

Rural Transport: Challenges and Highlights

Rural Transport Current and Future Challenges

Ongoing decline in rurally based local bus operators and no new local bus operators starting up

Aging population who increasingly depend on public transport provision to key services and to maintain physical and mental health

Bus driver shortages, in rural areas – lack of affordable housing compounds this

Increased cost and lead in times for vehicles and parts, post covid and Brexit impacting on service delivery & availability.

Lack of integration between rural services and mainline bus, intercity coach and railway services

Commercial rural bus services subject to reduction in frequency, longer journey times and reduction in evening journeys



Highlights: New Ways to Deliver Public Transport

Highlights: Opportunities for Rural Transport

172 CT groups from 30 of the 32 Scottish LAs are members of CTA

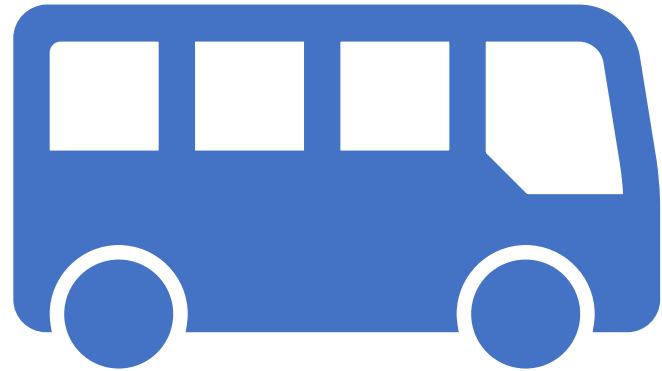
Perth & Kinross Council supporting rural CT groups – lending out 8 seat vehicles and contracting local bus and school service via a PSP agreement.

Scottish Borders Council funding the Pingo public transport facility for their rural residents

Highland Council operate their own in house fleet of 6 single and 4 double deck vehicles

Highland Council lend cars to CT groups such as Nairn Wheels and Gairloch CT so that they can deliver transport

Glasgow CT group delivers local public transport services in the greater Glasgow area



The Future: Rural public transport

- Many Communities can be empowered to deliver their own public transport solutions with support and funding from national and local governments.
- Green tourism is another important aspect of rural transport that should be highlighted to decision makers ?
- Can't solely depend on CT groups – LA need to consider in house operation if required. Public transport is non-statutory, but school transport is statutory
- Joined up thinking is required – lack of affordable housing and lack of childcare can equal lack of staff for transport operations. What other publicly funded transport is operated in rural areas? Joined up funding approach required?

Rural passengers tell us how vital transport is





Association of Transport Coordinating
Officers

Members from
across England,
Scotland &
Wales



Who are ATCO?



Passenger Transport Officers from Local Authorities working on:

- Public Transport – Bus & Rail
- Community Transport
- School & College Transport
- Social Care Transport
- Fleet
- Health transport

50th anniversary year



ATCO Board



Damien Jones
Chair of ATCO
Regional & Stakeholder
Engagement
(Devon County Council)

Cathy Knight
Vice-Chair of ATCO
Public Transport Lead
(Durham County Council)

Phil Lightowler
Vice-Chair of ATCO
School Transport Lead
(Kent County Council)

ATCO Board – to provide support across
other areas

- ATCO Membership Body
- Local Authority Members
 - Commercial Members
 - Retired/Non-voting members

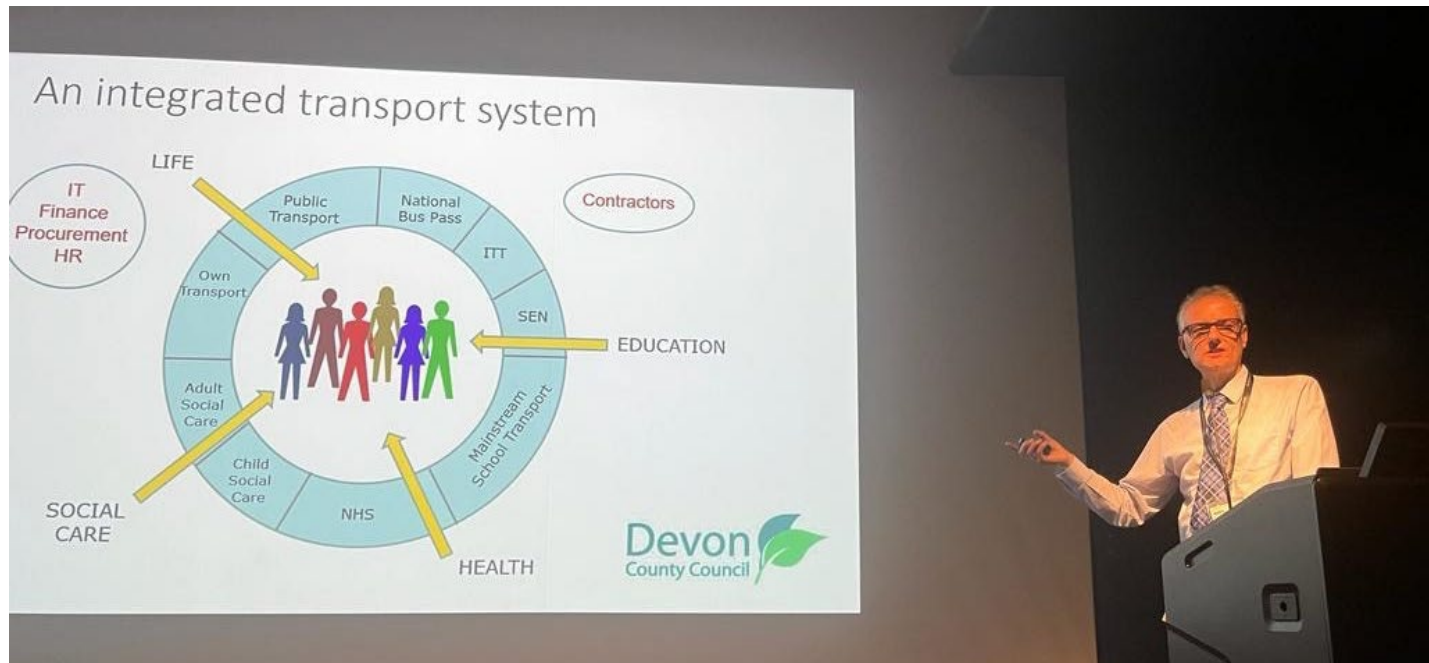
Link to website: [ATCO](#)

Meet nationally and regionally to:

- Share best practice
- Work with partners
- Work with Government Departments including:
 - Department for Transport
 - Department for Education
 - Transport for Scotland
 - Transport for Wales
- Help shape policy and practice

What do we
do?

National Events



Membership Enquiries

Please contact:

Rachel Phillips

Email hello@atco.org.uk

