

Access to Services for Rural Areas

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The Rural Transport Question

- What rural environment exists? – dormitory, second homes, self sustaining communities or a mix?
- Need for a realistic appraisal to allow forward planning
- Common issues:-
 - Transport economics – no sound commercial business case
 - Population Age and Density
 - Car Reliance
 - Confidence in services – perception of reliability. What rural environment exists – dormitory, playground, self sustaining communities or a mix?

Contracted ECC Transport Provision

- School Transport - £26m. Service Support - £8m, mainly for rural, evening and Sunday services.
- Community Transport - £1.2m for those unable to use PT including the rural isolated.
- Unconventional – Quality Taxi Partnership, Shopper Buses, Parish Grants, car share.
- Information and Marketing, including Telematics and road side publicity.
- Some small scale commercial services still run in rural areas as does a strong taxi network.

Accessibility Planning

- **Accessibility Planning**
 - Government targets look at Access to 4 key services – Education, Employment, Health and Food Shopping
 - Local services such as post offices closing – not helpful
 - Focus on ‘socially excluded’ groups.
 - Transport is just one way of providing service delivery. Taking Service to user equally valid. Recognises that transport demand is a function of demand for other services. Expects these to be planned on this basis

Delivering Rural Services More Effectively

- Government mapping data indicates that most people (over 90%) in Essex live within 60 minutes of services by public transport.
- Mapping does not recognise the needs of those not able to use conventional transport options.
- If one service is inaccessible, then others are likely to be.
- Close partnership working between service deliverers.
- Need to look at innovative ideas and options for service delivery.

Delivering Rural Services More Effectively

- **Key points**
 - Distributed rural demand makes conventional solutions less effective.
 - Not all transport demand can be satisfied.
 - Unmet demand requires a focus on local service delivery to minimise transport needs.
 - Pool resources and co-operate over joint service delivery at a local level
 - NOTE: Effect of rising prices - fuel etc.

ECC Transport Rural Role

- Maintaining the links – providing key connections where local service delivery not practical.
- Offer alternative to car use as far as possible.
- Creative thinking-looking at alternatives for meeting unmet demand, including demand-responsive, social car, taxi buses.
- Co-ordinate various aspects of service delivery and provide information. Work at local level to develop solutions - parish or volunteer groups.
- Offer professional advice over access and service delivery.
- Solutions must be cost effective

The Tasks

- Work together to address these issues and generate cross cutting plans.
- Include Rural Proofing and co-operative service delivery at planning level – for service providers and developments .
- Make assessment of travel costs must be part of the cost benefit analysis for service delivery choices.
- Identify multiple service provider centres in rural areas – focuses for the new Rural Communities.
- Maximise IT and supermarket style home delivery.
- Supply IT equipment and training.

The Challenge

- Can we think flexibly and co-operatively enough to make it work ?
- Do we really want to make a difference to Rural Communities or are we window dressing ?
- Can you come up with a project we can take forward?
- The Essex Rural Commission of Enquiry demonstrates how serious ECC is.
- ECC transport services will be a key contributor to this commission