



# **THE CHALLENGE OF CONNECTING RURAL COMMUNITIES – A POLICY PERSPECTIVE**

**HAYDN DAVIES**



## OUR VISION

- **A transport system that is an engine for economic growth**
- **But one that is also greener and safer**
- **And improves quality of life in our communities**



# The Local Transport White Paper

Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon  
Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen



January 2011



## ON RURAL AREAS

- Public transport services remain important for both the sustainability and independence of rural communities.
- Where commercial bus services are not viable, this may mean local authority tendered bus services.
- But it may be that other more flexible services provided by the council or the voluntary sector (e.g. dial-a-ride) are more sustainable.

## RELATED POLICIES

- Addressing shorter, local trips including those in rural areas offers huge potential in helping grow the economy and tackle climate change.
- Walking, cycling and public transport are all sustainable way of making these local trips.

## **BUSES**

### **Local Bus Services**

Contribute to economic growth by:

- linking people to goods, jobs, education and services and
- reducing time delays due to congestion by encouraging mode switch from cars

Make transport greener by:

- removing car traffic particularly from urban areas
  - reducing noise pollution and carbon emissions
- and improving air quality

Improve quality of life – in particular by:

- providing access to goods, jobs, education, services and social activities for those without access to a private car, and for the elderly and disabled



## HOW IS POLICY ESTABLISHED

- Existing Evidence and New Research
- Efficacy of Existing Policies
- Likely Efficacy of New Policy
- Stakeholder Involvement
- Other Government Departments
- Financial and Legal
- Impact Assessment
- Statutory Assessments
- Formal Consultation
- Shared Cabinet Responsibility



## EXISTING EVIDENCE

### **National Travel Survey (2008/09)**

9% of rural households didn't own car or van

15% in 1995/1997

25% for Great Britain

80% trips by rural households by private transport

5% by public transport, 3% bus

55% for Great Britain

9,750 miles per person per year

6,850 across Great Britain



## **EVIDENCE – IMPACT OF EXISTING POLICIES**

### **National Travel Survey (2010)**

- 57% of people in rural areas hourly or better bus <13 minutes walk  
Increased from 45% since 1998/2000  
Consistent trend

### **Pre-spending Review**

House of Commons Transport Select Committee – impact on buses





## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Commitment to National Concessionary Fare Scheme**

**Comprehensive Spending Review October 2010  
Covers 4 year period April 2011 to March 2015**

**Reduction of 20% in rate of Bus Service Operators Grant  
from April 2012**

**Rationalisation of DfT's funding streams from 26 to 4**

**Rural Bus Challenge ends as separate funding stream**



## **FINANCIAL COMMITMENT - REVENUE**

**£800m - National Concessionary Fares Scheme (09/10)**

**£318m – BSOG (09/10), helps ensure that outside London:  
average fares 7% lower than otherwise  
bus service levels 7% higher than otherwise**

**£400m – Local Authority support for buses**

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Role of rail in rural areas**

- relatively minor as stations in rural areas few
- importance of public transport links to rail stations elsewhere

### **Transport Poverty and Cost of Rural Living**

- Minister spoke at Transport Poverty in Rural Britain roundtable

### **Wheels to Work**

- local schemes providing powered two-wheelers
- access to employment, training and education
- for those with no alternative

### **Good Practice**

- Rural Transport Knowledge Base
- Local Government Improvement and Development (IDeA)
- Now available via Local Government Group website



## **FUNDING**

**Local Authority Revenue Settlement – 26% overall reduction, not ringfenced but includes 28% reduction in transport element**

**Local Authority Capital Grants from DfT – only 11% reduction but .....**

**Local Sustainable Transport Fund - £560m capital and revenue**

**£10m to rural local authorities for Community Transport**



## RELATED GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Localism**

**Decentralisation**

**Big Society**

**Open Public Services White Paper**

**Community Budgets**

**Decentralisation and  
the Localism Bill:**  
an essential guide

**Open Public Services**  
White Paper



## **WHERE MIGHT POLICY BE GOING**

**Only 9% of rural household don't have car or van  
but .....**

**Decentralised mechanism for BSOG**

**Increasing role for Community Transport**

**Competition Commission Final Recommendations**

**Response to Transport Select Committee**

**Working across Government with DEFRA in particular**