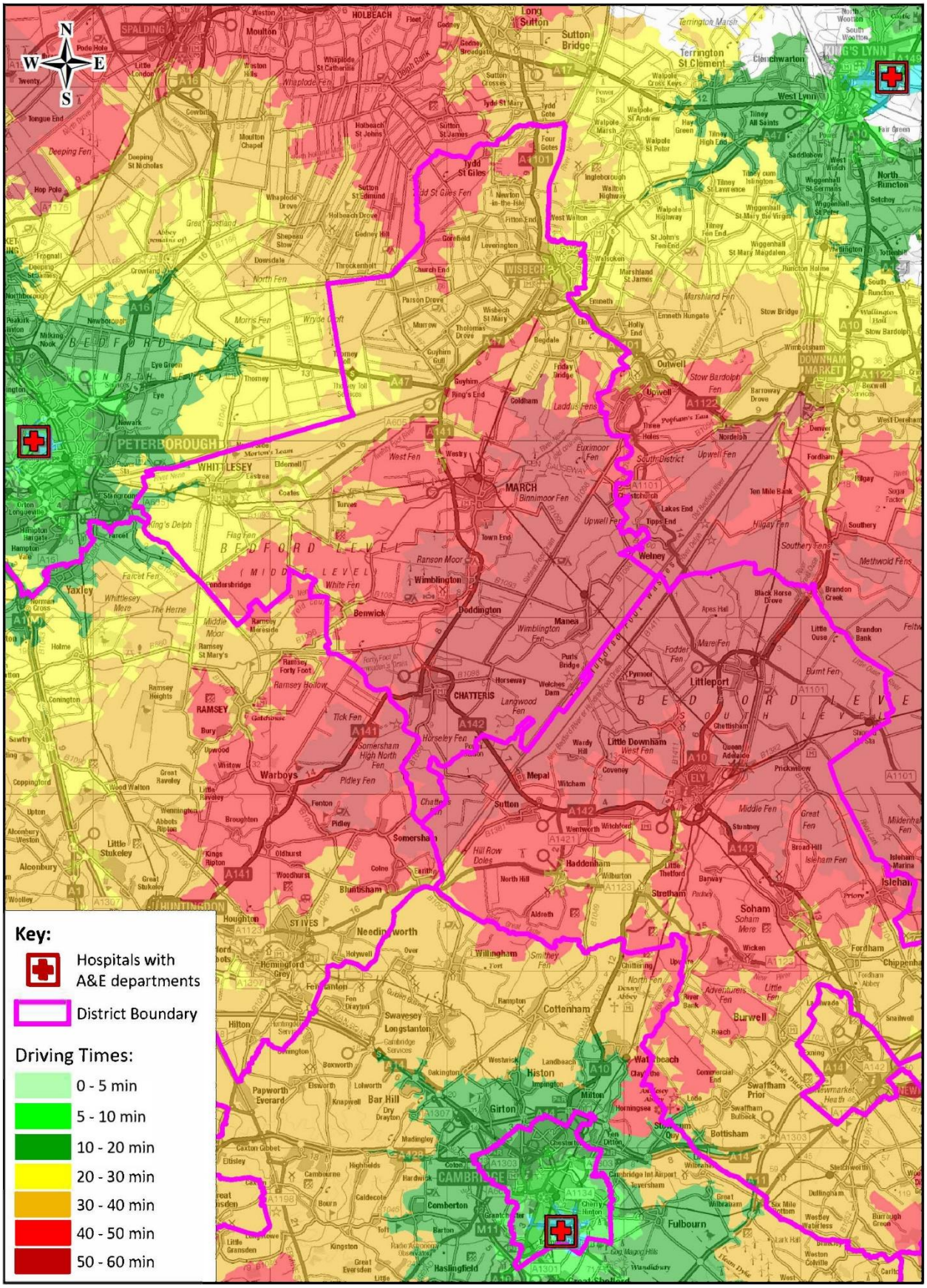

Figure 20: Accessibility to Hospitals with A and E department zoomed out by car

From Figure 19 and Figure 20 above it can be seen that access to larger hospitals from Fenland involves significant journey times by car. These maps show access to the following hospitals: Addenbrooke's Cambridge, Peterborough City Hospital and The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kings Lynn.

With the southern half of the district being approximately an hour away from a hospital with an A and E department. The northern part of the district fares slightly better with journey times of approximately 30-40 minutes which is likely to be due to access along the A47 and A605 which are faster roads. Such journey times seem long in an emergency. Larger hospitals with A and E departments also provide more specialist treatment and healthcare. Fenland residents may therefore be travelling long distances on a regular basis for medical appointments.

These long journey times by car imply that journeys by public transport are even longer. From some locations it may not be possible to make early or late hospital appointments by public transport. This can be an issue for those with regular outpatient appointments.

The figures below provide examples of journey times between March and Peterborough and Wisbech and Cambridge all information was taken from Google maps. They show that the train service between March and Peterborough offers real journey time savings when compared to car. With reference to Wisbech, whilst the journey times to Cambridge by public transport are long, this is equally true for car. When looking at both car trips it can be seen that journey time reliability is an issue as the timings provided are variable.

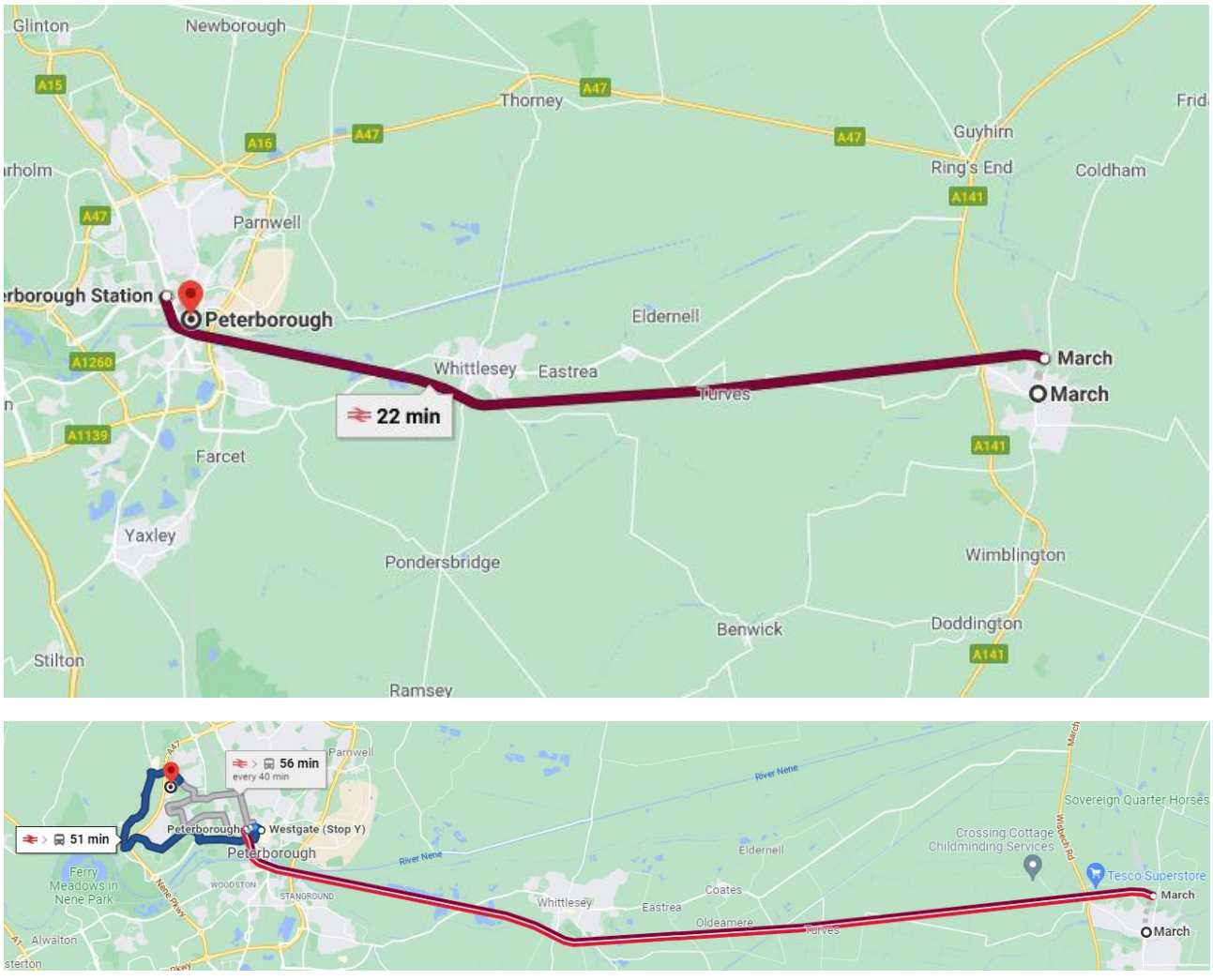

Figure 21: Rail Journey times between March and Peterborough and Peterborough City Hospital, Source Google maps

Figure 21 shows that whilst the journey times between March and Peterborough Station is fairly short, (approximately 20 minutes) an interchange to bus is required in order to reach Peterborough Hospital. This adds significantly to the journey time (approximately 30 minutes) when the time to interchange between

bus and rail is taken into account. The interchange makes this option less attractive due to the need to meet connections.

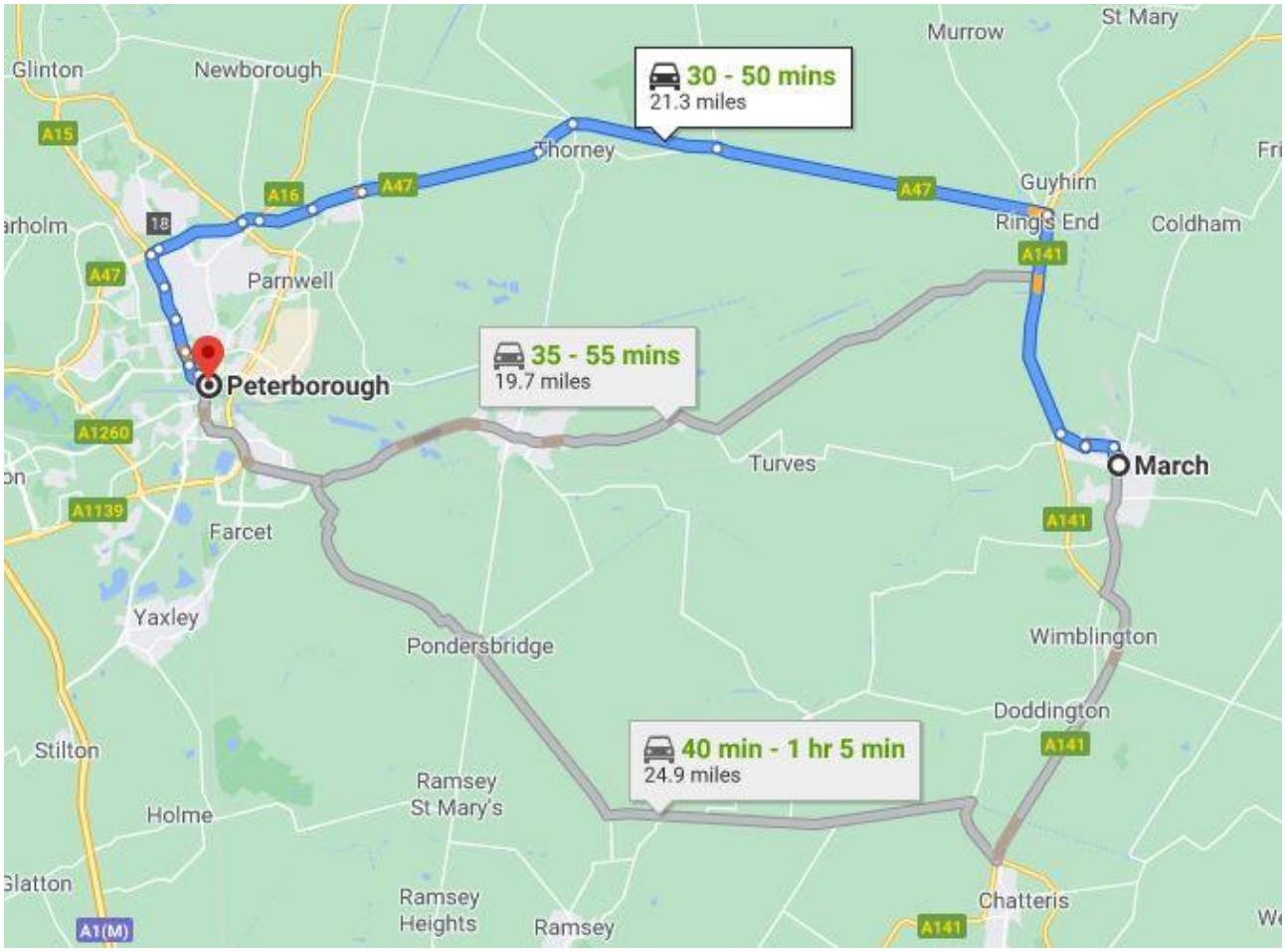

Figure 22: Car journey times between March and Peterborough, Source Google maps

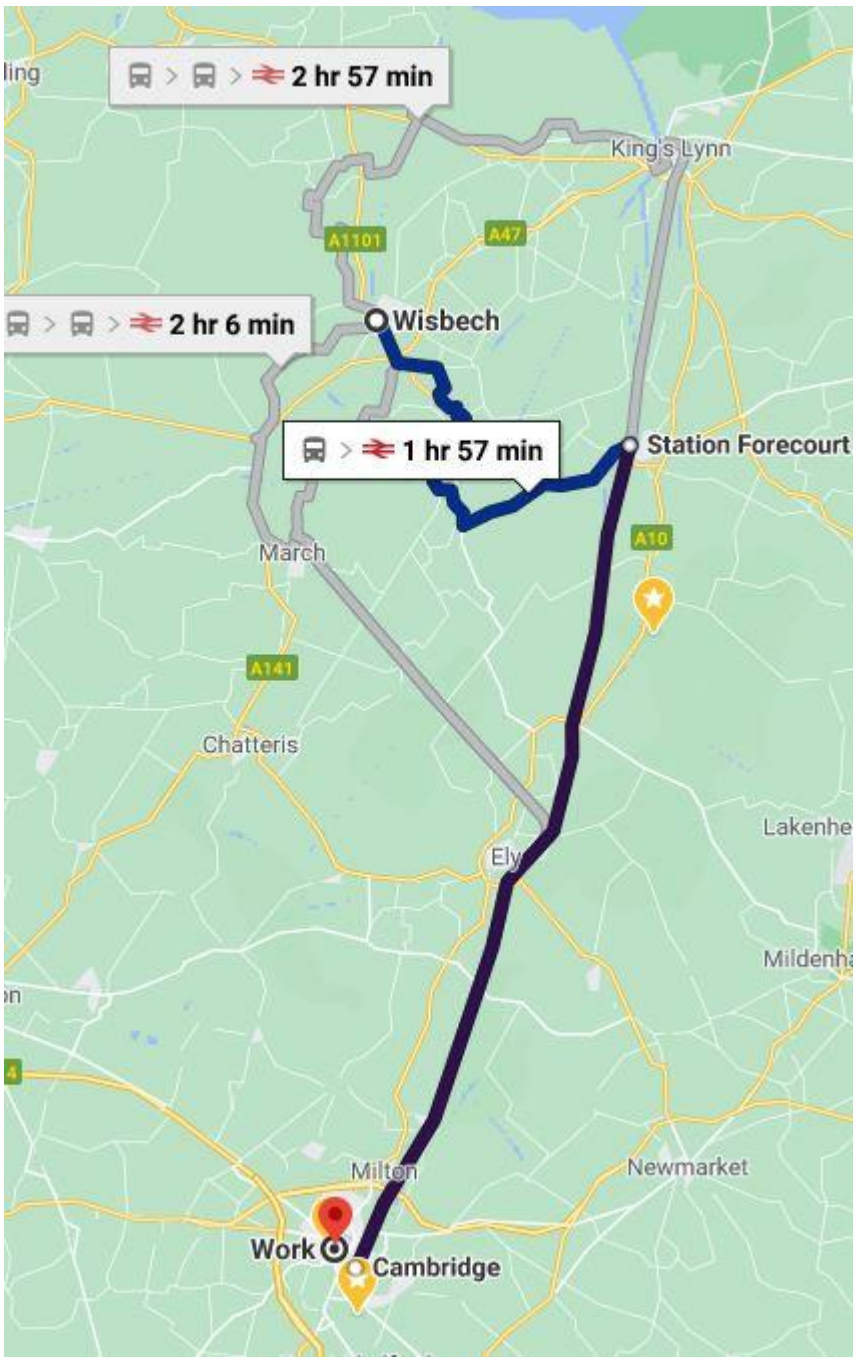

Figure 23: Public transport journey times between Wisbech and Cambridge, Source Google maps

Figure 24: Journey times car between Wisbech and Cambridge, Source Google maps

Accessibility to Hospitals Summary

Access to hospitals within and outside Fenland can be challenging with long journey times and difficult routes of travel. Except for Wisbech residents accessing Wisbech community hospital, it is likely to be difficult accessing hospital medical facilities if you do not have a car. Bus journeys are long and infrequent making appointment times more limited and adding travel complications if there are delays and long waiting times.

This picture may well indicate why significant numbers of residents who do not have access to transport are increasingly reliant on the community car schemes. These services provide end to end journeys by car travel for a specific appointment time and drivers will also wait for customers, so there are no delays on the return journey or worries about how to get home because of a delayed appointment.

6.2 Market towns accessibility in Fenland:

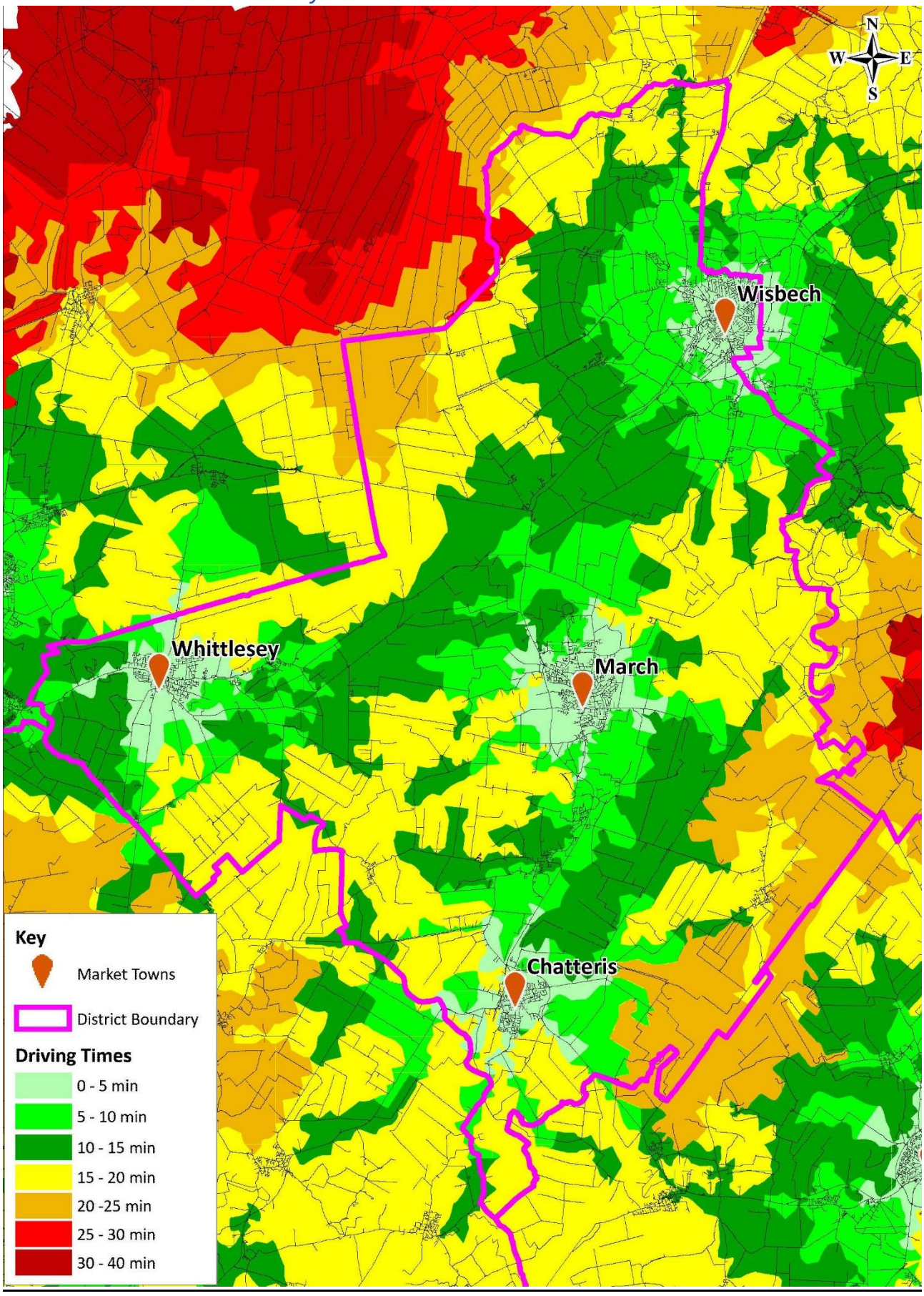

Figure 25: Market Town Accessibility by Car in Fenland

Around 25% of the Fenland population live within the villages and more isolated communities. This amounts to around 20,000 people. Figure 25 shows that for the villages north of Wisbech and Manea they have at least a 15-minute drive to their nearest town centre.

Bus access for each town and its village catchment within Fenland District is as follows:

Chatteris – there are hourly services from March, Doddington and Wimblington. For bus access to Chatteris from the rest of Fenland District at least one change of bus would be required, probably at March. There is some access for commuter times to and from Peterborough including Coates, Eastrea and Whittlesey but this is one journey each way per day. As there is no railway station at Chatteris there is no access by train.

March - there are hourly bus services from Chatteris, Coates, Doddington, Eastrea, Wimblington, Whittlesey and Wisbech including commuting times. There are also two hourly bus services during the day from places such as Benwick and Manea. There is one Sunday service in each direction connecting March with Coates, Eastrea, Whittlesey and Peterborough. March also has hourly rail services to destinations such as Cambridge, Ely and Peterborough, along with two hourly services to Manea and Whittlesea Stations. These services are 7 days a week. Integrated access between bus services and railway services is limited.

Whittlesey – there are hourly bus services from Coates, Eastrea and March direct to Peterborough. This includes some Sunday services. There is one service each way per day to Chatteris, Doddington and Wimblington that is suitable for commuters. Whittlesey has a railway station and there are two hourly services calling at Manea, March and Peterborough, 7 days a week. The railway services offer travel into the middle part of the evening.

Wisbech – there are bus services every 30 minutes to Peterborough and Kings Lynn which also provides access to residents of Guyhirn and Thorney Toll into Wisbech. There are hourly services from Coldham, Friday Bridge and Elm into Wisbech. Access from the villages north of Wisbech such as Newton, Tydd St Giles and Parson Drove is patchy depending on which village you live in. Access is typically two hourly at best with some services for commuting or further education.

6.3 Rail Accessibility in Fenland

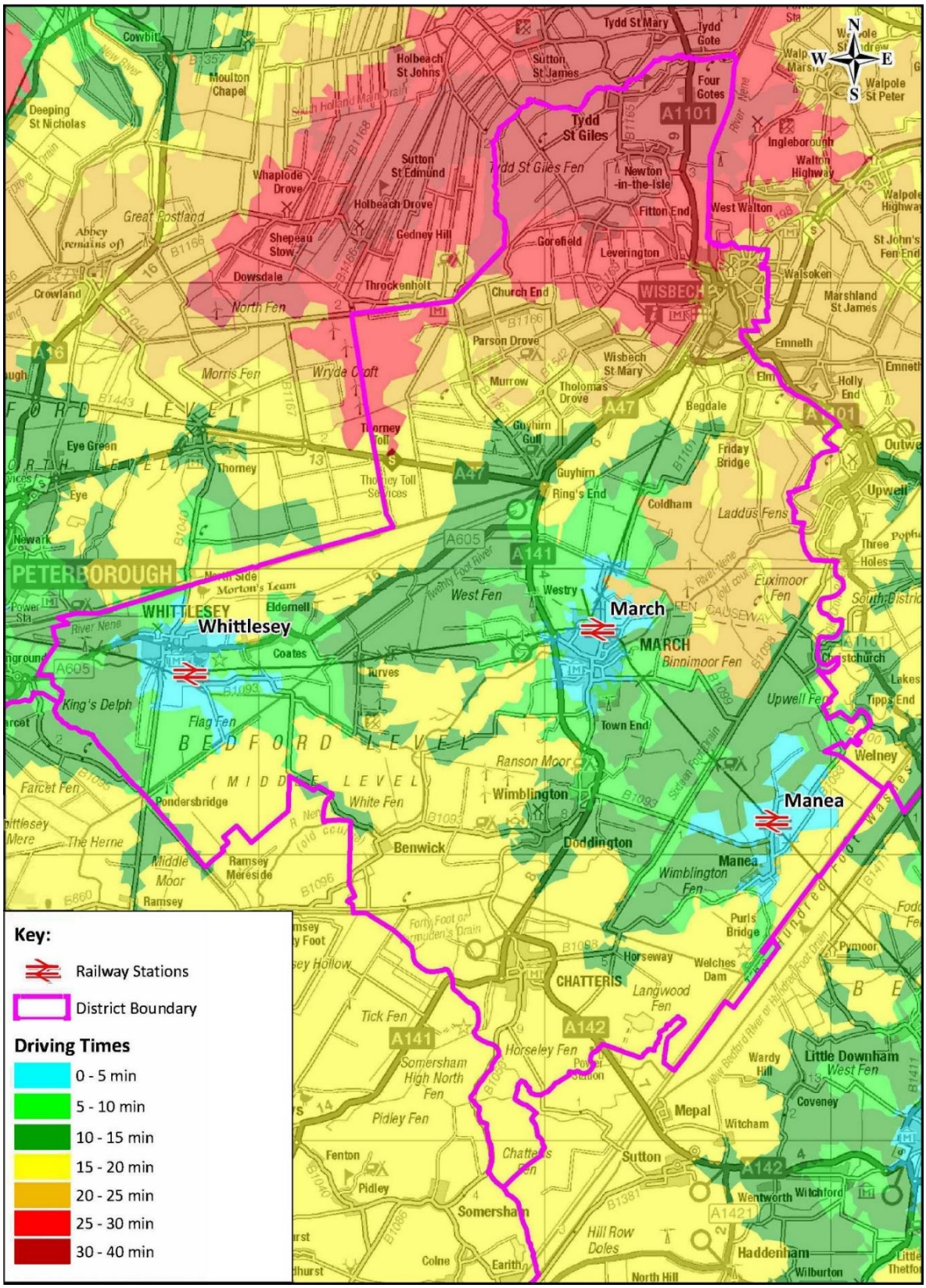

Figure 26: Fenland Rail Station Accessibility by Car zoomed in

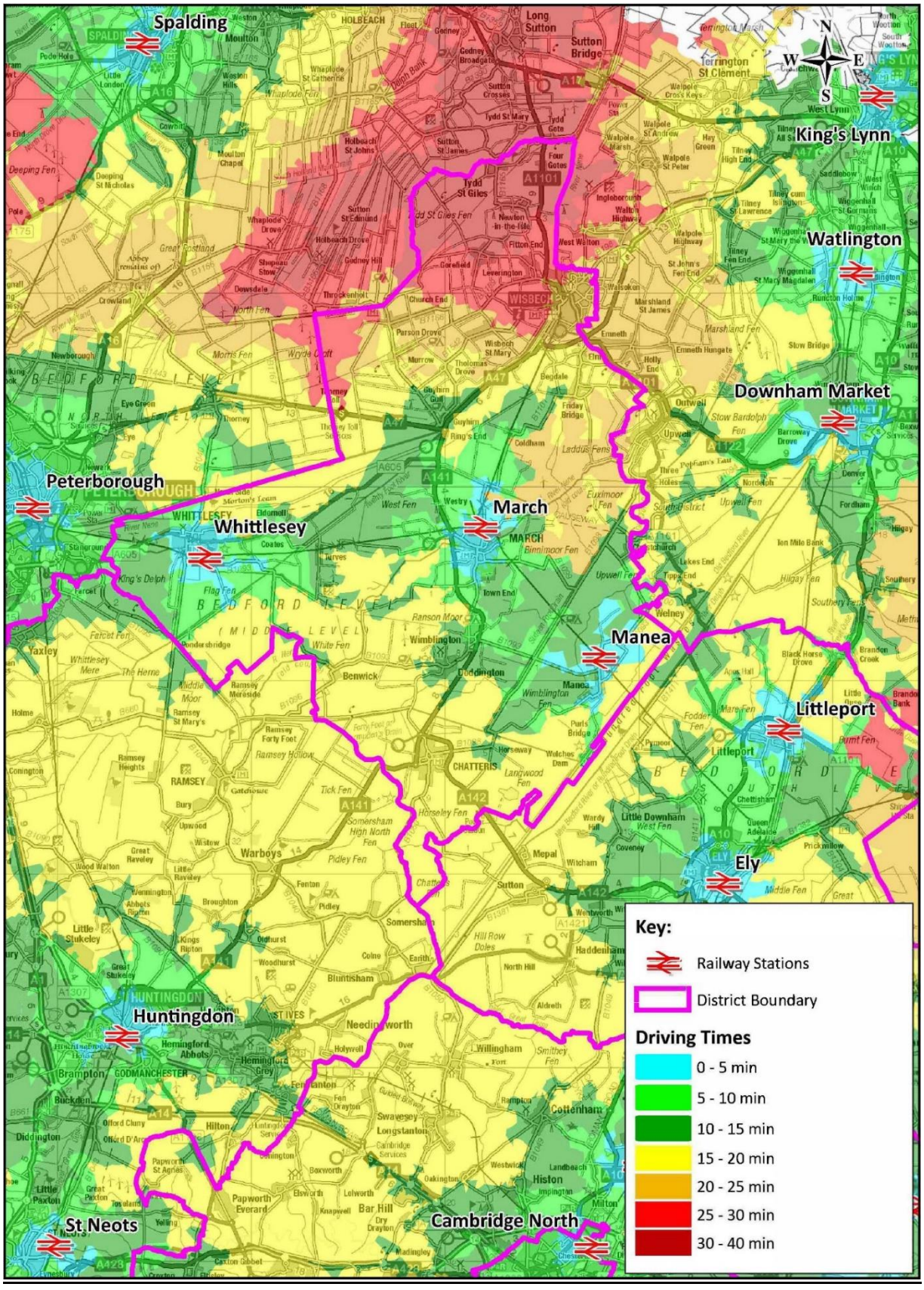

Figure 27: Fenland and Surrounding Rail Station Accessibility by Car zoomed out

There are 3 railway stations within Fenland District at Manea, March and Whittlesey, however for some Fenland residents, stations outside the district are more convenient notably Kings Lynn, Downham Market, Ely, Peterborough and Huntingdon. The map shows that a significant proportion of local residents are within a 15-minute drive time of a railway station. It is noted that the villages north of Wisbech are at least a 25-minute drive from a railway station and Wisbech itself has a 20-minute drive time.

Manea – there are two hourly services calling at March, Peterborough and Whittlesea Stations, 7 days a week. The railway services offer travel into the middle part of the evening.

March - March Station has hourly railway services to destinations such as Cambridge, Ely and Peterborough, along with two hourly services to Manea and Whittlesea Stations. These services are 7 days a week. Railway services are available until the middle part of the evening. There is limited integrated access between bus services and railway services.

Whittlesey – Whittlesey has a railway station and there are two hourly services calling at Manea, March and Peterborough, 7days a week. The railway services offer travel into the middle part of the evening.

All 3 of our railway stations are located at the edge of the village or town. Manea and Whittlesea Stations have no direct bus service access. A 15/20-minute walk would be required from the nearest bus stop. March Station has two hourly bus services stopping outside the station, but these do not typically align with railway services.

It should be noted that the ExCel bus service which is regular from Wisbech goes direct to Peterborough and Kings Lynn railway stations where there is railway access across the country.

There are few early morning and evening services which means that it is not possible to carry out some trip by rail such as accessing shift patterns, early/late flights and the night-time economy.

The timetable information below was valid in Summer 2019. All the rail timetable information provided above was taken from nationalrail.co.uk and is the pre -covid timetable.

There is information available on Greater Anglia's website that provides details of access to the three Fenland stations: Manea https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/travel-information/station-information/mne March https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/travel-information/station-information/mch Whittlesea https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/travel-information/station-information/wle

6.3.1 Rail Frequencies in Manea

The following table shows the direct services accessible from Manea Railway Station. Some of these services have been reduced due to the Coronavirus outbreak in the UK, until further notice.

Table 6 Manea Rail Frequencies

Station	Destinations	Weekday services	Weekday services off peak hours	Saturday services	Sunday Services
Manea	Colchester	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours
	Cambridge	Direct services at either end of the day for commuting		Direct services at either end of the day for commuting	
	Ipswich	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours
	Peterborough	1 service every 2 hours including a commuter service	1 service every two hours	3 service an hour 1 service every two hours	2 service an hour 1 service every two hours

6.3.2 Rail Frequencies in March:

The following table shows the direct services accessible from March Railway Station. Some of these services has been reduced due to the Coronavirus outbreak in the UK, until further notice.

Table 7: March Rail Frequencies

Station	Destinations	Weekday services	Weekday services off peak hours	Saturday services	Sunday Services
March	Sheffield	3 services per day	3 services per day	No service	No service
	Nottingham	3 services per day	3 services per day	3 services per day	2 services per day
	Cambridge	hourly	hourly	hourly	hourly
	Ipswich	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours
	Stansted Airport	1 service an hour	1 service an hour	1 service an hour	1 service every 2 hours
	Birmingham New Street	1 service an hour	1 service an hour	1 service an hour	1 service every 2 hours
	Peterborough	hourly	hourly	hourly	hourly

6.3.3 Rail Frequencies in Whittlesey:

The following table shows the direct services accessible from Whittlesea Railway Station. Some of these services has been reduced due to the Coronavirus outbreak in the UK, until further notice.

Table 8: Whittlesey Rail Frequencies

Station	Destinations	Weekday services	Weekday services off peak hours	Saturday services	Sunday Services
Whittlesea	Colchester	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours
	Cambridge	Direct service in the AM peak only for commuting.		Direct am peak service but change required in PM peak,	

Station	Destinations	Weekday services	Weekday services off peak hours	Saturday services	Sunday Services
	Ipswich	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours	1 service every 2 hours
	Peterborough	1 service every 2 hours including a commuter service	1 service every two hours	3 service an hour I service every two hours	2 service an hour 1 service every two hours

All the rail timetable information provided above was taken from nationalrail.co.uk and is the pre -covid timetable

6.4 Bus accessibility in Fenland

Due to the changing nature of public transport services, in particular as we recover from the pandemic, it is important to understand this chapter is correct as of December 2021. The sources include the Stagecoach website and travel line.

When looking at Cambridgeshire as a whole, it is included in one of the five lowest Local Authorities in England regarding accessibility to bus services. With 56 percent of the Cambridgeshire population being within 1km walking distance of a bus stop with at least one bus service per hour[27]. It is noted that not all are able to make a 1km journey from their home to a bus stop.

The distance people are able to travel to a bus stop varies due to numerous reasons, therefore the maps below provide a general impression of access to bus services but it is noted that this will vary dependent on user.

27 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1030718/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2021.pdf page 18

6.4.1 Bus accessibility in Chatteris:

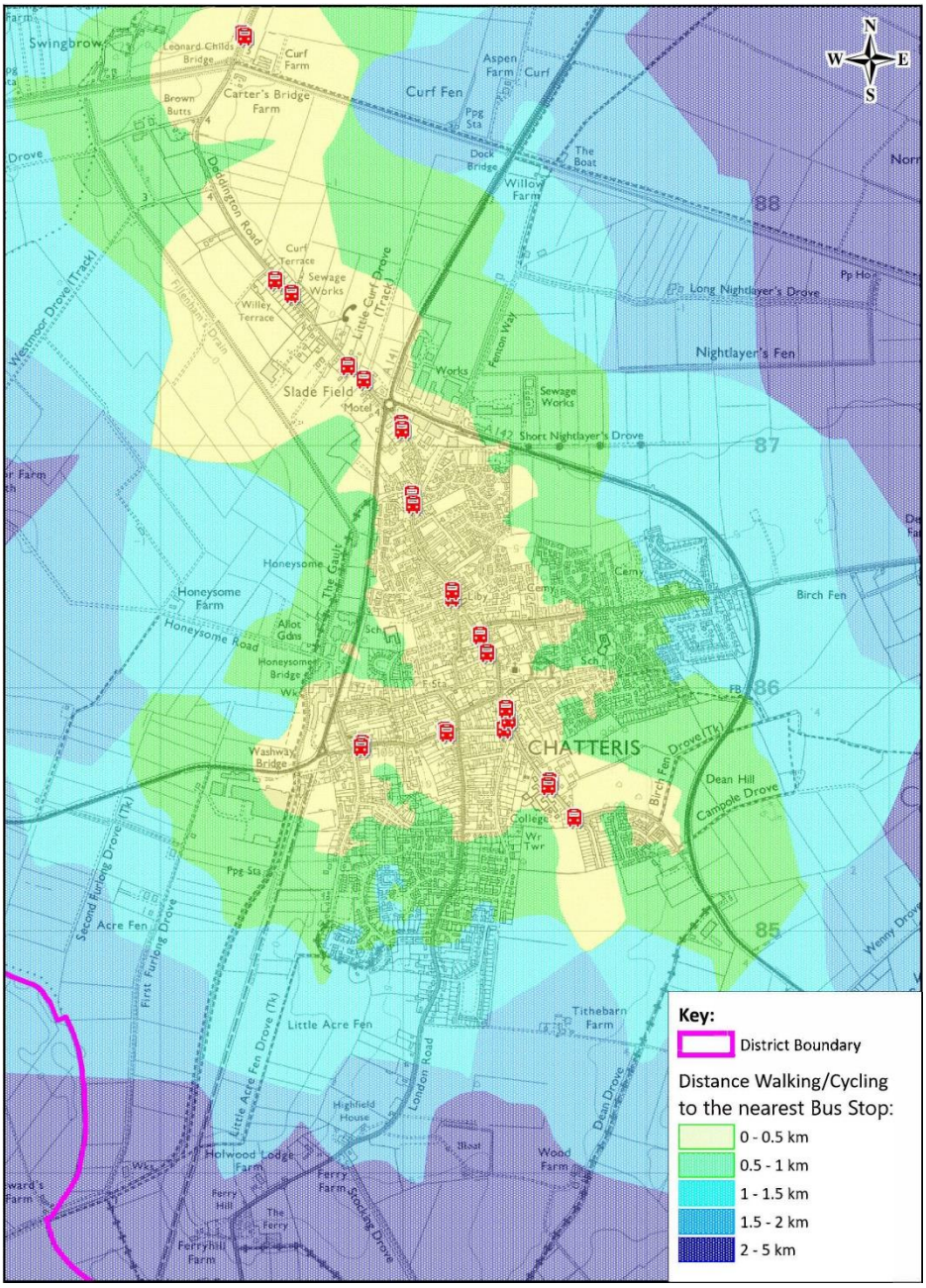

Figure 28: Bus Stop Accessibility in Chatteris

Figure 28 shows that most people living in Chatteris are within 500 metres of a bus stop. Some of the communities on the east and in the south are less likely to be in reasonable distance of a bus stop. There is information below about bus service frequency which indicates that even with high levels of the community within easy reach of bus stops their access to services is limited with the best frequency being every two hours.

Bus services

Table 9: *Bus Frequencies in Chatteris* below shows that whilst Chatteris has several bus services to a range of destinations for commuting, travel at other times is relatively poor. The commuting services assist

people getting to work but only fit around certain working day patterns. There are also no bus services beyond the early part of the evening and no buses on Sundays.

Bus Frequencies

The table below outlines the services and frequency of the buses operating in Chatteris.

Table 9: Bus Frequencies in Chatteris

Service	Operator	Weekday Frequency	Saturday Frequency	Sunday frequency
33 - Peterborough - Whittlesey - March (- Chatteris)	Stagecoach in Peterborough	Only 1 service for commuting	Only 1 service for commuting	No service
39 - Ely - Chatteris - March	Stagecoach in Cambridge	9 journeys each direction per day	8 journeys in each direction per day	No service
35 - March - Huntingdon Rail Station	Stagecoach in Cambridge	Every 2 hours	Every 2 hours	No service
8 Citi - Chatteris - Cambridge	Stagecoach in Cambridge	1 return journey for commuting	1 return journey for commuting	No service
V2 - Chatteris - Pidley - St Ives	Stagecoach in Cambridge	1 service for commuting plus every 2 hours off peak	No service	No service
336 - Chatteris - Wimblington - Ramsey	SunFun Luxury Travel	1 return journey for school	No service	No service

Note there are no evening services.

6.4.2 Bus accessibility in Doddington and Wimblington:

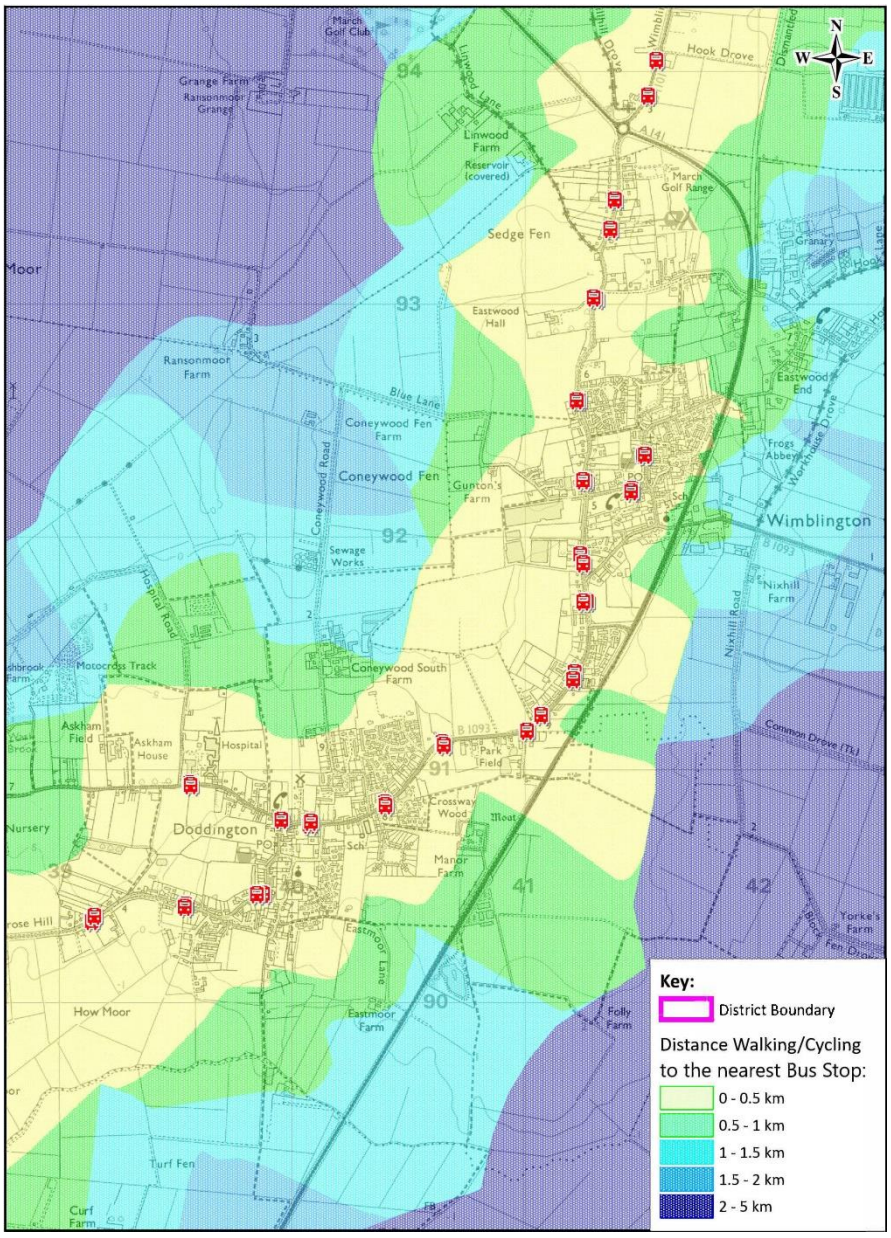

Figure 29: Bus Accessibility in Doddington and Wimblington

Figure 29 shows that most people living in Doddington and Wimblington are within 500 metres of a bus stop. The bus service frequency information below indicates that access to bus services is limited with the best frequency being every two hours.

Bus services

Table 10 below shows that whilst Doddington and Wimblington have a few bus services to a range of destinations for commuting, travel at other times is relatively poor. The commuting services assist people getting to work but only fit around certain working day patterns. Compared with other villages in Fenland District the level of service is quite high. Access to most towns or villages within Fenland is achievable by bus although availability is limited. There are no bus services beyond the early part of the evening and no buses on Sundays.

Bus Frequencies

The below table outlines the services and frequency of the buses operating in Doddington and Wimblington.

Table 10: Bus Frequencies in Doddington and Wimblington

Service	Operator	Weekday Frequency	Saturday Frequency	Sunday frequency
33 - Peterborough - Whittlesey - March (- Chatteris)	Stagecoach in Peterborough	only 1 service for commuting	only 1 service for commuting	No service
39 - Ely - Chatteris - March	Stagecoach in Cambridge	Up to 6 journeys to either Ely or March	Up to 5 journeys	No service
56 - Wisbech - March - Benwick / Manea	Stagecoach in Peterborough	Every 2 hrs to Doddington, hourly to Wimblington	Every 2 hrs to Doddington, hourly to Wimblington	No service
8 Citi - Chatteris - Cambridge	Stagecoach in Cambridge	1 return journey for commuting	1 return journey for commuting	
336 - Chatteris - Wimblington - Ramsey	SunFun Luxury Travel	Only 2 services for school purposes	No service	No service
V2 - Chatteris - Pidley - St Ives	Stagecoach in Cambridge	1 service for commuting plus every 2 hours off peak	No service	No service

Note there are no evening services.

6.4.3 Bus accessibility in Manea:

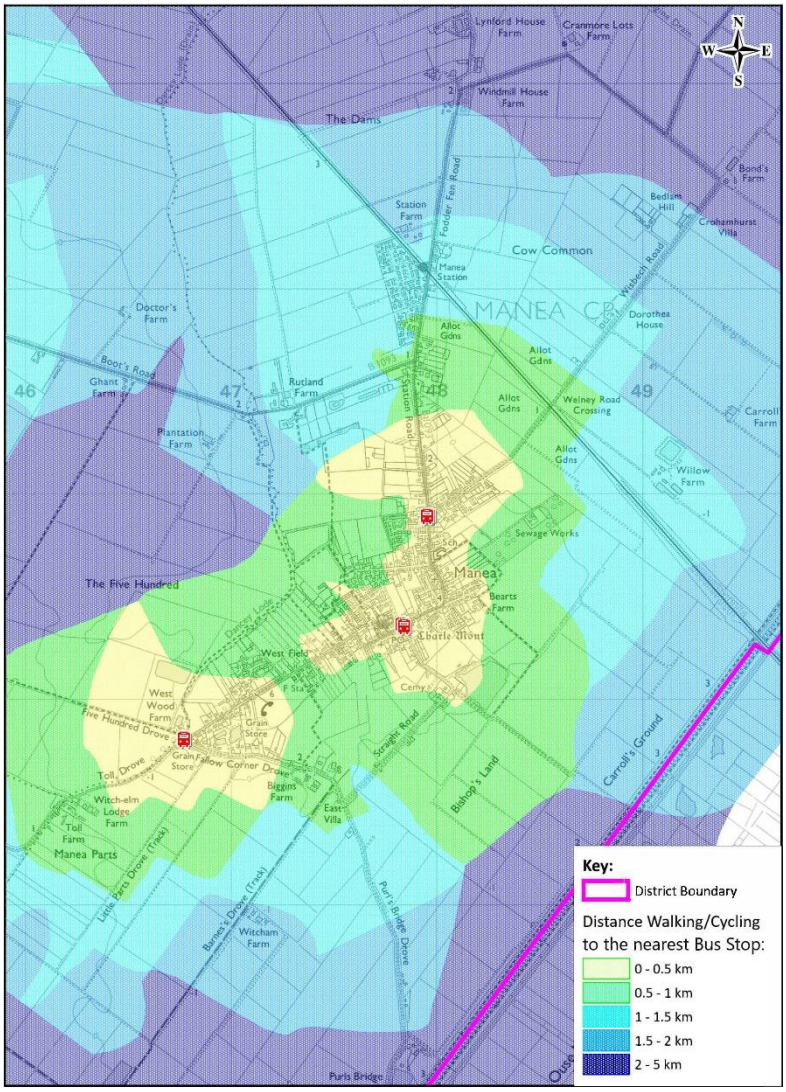

Figure 30: Bus Accessibility in Manea

Manea is a linear village and whilst those living within or very close to the village centre are within 500 metres of a bus stop, many residents are not. Bus services are limited within the village as there are around 4 services every two hours during the middle of the day. These services call directly at Wimblington, March and Wisbech. There is no bus service for commuting purposes and no Sunday bus service. Access to other parts of Fenland by bus is challenging due to the limited period of the day when you can travel by bus from Manea.

Bus Frequencies

The below table outlines the services and frequency of the buses operating in Manea.

Table 11: Bus Frequencies in Manea

Service	Operator	Weekday Frequency	Saturday Frequency	Sunday frequency
56 - Wisbech - March - Benwick / Manea	Stagecoach in Peterborough	two hourly in the middle part of the day	two hourly in the middle part of the day	No service

6.4.4 Bus accessibility in March:

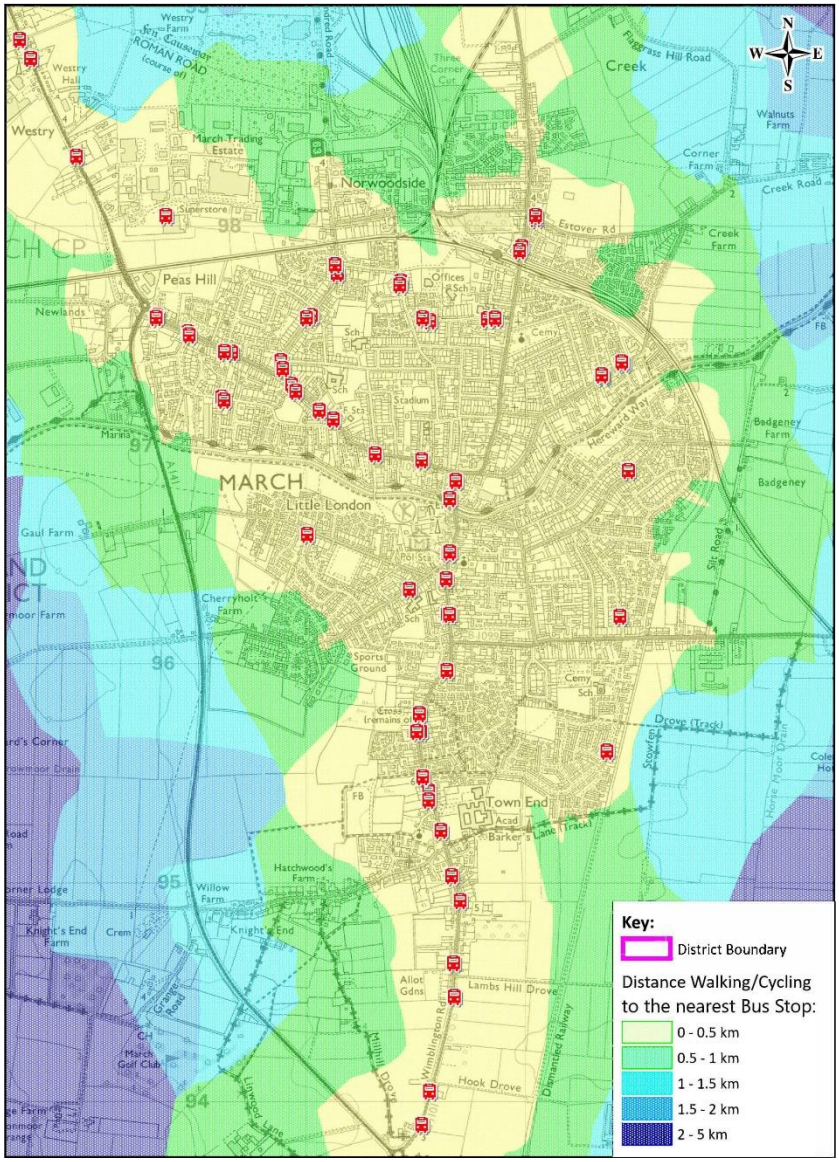

Figure 31: Bus Accessibility in March

Most of the community within March live within 500 metres of a bus stop. This is largely due to work undertaken by the Transport and Access Group to introduce new bus stops in partnership with Stagecoach. The town has hourly services to Wisbech, Whittlesey and Peterborough. Access to other places is approximately two hourly including Cambridge. There are no evening bus services and no Sunday bus services limiting accessibility without a car during these times. Based on the bus services available the stops closest to the town centre will be on routes where service frequency is hourly for those further away from the centre the frequency will be 90 minutes or two hours.

Whilst the hourly service to Whittlesey and Peterborough has a good frequency the March element includes the town service and the journey time is not competitive compared to the car or the train.

Bus Frequencies

The below Table 12 outlines the services and frequency of the buses operating in March.

Table 12: Bus Frequencies in March

Service	Operator	Weekday Frequency	Saturday Frequency	Sunday frequency
33 - Peterborough - Whittlesey - March (- Chatteris)	Stagecoach in Peterborough	Every 60 minutes	Every 60 minutes	Only one service
39 - Ely - Chatteris - March	Stagecoach in Cambridge	Up to 6 journeys to either Ely or Chatteris	Up to 6 journeys to either Ely or Chatteris	No service
56 - Wisbech - March - Benwick / Manea	Stagecoach in Peterborough	Every 60 minutes	Every 60 minutes	No service
8 - March - Chatteris - Cambridge	Stagecoach in Cambridge	Only one service for commuting	Only one service for commuting	No service
46 - Wisbech - Guyhirn - March	Stagecoach in Cambridge	Every 90 minutes	Every 90 minutes	No service

6.4.5 Bus accessibility in Whittlesey:

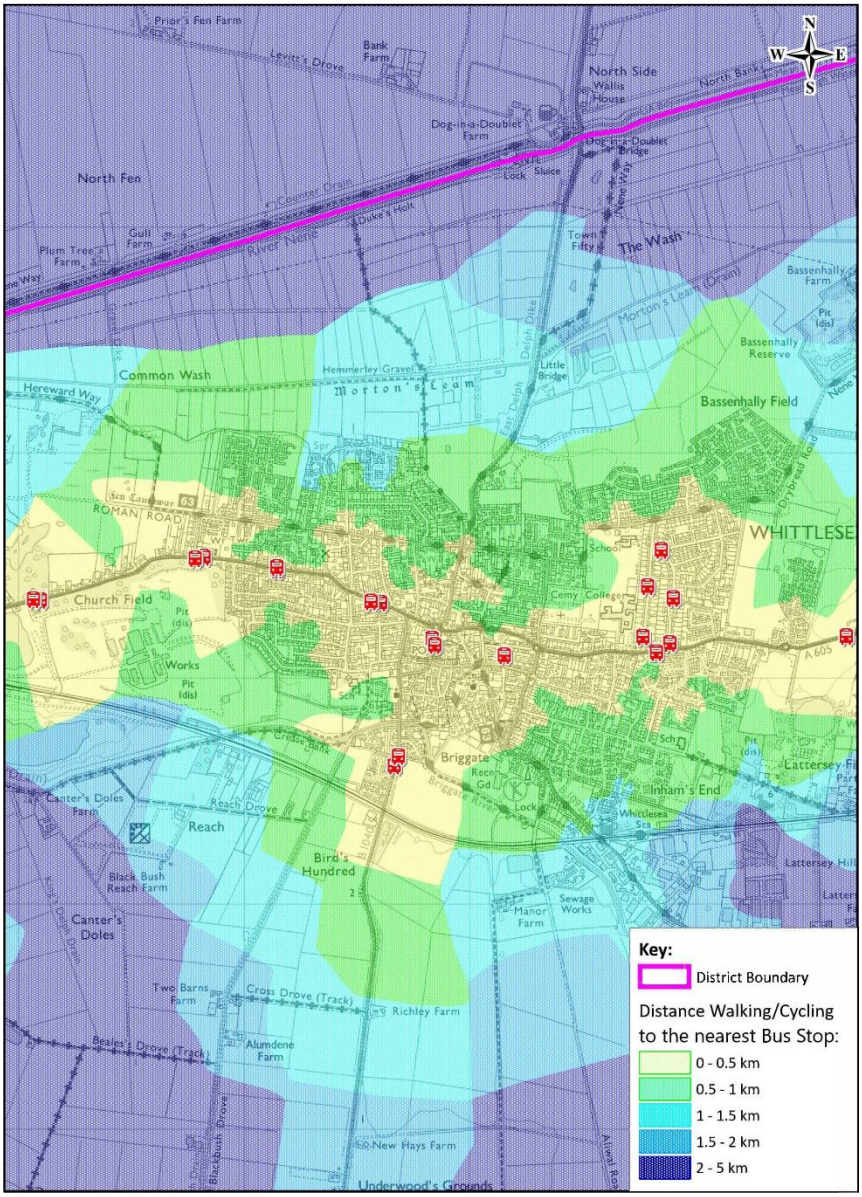

Figure 32: Bus Accessibility in Whittlesey

The town of Whittlesey is severed by the A605 which runs through east to west from March to Peterborough. As the bus route largely mirrors the A605 only those people living near the town centre are within 500 metres of a bus stop. Many households in the north of the town and in the southeast are a minimum of 15 minutes' walk from a bus stop.

There are good services to Peterborough during the daytime and on Sundays but no opportunities to travel in the evenings.

There are no bus services direct to Whittlesea Railway Station, the nearest stops being the bus station some 15 minutes' walk away.

Bus Frequencies

The below Table 13 outlines the services and frequency of the buses operating in Whittlesey.

Table 13: Bus Frequencies in Whittlesey

Service	Operator	Weekday Frequency	Saturday Frequency	Sunday frequency
33 - Peterborough - Whittlesey - March (- Chatteris)	Stagecoach in Peterborough	Up to every 30 minutes	Up to every 30 minutes	Up to every 60 minutes during the daytime into Peterborough.
31 - Peterborough - Ramsey	Stagecoach in Cambridge	Every 2 hours	Every 2 hours	No service

6.4.6 Bus accessibility in Wisbech:

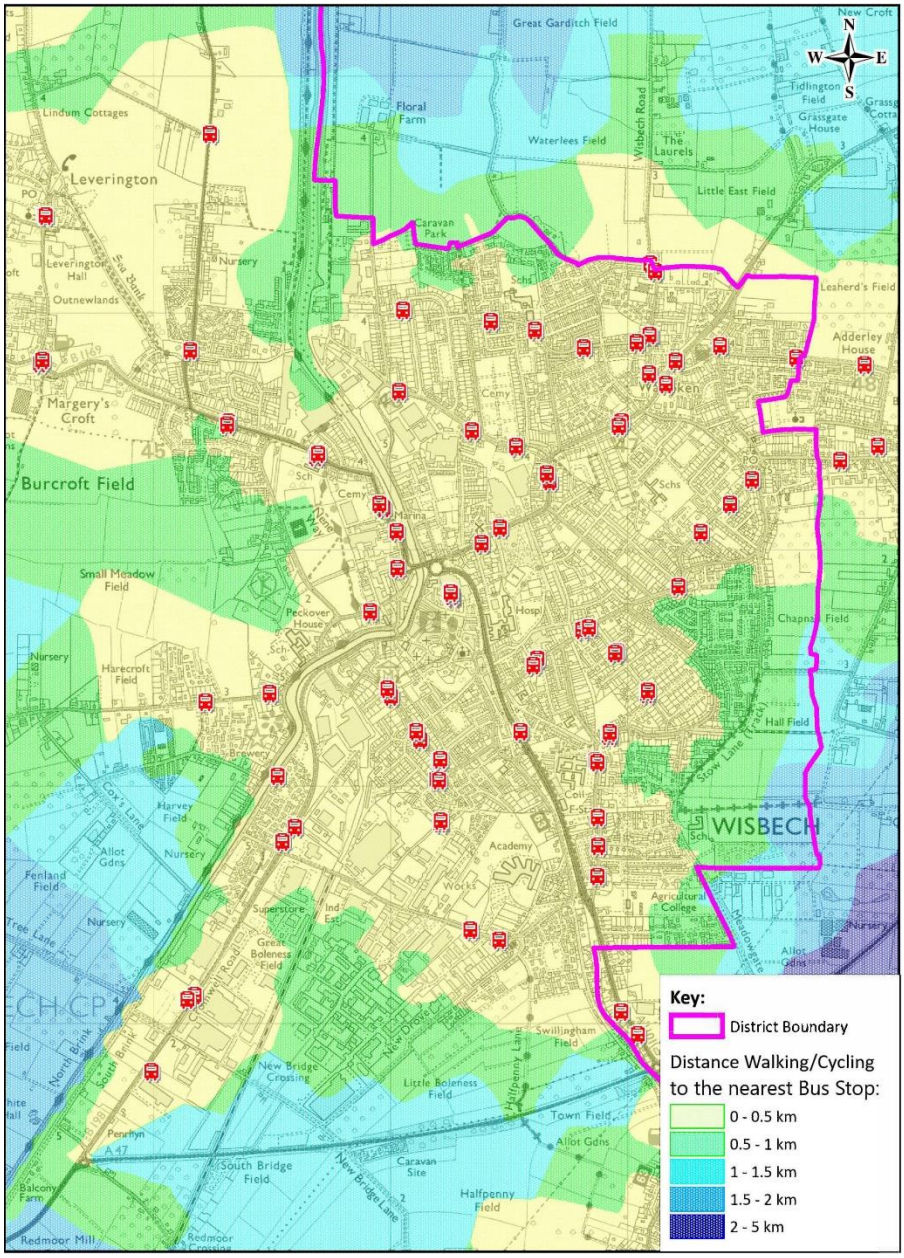

Figure 33: Bus Accessibility in Wisbech

Wisbech benefits from a regular town service (service 66) with a route serving the town centre and the communities in the north east during the day. This service is well used and operates on a commercial basis. Wisbech also benefits from the Excel service connecting the town to Peterborough, Kings Lynn and Norwich on a regular frequency from early in the morning until late in the evening seven days a week.

Access to the villages and also to March, Chatteris and Cambridge is much more limited including at evenings and weekends.

Bus Frequencies

The below Table 14 outlines the services and frequency of the buses operating in Wisbech.

Table 14: Bus Frequencies in Wisbech

Service	Operator	Weekday Frequency	Saturday Frequency	Sunday frequency
66 - Wisbech - Wisbech	Stagecoach in Lincolnshire	Every 30 minutes	Every 30 minutes	No service
46 - Wisbech - Guyhirn - March	Stagecoach in Cambridge	Every 1 and a half hours	Every 1 and a half hours	No service
46/X46 King's Lynn- Wisbech	Lynx	Every 2 hours	Every 2 hours	No service
56 - Wisbech - March - Benwick / Manea	Stagecoach in Lincolnshire	Every 60 minutes to March, two hourly from March to Benwick and Manea	Every 60 minutes to March, two hourly from March to Benwick and Manea	No service
60 - Wisbech - Downham Mkt - Swaffham	Go to town – West Norfolk's Community Transport	Up to once each hour	Up to once each hour	No service
Excel - Norwich - Dereham - Swaffham - Kings Lynn - Wisbech - Peterborough	First group	Every 30 minutes	Every 30 minutes	Every 60 minutes
50 - Wisbech - Long Sutton	Stagecoach in Lincolnshire	Only 5 services	Only 5 services	No service
68 Wisbech Tesco- Bus Station	FACT	Once each hour during the middle part of the day	No service	No service

6.5 Bus Accessibility from the Villages in Fenland

Villages with smaller populations and fewer services typically have infrequent and limited public transport. To ensure an accurate picture of accessibility in Fenland is portrayed it is essential to understand the availability within each Fenland settlement. It is noted that current bus services do not always meet residents needs one example is that in the areas around Whittlesea there are very limited services if any to meet the needs of secondary school students.

Appendix one sets out the results of some assessment work to understand the availability of transport in each settlement. The aim of this assessment is to understand the most and the least accessible places and to understand the transport gaps. The assessment hierarchy was developed as follows:

- Setting up a list of different frequencies of public transport. The frequencies assume 1 or 2 modes of transport and differentiate between weekday and weekend services, morning, afternoon and evening services and weekly services. 26 categories were developed in total.

- Based on the Fenland Local Plan Settlement Hierarchy report for 2013, a list of Fenland settlements was produced
- An assessment was made of the public transport available in each settlement. This was achieved by using the websites of public transport operators and generic sites such as National Rail Enquiries and Travel Line. **All assessments were made in November 2020**
- **Based on the public transport available in November 2020, each settlement was then added to one of the 26 categories.**

This assessment then gave an understanding of the most and least accessible places in Fenland. Table 12 sets out simplified version of the assessment information in Appendix 1. This table is intended to give a brief snapshot of settlement accessibility levels.

Table 15: Bus services from Fenland villages

Tier	Frequency of Service	Village
A	Hourly or better	• **Guyhirn & Thorney Toll** – every 30 minutes to Kings Lynn, Norwich, Peterborough and Wisbech from early in the morning to late at night and hourly on Sundays. • **Coldham, Elm, Friday Bridge –**hourly Monday to Saturday between March and Wisbech . Two hourly to Benwick and Manea • **Doddington & Wimblington** – hourly to March and Wisbech Monday to Saturday. Two hourly to Benwick and Manea.
B	Approximately every 90 minutes	• Service 46 calls at **Rings End, Tholomas Drove, Westry, Wisbech St Mary.** This service connects March and Wisbech
C	Every two hours	• **Benwick-** to March and Wisbech there are two hourly services during the day • **Coates and Eastrea** - two hourly Monday to Saturday and one service in each direction on a Sunday. This offers travel into Whittlesey and Peterborough and March. There is also commuting access to Chatteris. • **Manea** – two hourly railway services to Peterborough, Ely and Ipswich, 7 days a week. Bus services on a two-hourly frequency to March and Wisbech Monday to Saturday • **Chatteris** - one direct service each way for commuting to Cambridge, Huntingdon and March. Connections at March/Huntingdon for Peterborough and Ely/Huntingdon for Cambridge during the day but often long wait times for connections • **Pondersbridge** - Commuter service into Whittlesey and Peterborough with two hourly services during the day, Monday to Saturday.

D	Less than two hours frequency	• Service 50 – Long Sutton to Wisbech calls at **Foul Anchor, Gorefield, Leverington, Newton, Tydd Gote and Tydd St Giles.** There are two services in the morning and three in an afternoon. These include services for commuters.
E	College/Commuter Service 5 days a week with ad-hoc services during the middle of the day	• From **Bellamy's Bridge and Church End**, a college service is available to March and Wisbech. There is one bus in each direction per day in term time. • From **Murrow and Parson Drove** there is a college/commuter service to March and Wisbech. There is one bus in each direction per day in term time. There is also one journey into Wisbech in each direction on Thursdays during the early part of the day.
F	No bus service	**Colletts Bridge, Fitton End, Stonea Turves**

6.6 Accessibility to Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and other Education Centres in Fenland:

The below shows the accessibility of schools across Fenland. The first set of maps provides access to primary schools 5-11 years old, Secondary school and colleges which cater for 12-18 year olds- with some colleges offering course for other age ranges, Other education includes special schools which provide education to children with special educational needs.

6.6.1 Accessibility to Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and other Education Centres in Chatteris:

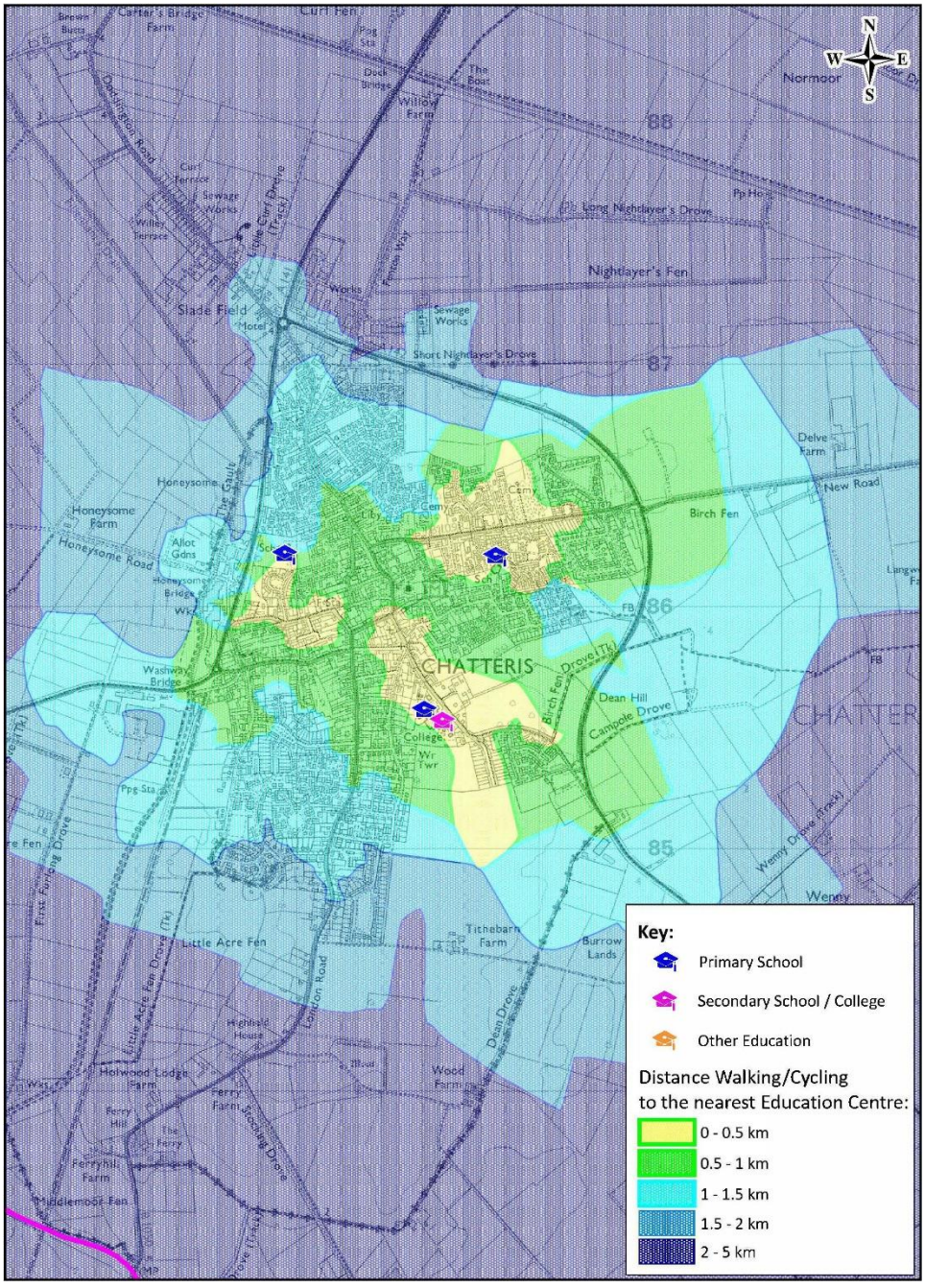

Figure 34: Access to Education in Chatteris

The two primary schools in Chatteris are located to the north of the town and the secondary school/college is in the north. Accessibility to education provision therefore differs greatly depending on where in Chatteris you live. There are also significant numbers of homes in the north west and south west of the town that are least a kilometre from any education centre.

6.6.2 Accessibility to Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and other Education Centres in Doddington and Wimblington:

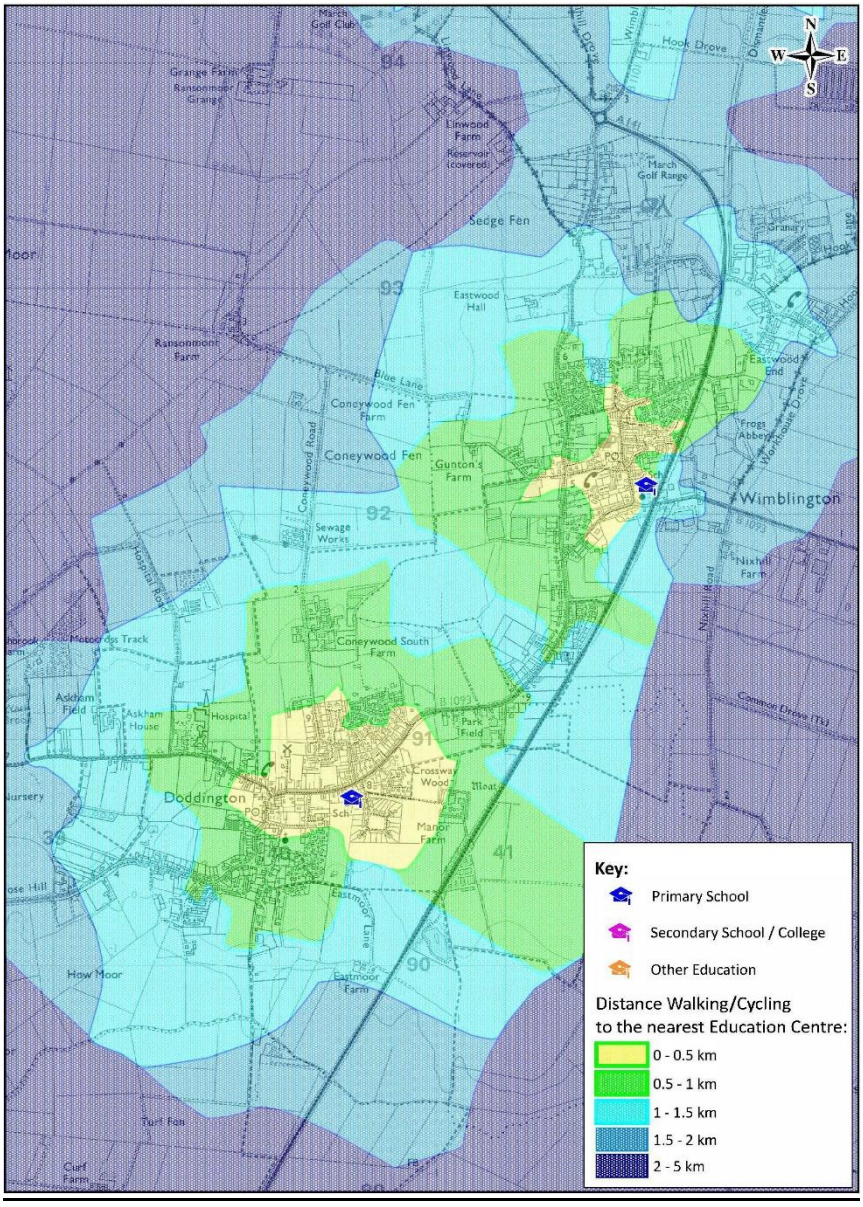

Figure 35: Access to Education in Doddington and Wimblington

Most dwellings within Doddington and Wimblington villages are within a 500-metre walk or cycle of the primary school. Those outside of this distance are within a 1 kilometre walk or cycle of the school except for a small number of dwellings in the south of Doddington that are further away. This indicates good accessibility within each village to the primary school. Secondary education or college will be accessed by bus, typically in Chatteris or March.

6.6.3 Accessibility to Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and other Education Centres in Manea:

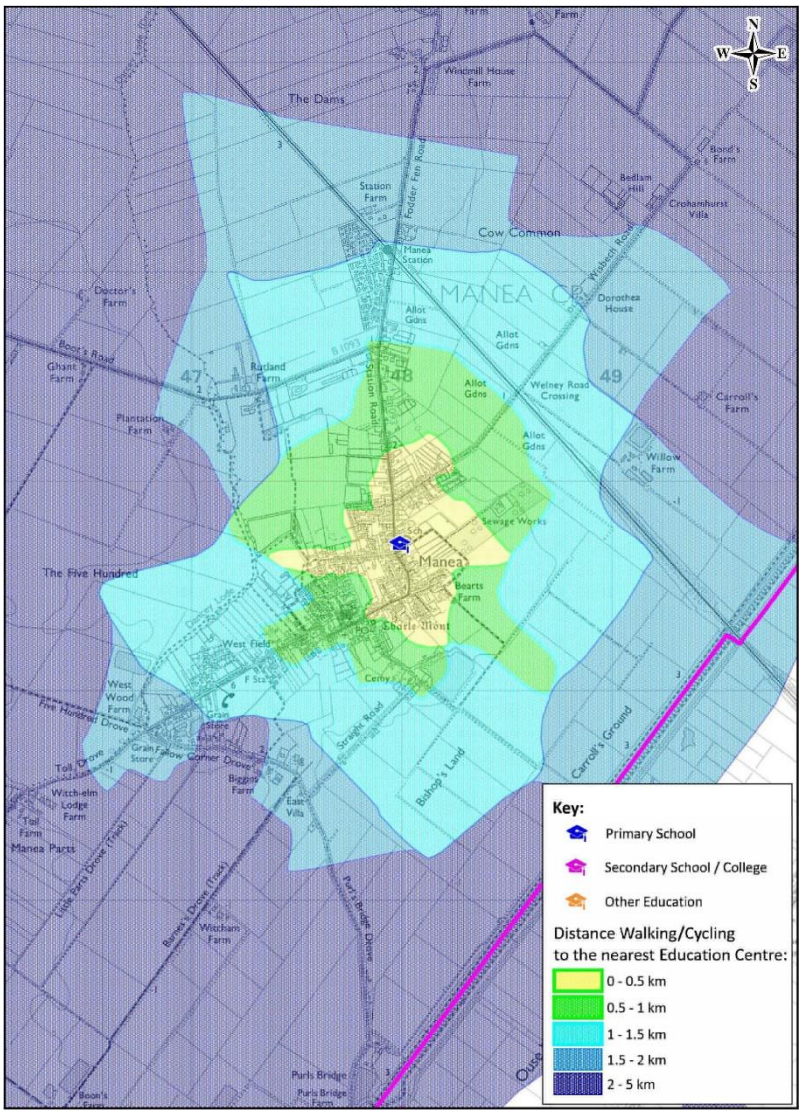

Figure 36: Access to Education in Manea

Manea village is linear and therefore large numbers of dwellings are outside a 500-metre catchment for the school. Dwellings situated within the village centre close to the facilities are within this catchment. Some residents within the village are at least 2 kilometres from the school. Secondary education can be accessed by bus to Chatteris and March or by train to Ely, March or Peterborough.

6.6.4 Accessibility to Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and other Education Centres in March:

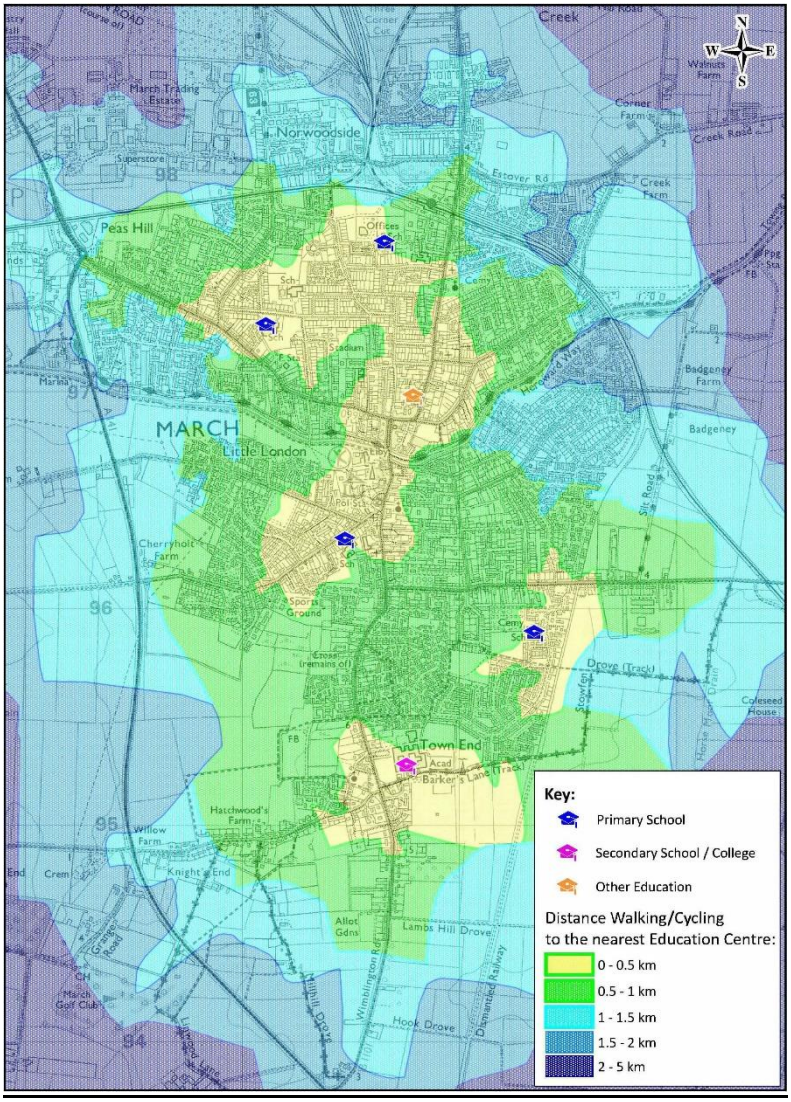

Figure 37: Access to Education in March

As the four primary schools are located in different areas across March, with the exception of the south of town, there is good access to primary schools. Conversely, because Neil Wade Community College is in the south of March there are therefore large numbers of homes across the rest of the town that are not within 500 metres of the school.

6.6.5 Accessibility to Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and other Education Centres in Whittlesey:

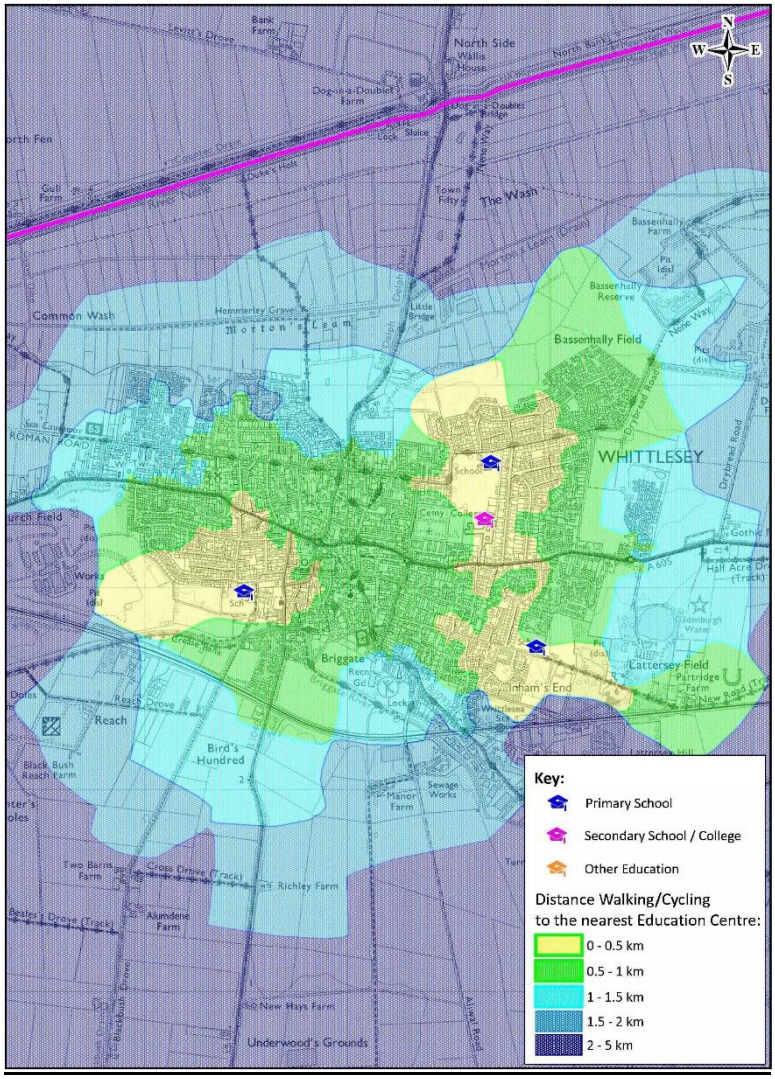

Figure 38: Access to Education in Whittlesey

Whittlesey has 3 primary schools located in the north east, south east and south west. Some areas closer to the town centre as well as those on the outskirts of town are therefore not within a 500 metres distance of these schools. The secondary school is in the north east of the town and therefore those in the west and the south have a longer and more difficult journey to this school.

6.6.6 Accessibility to Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and other Education Centres in Wisbech:

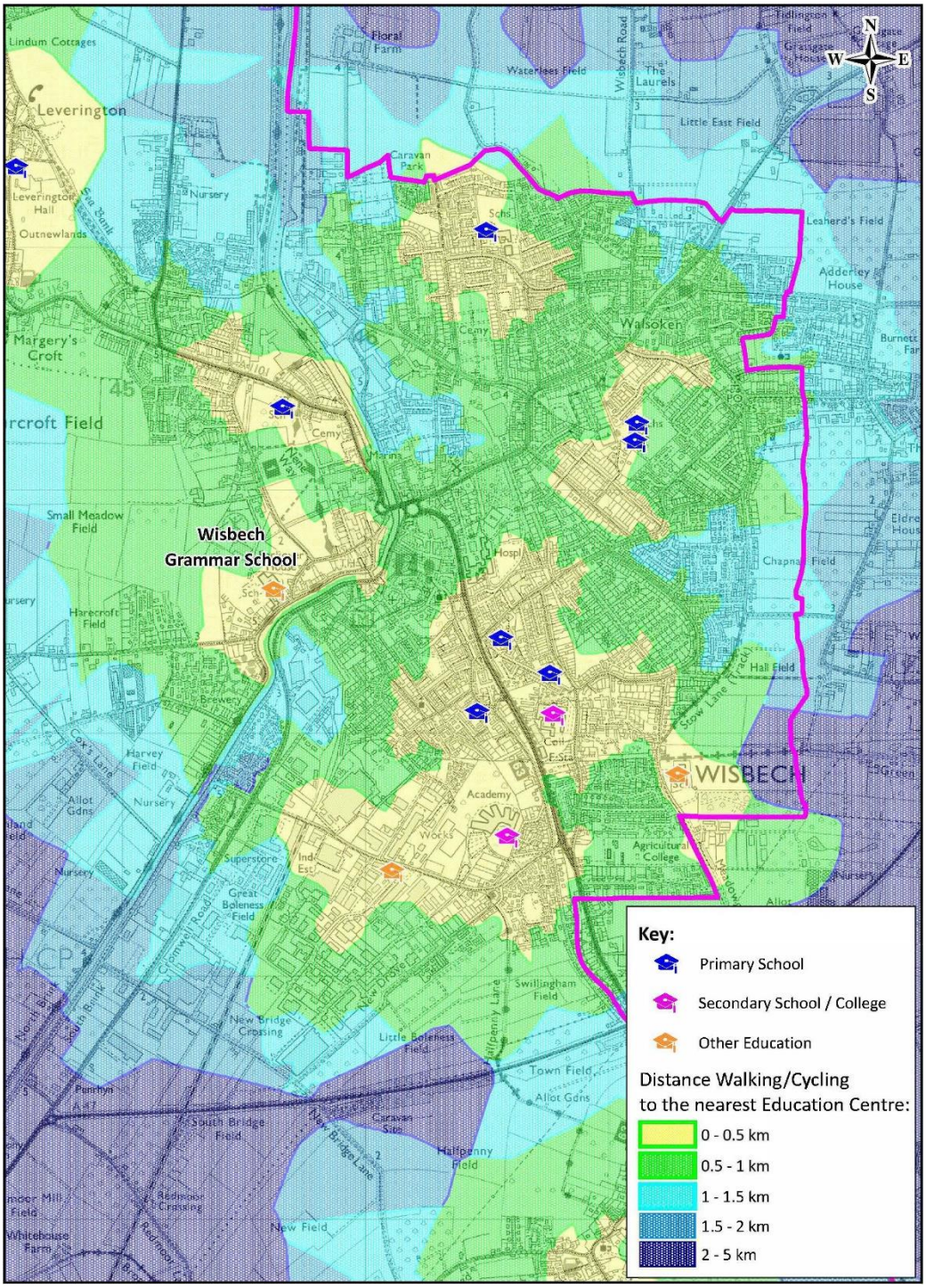

Figure 39: Access to Education in Wisbech

Wisbech has seven primary schools located around the town. Some parts of East and South Wisbech are more than 500 metres from a primary school. The three secondary schools/colleges are all within the south of Wisbech and therefore many residents are at least 1 kilometre away from these schools/colleges.

6.7 Access to colleges

Figure 40 and Figure 41 shows access to Peterborough Regional College, Huntingdonshire Regional College, The College of West Anglia: Wisbech, and Further Educational Colleges in Cambridge via car. It is recognised that not all students will use this mode. Access via public transport is likely to involve longer journey times or not be convenient. Some colleges do provide their own bus services for their students to make them more attractive for students further away. This creates a very complex picture. Each education establishment determines its own prospectus and the courses it wishes to offer, along with timetabling and availability. When transport to access a course is a key factor this which means some students will be able to access their first-choice courses they wish to whilst others will be unable to.

There is only one college in Fenland at Wisbech so many students must travel outside the district. It should be noted that all the Secondary Schools in Fenland offer 16-18 education. However due to the courses being offered sometimes significant journeys have to be made by students to a school or college that offers their choice of course/s.

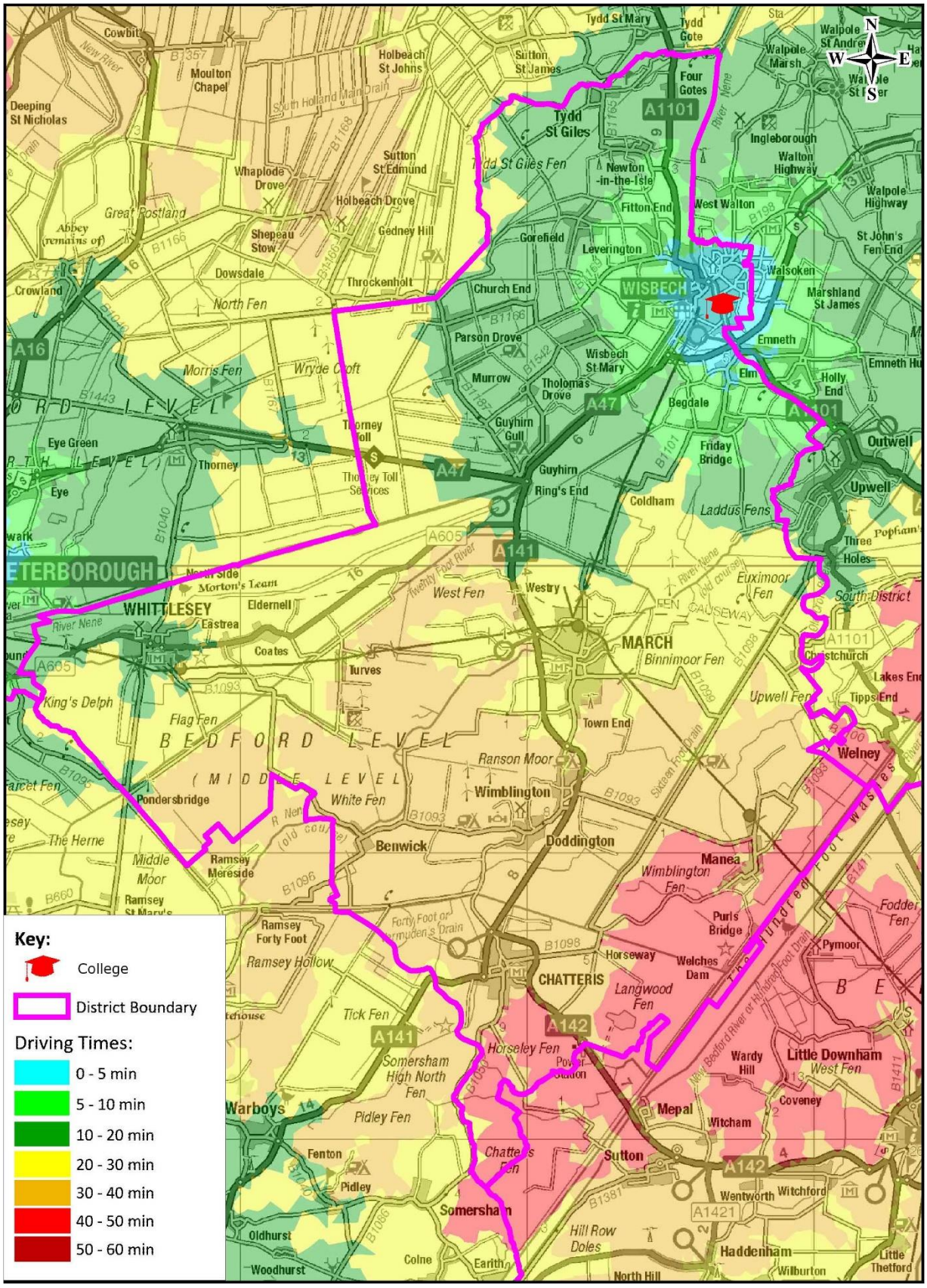

Figure 40: Access to Colleges in Fenland zoomed in

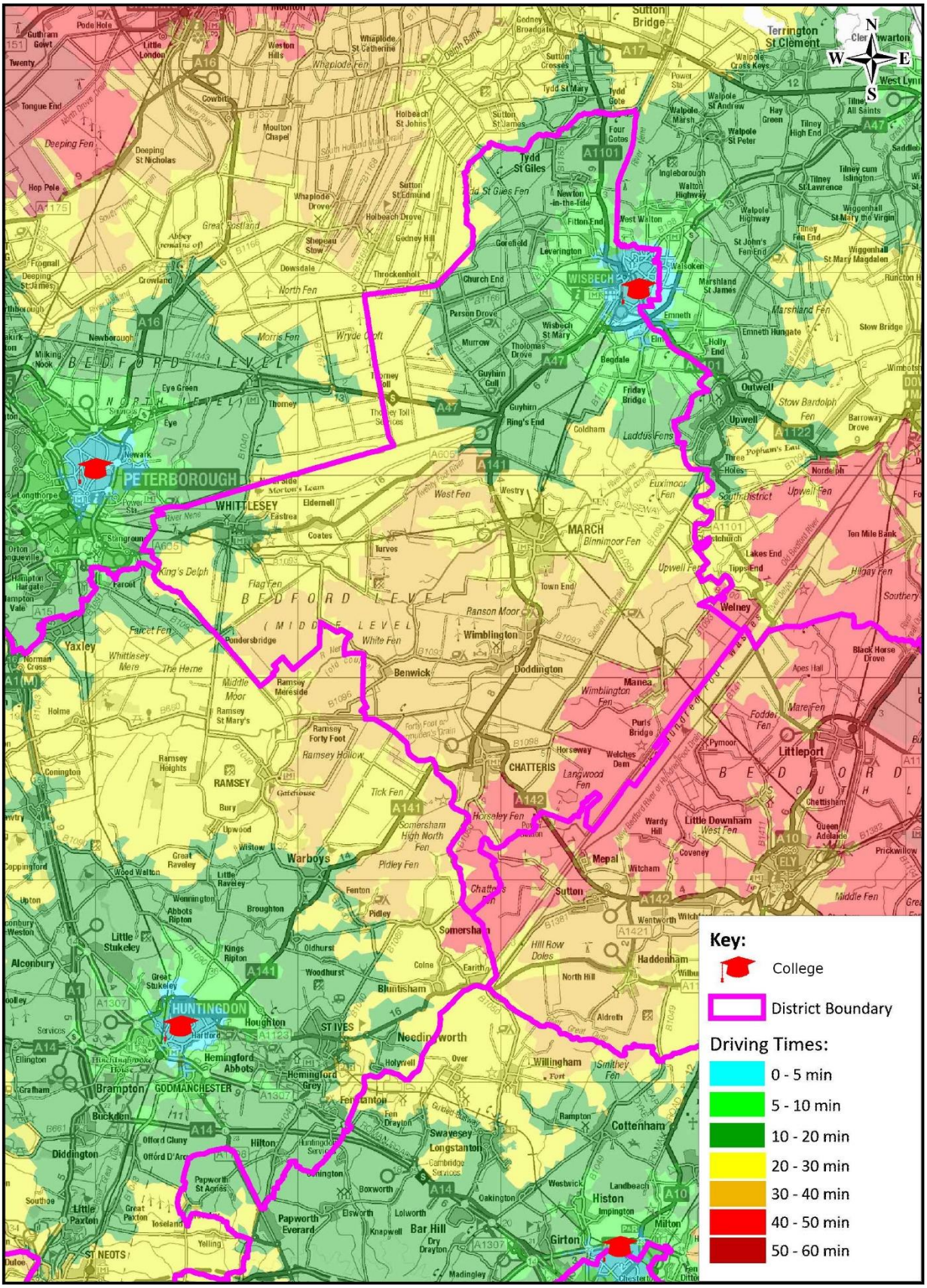

Figure 41: Access to Colleges in Fenland Zoomed out

Chapter 7 Active Travel

Active travel has a big role to play and help meet the objectives of the Fenland Transport Strategy. This section provides a summary of active travel in the Fenland area.

Cambridgeshire County Council produces a Traffic Monitoring Report[28] which includes information on the number of people walking and cycling into the Market Town Centres. The latest report was produced in 2019 from which all the figures mentioned below are taken.

The information provided in Table 15 and Table 17 is indexed to 2010 figures. The figures are indexed to show the development of a number over time and is not any specific unit. The base year has been set to 2010 (all values are 100). If in a following year the value was 110 this would indicate an increase of 10%. The 2020 12-hour flow are provided as a reference- this is the number of cycles or pedestrians (dependent on table) which crossed the monitoring points in the towns between 7am and 7pm. It should be noted that the 2020 figures were collected on 3rd November, 2 days before the 5th November 2020 lockdown. The government announcement of the lockdown had taken place by the 3rd November so whilst the count was taken during a period of restrictions easing the effects of Covid-19 travel restrictions are seen in the 2020 figures.

Table 16: Cycles entering and leaving towns indexed to 2010

Year	2010	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020 12 hr flow	2020 modal split
Wisbech	100	133	158	154	139	71	159	0%
March	100	81	91	110	101	75	512	1%
Chatteris	100	90	235	70	80	120	48	0%
Whittlesey	100	285	269	221	115	95	111	0%

[28] https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/road-traffic-data

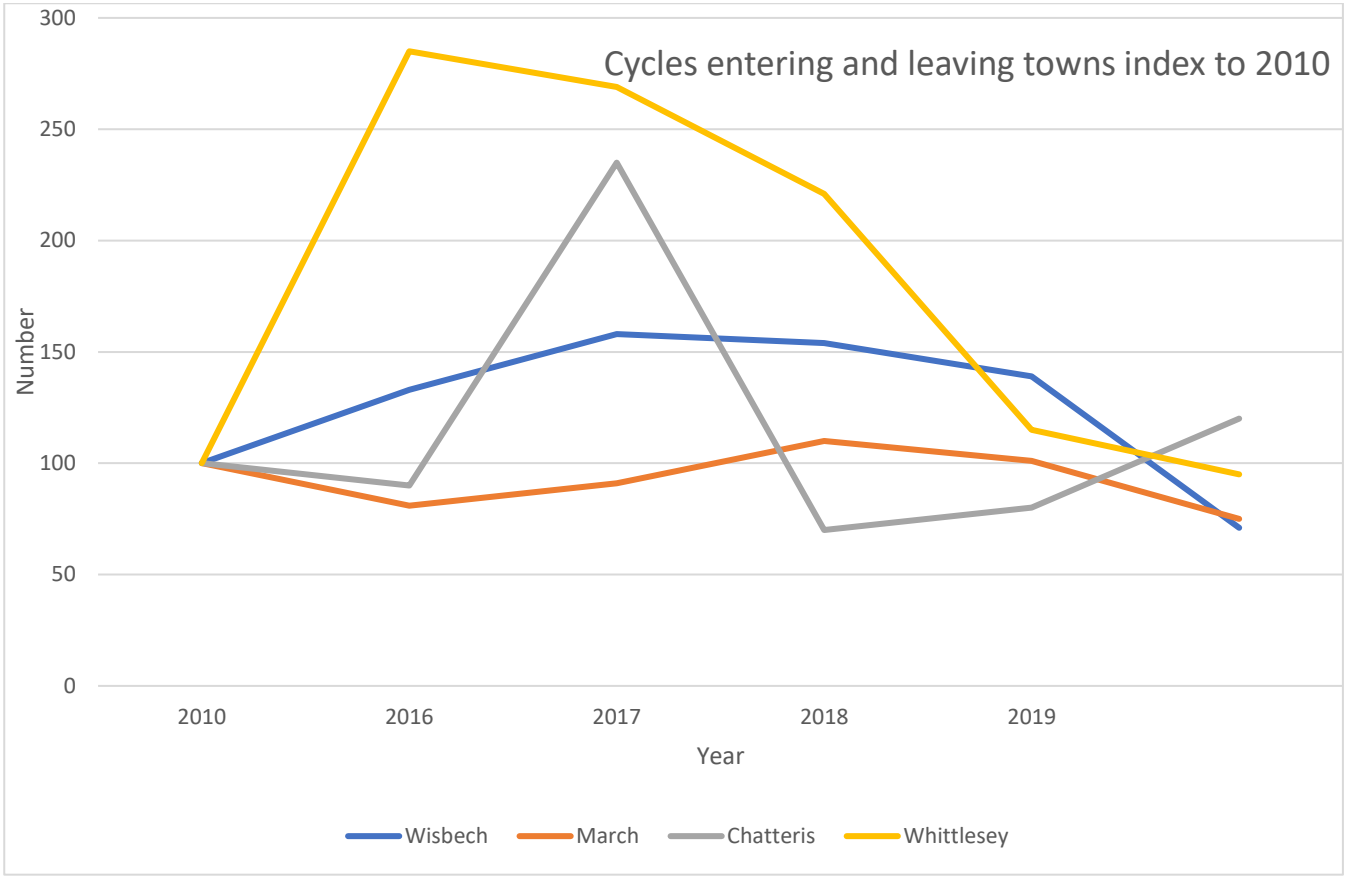

Figure 42: Cycles Entering and Leaving Towns

From Table 15 and Figure 42 above it can be seen in absolute numbers the number of people entering the market towns in Fenland by cycle is relatively low. It should be noted however that these figures take no account of the population size of the towns. Given the relatively small absolute numbers this can lead to fairly large percentage changes. Cycle mode share across all the towns is also very low at less than one percent in all the towns.

Table 17: Pedestrians entering and leaving towns index to 2010

Year	2010	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020 12 hr flow	2020 modal split
Wisbech	100	139	180	174	160	105	549	1%
March	100	95	96	150	138	139	1,314	4%
Chatteris	100	210	420	186	189	153	194	1%
Whittlesey	100	251	215	242	143	146	228	1%

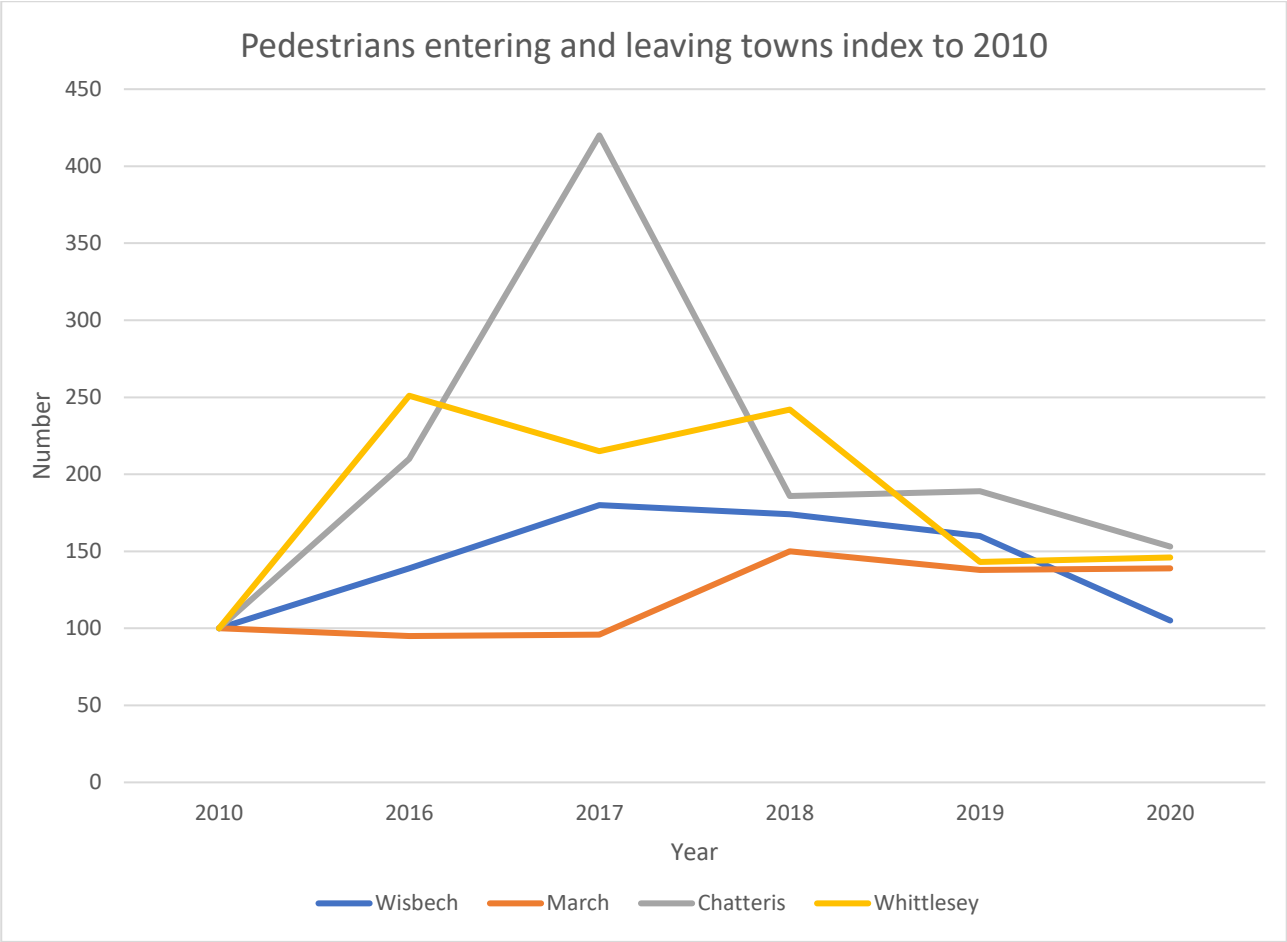

Figure 43: Pedestrians Entering and Leaving Towns

Table 17 Figure 43 above show a similar situation to cycling in terms of pedestrians entering and leaving the towns although the mode share is slightly higher.

It is hard to give detailed reasons as to why active mode share is so low in the Fenland market towns but it is likely to be a combination of factors. These could potentially be: unsuitable facilities for walking and cycling, weather on the day of surveys, people unaware that walking and cycling could be a suitable transport mode, distances too far, perception or risk, used to using car.

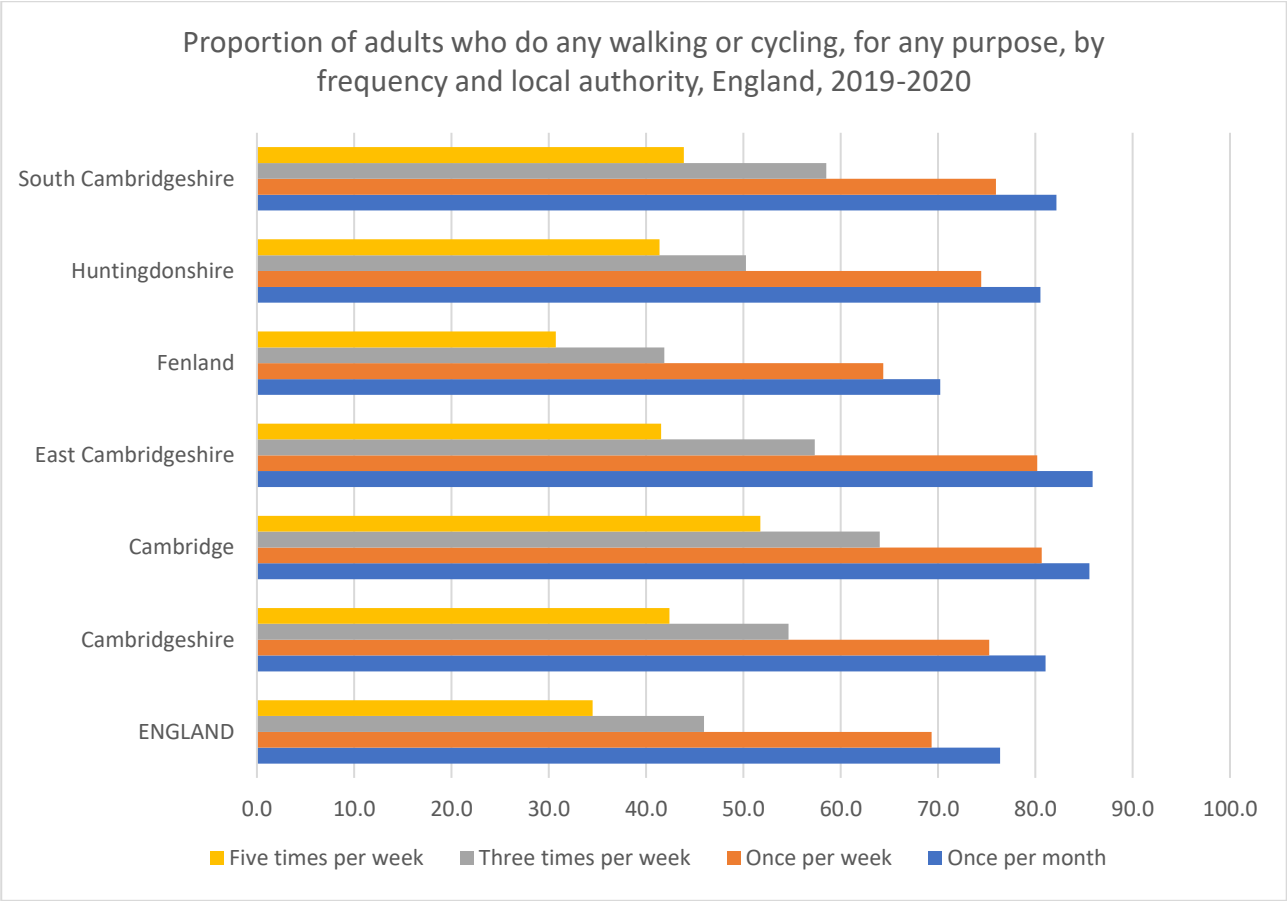

Figure 44: Proportion of adults who do any walking or cycling, for any purpose, by frequency, 2019-2020
Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/walking-and-cycling-statistics

Figure 44 above shows that percentages of adults walking and cycling in Fenland are generally the lowest for all frequencies when compared with other districts in Cambridgeshire. When compared with the averages for England the figures are similar.

Chapter 8 Digital Connectivity

The Connecting Cambridgeshire programme - led by Cambridgeshire County Council, supported by District Councils and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority - is significantly improving broadband, mobile and public access Wi-Fi coverage, whilst securing future proof full fibre and 5G networks to take advantage of emerging technology.

As a rural district with a scattered population around the main towns of Wisbech, Chatteris, March and Whittlesey, the geography of Fenland presents particular technical challenges for the delivery of digital infrastructure. However, the district has seen high levels of deployment to improve broadband connectivity and work is underway to improve mobile coverage.

As mentioned in the introduction a range of factors must be considered when discussing digital connectivity and go beyond just having a physical broadband connection or mobile phone signal. There is also a requirement to have access to a suitable device (computer, tablet or smartphone), the skills and experience to use that device and the ability to pay for the services you require.

Assuming a device is available, a lack of digital connectivity also makes it more difficult to be productive (especially when outside your home or office) and access to useful services such as real time passenger information (RTPI) to advise of changes or disruptions in public transport services is reduced. Rural areas such as Fenland often suffer the double effect of having poor access to physical services and poor digital connectivity.

8.1 Superfast Broadband and full fibre

Connecting Cambridgeshire is extending high speed fibre broadband access to homes and businesses across the county that would not have been able to get it otherwise.

- Most premises (>95%) in Fenland can now access superfast broadband speeds of at least 24Mpbs as of 2020
- This should rise to >97% over the next 18 months.
- There will always be several very rural hard to reach areas although it is noted that this may change with technology improvements. We are working to fill remaining gaps in coverage by encouraging groups of premises in hard to reach rural areas to apply for the Government's Rural Gigabit Vouchers to cover the cost of installing full fibre connections. With top up funding from the CPCA, businesses can get up to £5,000 and households up to £300, which can pooled as part of group project.
- 30% of premises can now access the latest Fibre to the Premise technology (FTTP) bringing speeds of 300 Mbps+ (above the national average of 16%).

When the programme began in 2012, <60% of premises in Fenland could access superfast broadband.

8.2 Public Access Wi-Fi

Public access Wi-Fi has an important part to play in supporting communities, particularly in areas where mobile coverage is poor and residents cannot afford broadband subscriptions. It can also contribute to supporting health and well-being, and digital inclusion in rural areas.

Free public access Wi-Fi (CambWifi) is already available at over 150 sites countywide, including Fenland libraries, leisure centres, park & ride sites community/children's centres, sheltered housing schemes, and council buildings. The network is being further expanded by Connecting Cambridgeshire so that more people can get online in village halls across the county
https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/public-access-wifi/public-wifi/

8.3 Mobile coverage

Mobile connectivity is now seen as an essential utility for business, and the public using mobile devices from home, at work and on the move; and, for public authorities to deliver services effectively in an increasingly interconnected world.

Mobile coverage across all of Cambridgeshire is causing concern amongst businesses and communities, as it has a negative social and economic impact.

Connecting Cambridgeshire is working with mobile operators, local businesses and government to share data to improve mobile coverage and capacity. Local surveys and the latest Ofcom data have been used to identify partial 'notspots' where better mobile coverage would bring a range of economic and community benefits.

The region could also benefit from the Shared Rural Network (SRN) programme supported by a joint investment of £1billion from government and industry to increase 4G coverage to at least 95% of the UK by 2026. This includes a new infrastructure sharing agreement between the four mobile operators to share and upgrade masts in areas which would otherwise not be commercially viable.

The below figures are taken from https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-coverage mobile phone coverage map accessed in December 2020, this was done for indoor 4G coverage. The maps show a varied picture of connectivity depending on which network provider you use. However, for all providers there is good coverage across the towns and the main villages. It should be noted that these maps are produced based on computer predictions so often the coverage may not be as shown, and there will be local variations.

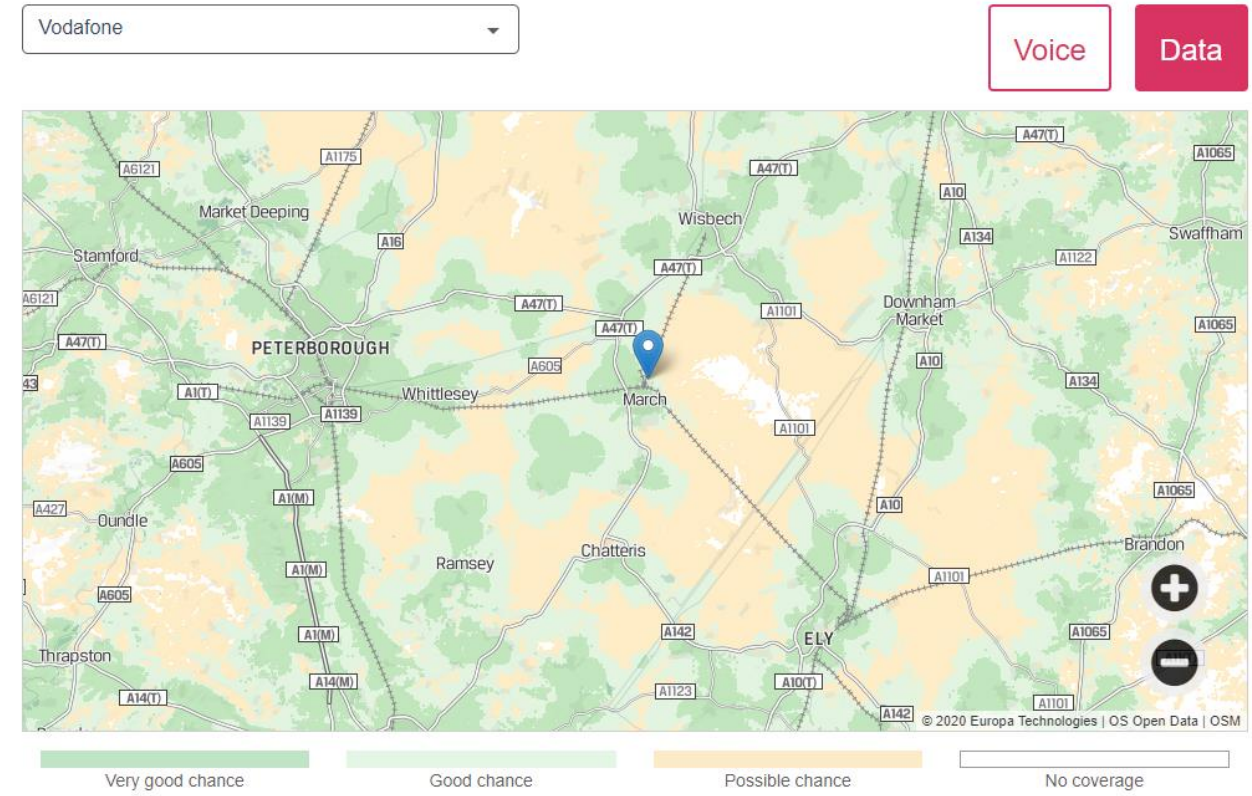

Figure 45: Fenland Mobile phone coverage Vodafone

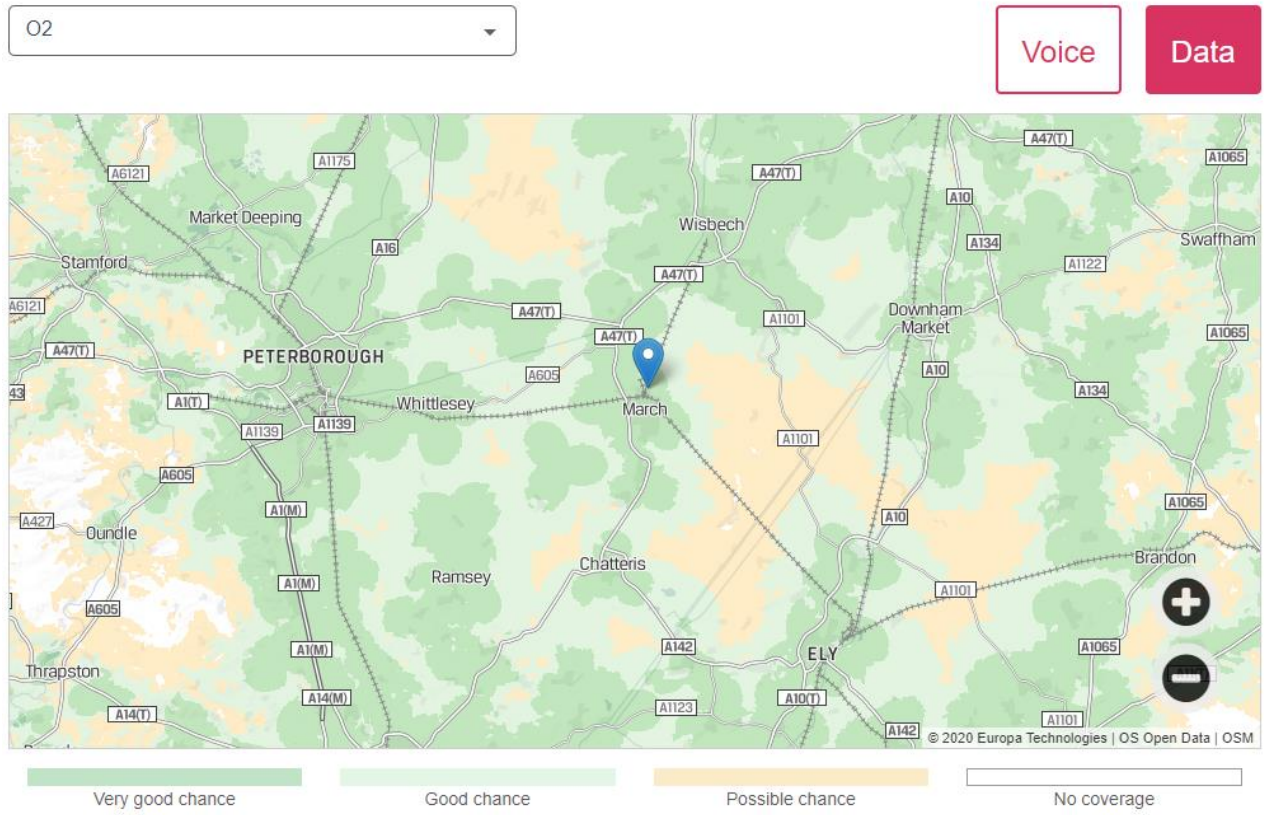

Figure 46: Fenland Mobile phone coverage O2

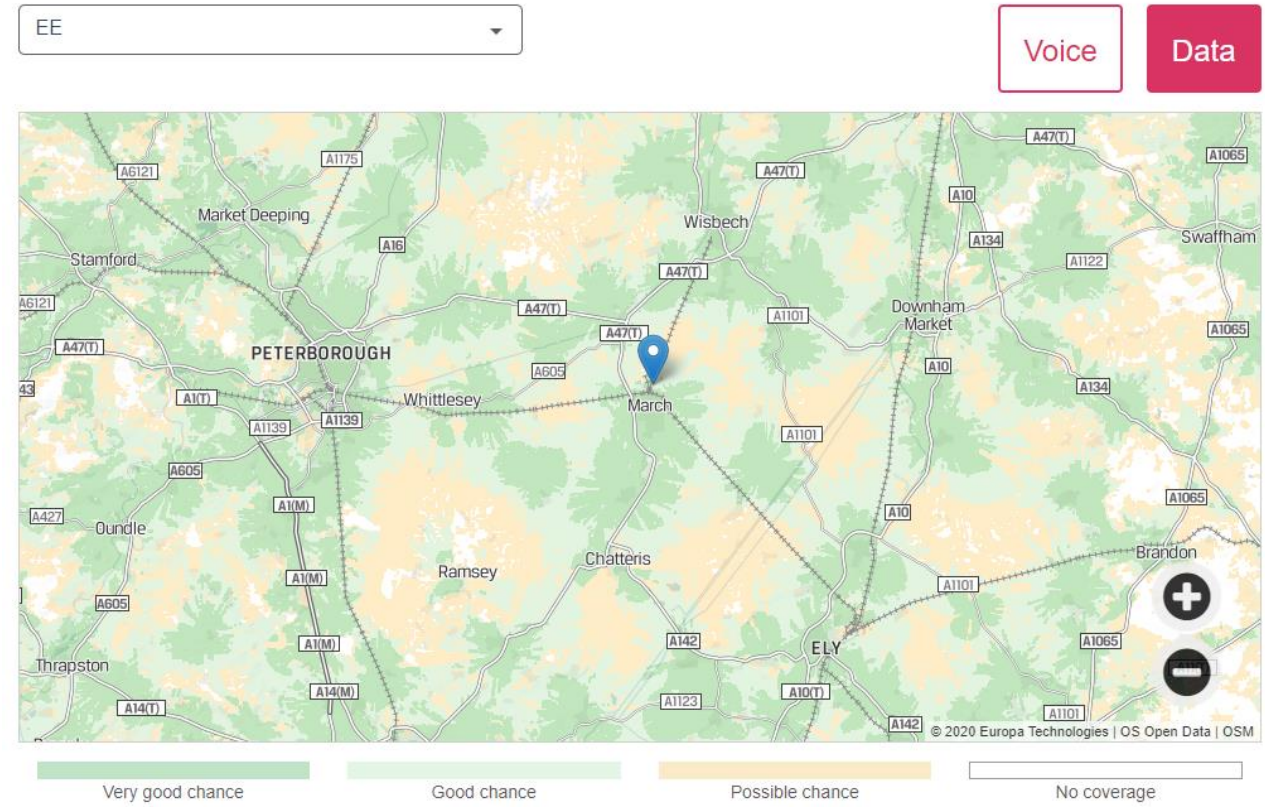

Figure 47: Fenland Mobile phone coverage EE

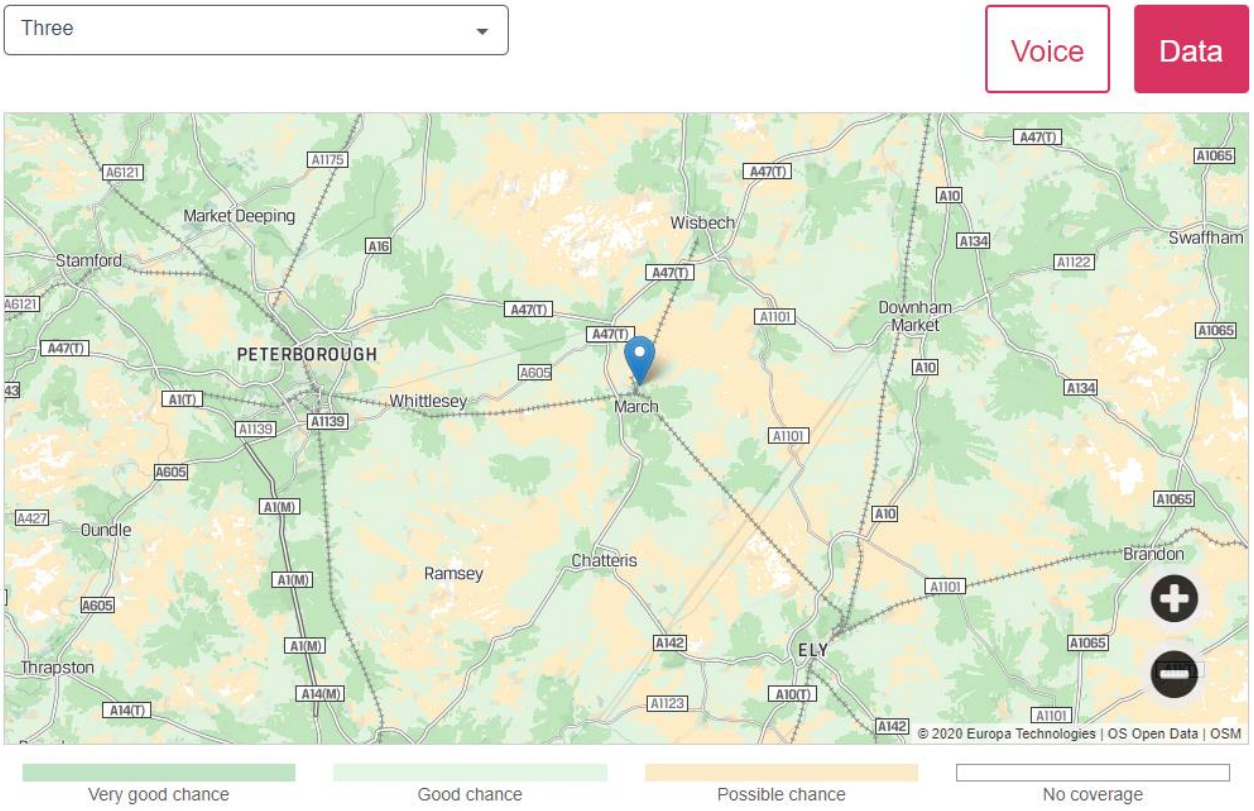

Figure 48: Fenland Mobile phone coverage Three

8.4 Smart Places - advanced communications and emerging technology

Advanced data techniques, sensor technology and digital connectivity are creating opportunities for better productivity and innovative solutions, which can positively impact on business growth, community well-being and the delivery of public services across the region.

'Smart' technologies and data solutions, such as the better use and display of real-time transport information (RTPI), that have been developed by the Smart Cambridge programme are being extended to bring digital solutions to Cambridgeshire's market towns including those in Fenland.

The programme is looking to install Smart Panels in local authority buildings such as council offices and libraries in Fenland. These screens are tailored to their specific location and show traffic conditions, train times and bus arrivals at the nearest stops in real time to help plan your journey. They also provide weather information and can be customised to show local Twitter feeds (such as the council feeds or traffic information) and webpages. By installing these screens, accurate real time travel information can be provided to users. A mobile version, the Pocket SmartPanel is also available and can be customised by the user on their own device to show information for their preferred bus and rail stops. In addition, the Smart team are also working with the CPCA on a journey planning tool which will cover the full Combined Authority area when released.

There is also an intention to install a sensor network (most likely a Low Power, Long Range network known as LoRa). Once installed, this network will allow sensors to be connected easily and at a low cost. It can be used by the local authority, businesses and residents to capture information about the town. There are many potential uses depending on the sensor installed, such as: monitoring water levels, air quality, rainfall, temperature, humidity. The programme has also engaged with a other councils and businesses who have used this technology for a variety of reasons to understand the potential use. Cases include monitoring public litter bin fullness levels so operatives only have to be sent to empty those that are full, monitoring temperature across the county to facilitate plans for gritting in cold weather and the use of rainfall and weather sensors by farmers to help monitor the conditions in their fields from a distance in real time.

This work is in progress now. Smart panel screens will be ordered and configured with the aim of installing them as soon as possible to ensure travel information is available to support travellers as the lockdown restrictions begin to ease. Procurement to support the sensor network deployment has also been initiated with the target installation date of June 2021. A piece of work on 5G has been commissioned with the hope of understanding which providers have plans to deploy in the region and how we can facilitate a deployment to ensure Fenland and other Cambridgeshire districts are able to benefit from this new technology as soon as possible.

Chapter 9 Summary/Results

The below provides a summary of the key findings from this work. These are listed below to add discussion and generate comments. After engagement with stakeholders this section of the report will be updated.

9.1 Key Findings

- Accessibility to and from Fenland is more challenging now than in 2004/2006. This is largely due to a more limited bus services, health policies around centralising medical services and the location of education courses
- 20% of all households in Fenland do not have access to a car. This amounts to around 20,000 people and is a statistic that has remained static over the last two decades
- Access to hospitals and to further and higher education courses (specifically access to the right course) are significant challenges
- The Sustrans 2012 research Locked Out, suggested that Fenland is worst affected area in the country for transport poverty. This was based on 3 criteria – areas of low income, areas where a significant proportion of residents live further than a mile from the nearest bus or railway station and areas where it would take longer than an hour to access essential goods and services by walking, cycling and public transport. It is suggested that this is now a more significant challenge than it was in 2012.
- The importance of the railways in Fenland offering shorter journey times is recognised as being key
- The success of improving accessibility to and from Manea -from one of the least accessible places to one of the most accessible (for those who are able to use train services)
- The extent to which community transport is supporting improved accessibility. This includes dial a ride and community car schemes along with befriending clubs and during the coronavirus pandemic the shopping service
- The importance of the community hospitals in Fenland especially given the longer distances to specialist hospitals
- Chatteris as one of our 4 market towns has seen a significant reduction in bus services between 2010 and 2020. From being one of our most accessible places, transport services now require changes of bus and services are typically infrequent
- The least accessible places in Fenland are now Colletts Bridge, Fitton End, Stonea and Turves. (perhaps we need to understand how many people this affects). Bellamy's Bridge, Church End, Murrow and Parson Drove are also very inaccessible.
- The least accessible places in 2006 and 2020 are typically smaller settlements that are geographically located in more isolated places.
- Levels of walking and cycling in Fenland are low. Improving walking and cycling levels is essential to improve accessibility but also for improving health another inequality that is highlighted for Fenland
- Digital connectivity is perhaps better than you might expected but how do we encourage greater levels of use.

9.2 Areas for improvement

- Addressing accessibility is critical to addressing wider social and economic issues that exist within Fenland e.g. poor educational attainment and access to employment
- Policies and policy implementation in other sectors (e.g. health, education) is disadvantaging people living in rural areas such as Fenland where accessibility is an issue. Policies such as NHS choice and the courses that specific colleges offer create accessibility challenges

- Improving access to Doddington Hospital given its more isolated location, is crucial
- The importance of planning policy and the settlement hierarchy – policies to encourage basic services (e.g. shops in smaller communities) and significant development in more accessible communities
- Significant work has been undertaken to ensure that as many households as possible are within 400 metres of a bus stop. Changes to bus services and frequency of bus services impacts on the effectiveness of this approach
- The challenge of providing evening and weekend travel for people who do not have a car
- How to develop interchanges – interchanges are needed to get those people living in smaller communities to the towns, to main transport corridors and to transport interchanges. Support the current LTP policy around this?
- The need for a more flexible regulatory framework for bus services – rural areas will always have limited or no competition of services. Greater flexibility and the opportunity to link bus and community transport services is needed. References to CPCA Bus Review?
- Murrow remains one of the least accessible places in Fenland – What if anything can we learn from approaches that have been tried to address this situation. It isn't as simple as just increasing the frequency of the bus service as this has been tried twice by two different operators and each time the service was not used.
- The challenge of improving accessible places in 2006 and 2020 are typically smaller settlements that are geographically located in more isolated places.
- How to improve levels of walking and cycling – links to Fenland Walking and Cycling Strategy? Securing funding for walking and cycling improvements.

9.3 What ideally do you we need to address?

- Access to hospitals for specialist services
- Access to colleges and further/higher education courses
- Transport services at key times
- Transport services in the evenings and weekends
- Improving walking and cycling
- Ensuring that most people are using computer services and are able to use computers
- Ensuring services are suitable for the diverse needs of the communities

Chapter 10 Stakeholder views and Feedback

10.1 Approach

As part of the development of this report it was felt that the views and knowledge of key stakeholders would be important. To this end key stakeholders were contacted In October 2021 and were given time to review and provide comments on a draft version.

Officers from Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council were also available to answer questions and there were a few virtual drop-in sessions available for people to attend if they wished to discuss this report in more detail.

It should be noted that at this time the engagement was focused on key stakeholders because this report will form a key element of the Fenland Transport Strategy with a much wider engagement.

10.2 Key Stakeholders Contacted

A series of stakeholder groups and organisations were asked to comment from October 2021 to November 2021. These organisations were as follows:

- Fenland Transport and Access Group
- All Fenland Town and Parish Councils
- All Fenland District Councillors
- Cambridgeshire County Councillors representing Fenland and the Chair and Vice of CCC's Highways and Transport Committee
- Transport Operators- Bus, Trains, Community Transport
- Care Network
- Cycling Groups
- Walk/rights of way groups
- Cambridgeshire ACRE
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authorities Transport Team
- Station Adopted
- Great Anglia Trains
- Cross Country Trains
- NHS staff
- Cambridgeshire County Council Public Health Officers
- Camsight
- Alzheimer's Society
- Rail Futures
- Fenland District Council Planning Officers
- Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Officers
- Cambridgeshire County Council Passenger Transport Officers

10.3 Feedback Received

In total there were 16 responses to the to this period of engagement. Following this engagement the report was updated to reflect the comments that had been received.

In summary comments received were generally supportive of the report and highlighted specific accessibility difficulties.

Other comments made related to:

- Some information related to the bus services information needing to be updated
- Some information related to the community transport needing to be updated
- Potential confusion related to the term accessibility and the different meanings people placed on the term were highlighted

Following the engagement at the end of 2021 and start of 2022 the report was reviewed by the Public Transport team at the CPCA so information related to bus times could be updated. It was highlighted that information related to bus services would be applicable for a particular point in time December 2021.

Greater clarity was given to the term accessibility when used for the purposes of this report were given noting that accessibility is very person specific and can be impacted on by a variety of personal characteristics.

Chapter 11 Key considerations and discussion points

The evidence presented in this report raises a number of key points for consideration as how best to address accessibility challenges across Fenland. These are summarised below:

- This report shows that accessibility challenges have existed for many years and have not improved, creating inequalities at many levels. Various interventions have been tried but with limited success highlighting the need for a different approach to be taken to fully address these challenges
- Requirement of a transport strategy to address these challenges, linked with the CPCA's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)
- Better collaboration with partners, including the CPCA, CCC, FDC, transport providers and the NHS, to consider a more wholistic transport solution. Previous projects have sought to address this, such as Total Transport, but greater political involvement will be required to progress discussions further.
- Larger infrastructure solutions will not fully address the accessibility challenges within Fenland. More local improvements will be required, focussed on better integration and connectivity.
- The successful implementation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP, CPCA), will be key to improving accessibility in Fenland.

Chapter 12 Next steps

12.1 Timeline for Transport Strategy

The provisional timeline for the Transport Strategy for Fenland is provided below.

January 2022	Fenland Accessibility Final Draft Report
January 2022	Member Steering Group
March 2022	Highways and Transport Committee – Engagement Draft Fenland District Council Cabinet- Engagement Draft
Autumn 2022	Public Consultation for FTS
Winter 2023	**Highways and Transport Committee – Final Draft**
Winter 2023	**Fenland District Council Cabinet – Final Draft**

Appendix 1 Fenland Accessibility – Assessment Criteria and Accessibility Hierarchy by Settlement

Summary
This table sets out the accessibility criteria numbers and shows how each Fenland settlement fits into the criteria. Criteria 1 has most accessibility and criteria 26 has the least accessibility by public transport.

Criteria No	Fenland Settlement meeting the criteria		Criteria No	Fenland Settlement meeting the criteria
1			14	Chatteris, Coates, Eastrea, Pondersbridge
2			15	
3	March, Whittlesey		16	
4	Guyhirn, Thorney Toll, Wisbech		17	
5			18	Benwick
6			19	
7			20	Four Anchor, Gorefield, Leverington, Newton, Tydd Gote, Tydd st Giles
8	Coldham, Doddington, Elm, Friday Bridge, Wimblington		21	Bellamy's Bridge, Church End, Murrow, Parson Drove
9			22	
10			23	
11	Rings End, Tholomas Drove, Westry, Wisbech St Mary		24	
12			25	
13	Manea		26	Christchurch, Colletts Bridge, Fitton End, Stonea, Turves

Accessibility Criteria and assessment for Fenland Settlements

The table below sets out a range of accessibility criteria based on levels of public transport stopping in that location, the frequency of the stopping services is also measured. A significant list of accessibility criteria was put together ranging from high frequency services most of the time to no services being available. Each of the Fenland settlements has then been assigned to one of the criteria based on the level of public transport that services each place. This approach has the advantage of showing a wide range of possible travel patterns (which could be available anywhere) which the Fenland settlements can be compared against.

Criteria No	Assessment Criteria	Fenland Settlements meeting these criteria	Key issues & Challenges	Notes
1	Hourly or better bus and train service morning, afternoon and evening, 7 days a week	None	In a sparsely populated rural area such as Fenland would this level of frequency ever be possible? It would require substantial subsidy. The railway line within Fenland only connects to a small number of settlements and would not therefore be realistic to achieve widespread railway access direct from most places.	Despite services operating into the early part of the evening. There are no services available to access the evening economy
2	Hourly or better bus or train service morning, afternoon and evening, 7 days a week	None	In a sparsely populated rural area such as Fenland would this level of frequency ever be possible? It would require substantial subsidy. Are there new more flexible approaches that might help rural areas to get closer to this service frequency?	Despite services operating into the early part of the evening. There are no services available to access the evening economy
3	Hourly or better bus and train service morning, afternoon and early evening, 7 days a week	March Whittlesey	March Hourly railway services to Peterborough and Cambridge from early morning to mid evening. Commuter bus services to Peterborough and Cambridge. Hourly bus services during the daytime to Cambridge with a change of bus at Ely. Tow hourly services to Peterborough.	

Criteria No	Assessment Criteria	Fenland Settlements meeting these criteria	Key issues & Challenges	Notes
			Whittlesey Two hourly railway services to Peterborough and Ely from early morning to mid evening. A commuter service direct to Cambridge in a morning but difficulty returning home. Commuter bus service into Peterborough and March. Hourly services to Peterborough during the day. Saturdays like weekdays. Hourly services each way on Sunday.	
4	Hourly or better bus or train service morning, afternoon and early evening, 7 days a week	Guyhirn Thorney Toll Wisbech	Guyhirn 30 min bus service to Peterborough, Kings Lynn and Norwich, Monday to Saturday including direct to their railway stations. Hourly on Sundays. A service approximately every 90 minutes to March and Wisbech including a commuter service. Thorney Toll 30 min bus service to Peterborough, Kings Lynn and Norwich, Monday to Saturday including direct to their railway stations. Hourly on Sundays. Wisbech 30 min bus service to Peterborough, Kings Lynn and Norwich, Monday to Saturday including direct to their railway stations. Hourly on Sundays. Hourly to March	

Criteria No	Assessment Criteria	Fenland Settlements meeting these criteria	Key issues & Challenges	Notes
5	Hourly or better bus and train service morning, afternoon and evening service 5 or 6 days a week	None		
6	Hourly or better bus or train service morning, afternoon and evening service 5 or 6 days a week	None		
7	Hourly or better bus and train service morning and afternoon including commuter services 5 or 6 days a week	None		
8	Hourly or better bus or train service morning and afternoon including commuter services 5 or 6 days a week	Coldham Doddington Elm Friday Bridge Wimblington	Coldham Commuter service into March and Wisbech with two hourly services during the day. Saturdays like weekdays. Doddington Hourly or every 90 minutes to March. Some services to Chatteris and Ely and Wisbech every 2 hours. Commuter service available to Peterborough and Cambridge. Elm Commuter service into March and Wisbech with two hourly services during the day. Saturdays like weekdays. Friday Bridge	

Criteria No	Assessment Criteria	Fenland Settlements meeting these criteria	Key issues & Challenges	Notes
			Commuter service into March and Wisbech with two hourly services during the day. Saturdays like weekdays. Wimblington Hourly to March. Every two hours approximately to Chatteris, Ely and Manea. Commuter service available to Peterborough and Cambridge.	
9	Hourly or better bus and train service morning and afternoon 5 or 6 days a week	None		
10	Hourly or better bus or train service morning and afternoon 5 or 6 days a week	None		
11	Service level between two hourly and hourly in the middle of the day with a commuter service	Rings End Tholomas Drove Westry Wisbech St Mary	Rings End Commuter service to March and Wisbech. Service every 90 minutes during the day. Saturdays as weekdays. Tholomas Drove Commuter service to March and Wisbech. Service every 90 minutes during the day. Saturdays as weekdays. Westry Commuter service to March and Wisbech. Service every 90 minutes during the day. Saturdays as weekdays. Wisbech St Mary	

Criteria No	Assessment Criteria	Fenland Settlements meeting these criteria	Key issues & Challenges	Notes
			Commuter service to March and Wisbech. Service every 90 minutes during the day. Saturdays as weekdays.	
12	Service level between two hourly and hourly in the middle of the day	None		
13	Two hourly bus and train service morning, afternoon and evening at least 5 days a week including commuter services and weekend services	Manea	Manea Two hourly railway services to Peterborough and Ely from early morning to mid evening. A commuter service direct to Cambridge. Bus service to March and Wisbech two hourly in the middle of the day.	
14	Two hourly bus or train service morning, afternoon and evening at least 5 days a week including commuter services and weekend services	Chatteris Coates Eastrea Pondersbridge	Chatteris 1 direct service each way for commuting to Cambridge, Huntingdon and March. Connections at March/Huntingdon for Peterborough and Ely/Huntingdon for Cambridge during the day but often long wait times for connections Coates Commuter service into Peterborough with two hourly services during the day. Saturdays like weekdays. 1 service each way on Sunday Eastrea	

Criteria No	Assessment Criteria	Fenland Settlements meeting these criteria	Key issues & Challenges	Notes
			Commuter service into Peterborough with two hourly services during the day. Saturdays like weekdays. 1 service each way on Sunday Pondersbridge Commuter service into Whittlesey and Peterborough with to hourly services during the day. Saturdays like weekdays.	
15	Two hourly bus and train service morning, afternoon and evening at least 5 days a week including commuter services and weekend services	None		
16	Two hourly bus or train service morning, afternoon and evening at least 5 days a week including commuter services	None		
17	Two hourly bus and train service morning, afternoon and evening at least 5 days a week	None		
18	Two hourly bus or train service morning, afternoon and evening at least 5 days a week	Benwick	Benwick Two March and Wisbech there are two hourly services during the day.	
19	Daily bus service Monday to Saturday with a frequency of less than two hours	None		

Criteria No	Assessment Criteria	Fenland Settlements meeting these criteria	Key issues & Challenges	Notes
20	Daily bus service Monday to Friday with a frequency of less than two hours	Four Anchor Gorefield Leverington Newton Tydd Gote Tydd St Giles	All Villages There are two services in a morning and three in an afternoon. These include services suitable for commuting.	These villages are also served by the college/commuter service connecting to schools in March and Wisbech. Tydd St Giles also has a schools service towards Spalding in Lincolnshire.
21	Commuter or college service one journey each way Monday to Friday	Bellamy's Bridge Church End Murrow Parson Drove	Bellamy's Bridge and Church End A college service - one bus in each direction per day in term time. Service towards Wisbech and March Murrow A college/commuter service - one bus in each direction per day in term time. One journey into Wisbech in each direction on Thursdays during the early part of the day. Parson Drove A college/commuter service - one bus in each direction per day in term time. One journey into Wisbech in each direction on Thursdays during the early part of the day.	
22	Bus services 2/3 days a week including commuter services	None		
23	Bus services 2/3 days a week	None		

Criteria No	Assessment Criteria	Fenland Settlements meeting these criteria	Key issues & Challenges	Notes
24	Bus service once a week including commuter/College services	None		
25	Bus service once a week no commuter service	None		
26	No bus and train services	Christchurch Colletts Bridge Fitton End Stonea Turves		