Rural Services Network

Yorkshire & Humber Regional Seminar and Networking Event

Learning Outcomes

Date: 15th January 2020

Subject: Barriers to access – Connectivity & Rural Transport

Host: North Yorkshire County Council

Speakers

- Dr Gary Bosworth (University of Lincoln)
  "The Future of Rural Mobility: Introducing our New Toolkit"

- Colin Walker (East Riding of Yorkshire Council)
  "Rural Transport: The Access and Connectivity Conundrum"

- Martin Higgitt (Martin Higgitt Associates Ltd)
  "Issues and Solutions for Rural Connectivity and Transport"

- Ian Fielding (North Yorkshire County Council)
  "Making it Real – Transport in England's Largest County"

3 Examples of Good Practice discussed during the event with weblinks:

- Rural transport hub model, enabling a range of mobility innovations providing a focus for car-sharing, e-vehicle charging, rural deliveries, "last-mile" transit technologies, business workspaces, learning lounges and other social functions. Based on the Mobi-hubs model: https://mobihubs.eu/
- North Yorkshire's 'Little White Bus' is highly regarded. Operating with support from North Yorkshire County Council, this community transport service operates several routes in rural parts of the county.
- The Bridges Community Car scheme in Monmouthshire provides door-to-door transport for people who require additional support getting to local shops, social activities or appointments. www.befriendingmonmouthshire.org.uk

5 key learning points from the discussions

- Business & economy issues cannot be separated out from social & community issues. They are all inter-connected and transport/connectivity impacts on all areas of life in rural areas.
- There are no 'magic bullets' which will solve rural transport issues and needs. A variety of solutions are required. This includes reducing the need to travel and helping communities to help themselves.
- Public Service Vehicle Access Requirements (PSVAR) now means that vehicles which are unable to accommodate wheelchairs are not compliant and, hence, cannot take fares. One impact is that all the spare seats

previously available to local people on school and other services are no longer able to be sold.

- Planning and central government regulations need to support the drive to improve connectivity. Often, development proceeds where it simply adds to rural transport problems. For example, there is a lack of connectivity between different modes of transport which could be improved through appropriate controls.
- Bundling of demand for transport could assist in making services viable.

Any other key outcomes from the day for noting:

Many models are required to solve rural transport issues. These include:

- Limited opportunity for modal shift /new service development – must innovate to maintain.
- Demand Responsive services not always the answer – can be more expensive than traditional local bus.
- Overlay a range of options where feasible.
- Engage positively but realistically with communities.
- Support and facilitate community (based) transport development.
- Make the case for the bus as an essential service.