THE CHALLENGE OF CONNECTING RURAL COMMUNITIES – A POLICY PERSPECTIVE

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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 ways 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
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