



Wales Centre for Public Policy
Canolfan Polisi Cyhoeddus Cymru

What Works in Tackling Rural Poverty:

An Evidence Review of Interventions to Improve Transport in Rural Areas

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March 2018



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Summary

- Rural public transport is considered crucial to the development of rural areas, and plays a central role in key groups accessing services, employment, training, and recreation. It is however comparatively expensive to operate and difficult to design in a way that meets the diverse needs of rural communities.
- The review identifies three overarching approaches to addressing rural transport issues: fixed schedule public transport systems (mainly buses), flexible transport systems (such as demand responsive services), and schemes that provide vehicles to individuals or households.
- The economic and social impact of affordable rural transport provision has a very limited evidence base. Some schemes have demonstrated strong uptake, and highlight qualitative evidence suggesting social inclusion and health benefits.
- Government should be clear on the goals for rural transport before implementing schemes. For example, meeting social exclusion goals will require a different approach than an intervention designed to meet the needs of economic development.
- Reliance on community transport schemes will not satisfy the needs of all sectors of the rural population. Current evidence on the benefits of rural transport suggest potential for significant cost savings (particularly in relation to health expenditure), however, the research is limited in focus, quality, and utility. A stronger evidence base is required, based on detailed analysis of the economic and social benefits of alternative rural transport approaches.
- Rural areas require a flexible approach to ensure the mix of schemes and approaches in each area takes into account specific population needs and context. This challenge may benefit from further exploration, focusing on the role of voluntary schemes, and provision of financial support to deliver transport services outside of normal operating hours.

Introduction

The Welsh Government has supported a wide range of programmes to address rural poverty and yet recent estimates suggest that almost a quarter of the rural population of Wales is living in poverty. The causes of rural poverty are complex and multi-faceted, but transport in rural areas is known to be an important contributory factor. Poor quality or lack of rural transport has been identified as a key issue in many countries, as a factor that can limit opportunities for all sectors of the population and lead to social isolation, and access to affordable transport plays a pivotal role in the development of rural areas (Williams and Doyle, 2016).

The success of interventions targeted at improvement in services, provision of jobs, and support for economic growth all hinge on sparse and dispersed populations being able to travel to the locations where improvements are taking place. At the same time, recent austerity measures have imposed deep cuts on public transport services, which are often only viable through subsidies. Rural areas also face specific challenges of longer distances between dispersed settlements, as well as difficulties of access for the disabled and for those not living on main transport routes. The complex relationship between mobility, access to services, social capital, and communities has long been recognised (Gray et al., 2006; Shergold and Parkhurst, 2012), although the development of sustainable transport networks that meet social and economic needs of all residents in rural areas remains elusive.

In the UK standard scheduled public transport systems (mainly buses) have been declining due to reductions in local authority subsidies, making it increasingly difficult for people in rural areas to access services, socialise and gain employment. Young people, in particular, are disadvantaged as car ownership is expensive and rural jobs often have lower rates of pay than in urban areas; socialising can be difficult for teenagers as bus services often stop early in the evening, and also inflict constraints on pupils taking part in after-school sport and social activities. Those with young children can find affordable childcare difficult to access, which also limits employment opportunities. Older people can find it difficult to access services (usually located in larger villages and towns) and socialise due to limited or non-existent public transport. Poor rural transport has been recognised as a key factor influencing the success of a wide range of programmes aimed at poverty alleviation (House of Commons Transport Committee, 2014).

This report provides an overview of interventions designed to improve transport in rural areas. It is based on a review of the existing literature from a range of OECD countries. The evidence from this feeds into an overall report that examines the implications of the evidence across a number of priority areas for rural development and rural poverty.

The population of a rural area falls into two broad categories: those that can afford private cars, and those reliant on public transport. Those reliant on public transport often face a 'poverty of access' (Gray et al., 2006) as public transport tends to be limited in scope, time of operation, and its ability to access the people in need. In addition, the transport requirements of households with a private car may not all be met if a single car is used to get one person to work, leaving the other household members reliant on public transport. 'Poverty of access' is a problem that can afflict all sectors of society, including the old and disabled living too far from a bus stop; the young without a car who cannot get to work on time, (or to the relevant location where employment is available); young people who cannot socialise outside of school hours due to lack of services; and, families with small children who cannot access child care. The result of this form of poverty is not just unemployment but more insidious in terms of social isolation, exclusion, and loss of social networks which may reduce the ability to build social capital, all arising directly from lack of mobility.

As a result, communities in rural areas have explored a number of alternatives to fixed schedule public transport services. The two main approaches have been some form of flexible scheduling of regular bus services to allow deviations from standardised routes which enables buses to get closer to people's homes, or some form of 'demand-response' approach that operates somewhere between a bus service and a taxi service. A third, less-familiar approach, has been to provide individuals with private transport, either temporarily (e.g. through a loan or hire), or permanently through giving people a vehicle. None of the approaches solves all the problems of rural transport; all are reliant on some form of subsidy. These subsidies appear in different guises, such as through reliance on volunteer drivers, donations of vehicles, grant funding for set-up and/or operation, or direct operational subsidy from government. This report explores some of the options that are currently being delivered, their advantages, and their limitations. One recurring issue throughout the study is the lack of effective and comprehensive evaluation of transport services in rural areas (Lucas and Currie, 2011). Those that exist often tend to focus on the economic benefits and not the wider social welfare benefits (Laird and Mackie, 2014), which are often underestimated.

Description of interventions

This report provides an overview of interventions to address transport issues in rural areas. The work is based on a literature review (see References at the end of this report and Appendix A for more information on the interventions examined) carried out over the period December 2016 – February 2017. The majority of interventions examined are located in the UK, which has a wide variety of schemes operated by public and voluntary organisations. The literature review has revealed three broad approaches to addressing rural transport issues, which can be summarised as follows:

- Fixed schedule public transport systems
- Flexible transport systems
 - Driver-responsive systems (buses, mini-buses, taxis)
 - Expansion of existing services (such as school transport)
- Provision of vehicles
 - Loans
 - Low cost rentals
 - Low cost sales
 - Car clubs

Fixed schedule transport systems are the standard, traditional form of public service delivery, with buses travelling on fixed routes at fixed times. Services are often heavily subsidised in rural areas and tend to link larger service centres along main roads with little in the way of support along minor roads or in smaller communities. Flexible transport systems – often referred to as ‘driver responsive transport’ (DRT) systems are usually a mix of flexible schedule buses, and/or some form of ‘dial-a-ride’ system. They often use smaller vehicles and require advance booking for passengers to be picked-up and dropped-off at a limited number of locations. The third option is vehicle provision, which may be in the form of a loan or low-cost rental, low-cost sale, or car club type of arrangement.

In many cases a mix of approaches is required to fit the particular characteristics of each area and population needs. Local geography and economic activity are significant in determination of transport and accessibility needs (e.g. delivering accessibility in a coastal location based on high levels of tourism might be quite different from the transport needs of those in upland areas who need to access a large urban centre for employment). Examples of different types of intervention can be found in Table 1 below, and are described in more detail in Appendix 1.

Table 1. Summary overview of interventions to improve transport in rural areas

Subject: Transport

| Intervention | Location | Characteristics | Description of intervention | Evaluation |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Rural Transport Programme | Eire | Using rural transport to deliver high-level policy objective of social inclusion. Operation: 2003 - present | Rural transport programme delivered through 35 local partnerships. Heavily reliant on volunteers as drivers and to carry out other essential roles. The public expenditure on the Programme totalled €13.8 million in 2009, supporting 1.29 million passenger journeys. | Evaluation in 2011 covering period 2002-09 not able to quantify social inclusion benefits – lack of data to measure programme benefits. Evaluation part of a wider review of value for money regarding public expenditure. Some qualitative evidence suggesting social inclusion benefits for RTP Passengers, in particular among older people and people with a disability. |
| South Staffordshire Connect | Staffordshire, England | Bookable bus service for those not close to regular bus routes Operation: 2012 - present | A local bookable bus service, which will pick you up from your door. Aimed at residents of South Staffordshire that live away from regular bus routes or find it difficult to use a standard bus. Open to all ages, adults paying a flat fee of £3 per journey. | Year one report (2013) noted in first 12 months the service carried >10,000 dial-a-ride passengers and over 7,600 day centre passengers, and undertaken 8,000 journeys (dial-a-ride only). A total of 1,650 South Staffordshire residents registered to use the service. |
| Wheels to Work | Nottinghamshire | Moped and bike loan for people needing access to study or employment | Wheels to Work runs a Moped Loan Scheme, to loan individuals a moped for up to six months, for £25 a week. This includes insurance, tax, breakdown cover, servicing and maintenance. Run by Rural Community Action, Nottinghamshire | ACRE (2013) indicates high demand but also high capital investment and running costs, and reductions in local authority funding were making schemes unviable. |
| Wheels to Work | North West England (regional scheme) | Moped and bike loan for people needing access to study or employment | Moped Loan Scheme with loan periods extended to 9 months. Sliding scale of loan fees from £13-£26 per months depending on levels of welfare received by users. | The scheme attracted 437 users and cost around £2,600 per moped. The evaluation rated the overall saving to the taxpayer of the scheme, including additional help in kind at roughly the same level, suggesting the scheme broadly breaks even. |

Subject: Transport

| Intervention | Location | Characteristics | Description of intervention | Evaluation |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Co-Wheels Car Club | UK | Community car club: low cost vehicle rental available across UK. Operation: 2014 - present | Small number of low cost vehicles available for hire. Operates as a social enterprise managing 4 franchises and 50 car clubs across the UK. Co-Wheels Huntly is a community car club for Huntly & District promoted by Huntly & District Development Trust (HDDT) | Received £0.5 million grant funding in 2014-15 from Big Issue and Ignite Social Investment funds to expand. Membership doubled 2014-15 to 3,803 with 41% having below average income. Total of 480 cars in fleet in 2015 of which 33% are ultra-low emission vehicles. |
| Lincshare | Lincolnshire | Car share scheme to reduce transport costs | More than 1300 people are signed up to LincShare - a free car sharing 'matching service' for all those who live, work and travel around Lincolnshire. People who don't drive or have access to a car can also car share. | Most likely to be used for linear transport connecting rural and urban areas (i.e. centres of employment). Suggestions some people save over £1,000 per year. |
| MiBUS Service | East riding of Yorkshire, England | Demand response minibus service Operation: 2011-13 | Demand Responsive MiBUS services. 18 routes operate on a weekly basis, taking residents to retail outlets and other facilities. The services operate on a pre-booked, door-to-door basis, with bookings being taken through East Riding Council's Call Centre. | In 2011/12 around 900 MiBUS door-to-door services undertook 67 single and 5,726 return passenger journeys. This equates to an average vehicle occupancy rate of 6.5 passengers per trip (represents annual operation at approximately 60% of total capacity). |
| Tees Valley Transport Brokerage Project | West Tees Valley, England | Mini-bus brokerage scheme | A 3 year project to extend coverage of a successful minibus brokerage scheme in East Cleveland to cover the west Tees Valley. The brokerage brings together individuals and groups who need transport with locally owned minibuses. | Under LEADER the scheme delivered approximately 3,000 passenger journeys carrying a mix of 56% elderly residents (shopping trips, sporting fixtures, health destination visits, social outings), 28% young and school age children (extracurricular activities, sports coaching, dance lessons, to and from school transport, youth club/brownies etc.). |
| 60+ Community Transport (CT) | Oxfordshire, England | Volunteer drivers supporting elderly people to reach medical services Operation: 2014 - present | Community First Oxfordshire supports the 60+ Community Transport (CT) schemes in the county. A Red Arrow Team of 20 drivers provide back up to the county's existing community transport schemes and prioritise help to older and more vulnerable people. | No evaluation available. |

Subject: Transport

| Intervention | Location | Characteristics | Description of intervention | Evaluation |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Second Chances Garage | Frederick county, Maryland, USA | Provision of vehicles for employment and access to basic services Operation: 2010 - present | Provides low cost transport and vehicle repairs to low income families. 90% of all proceeds invested back into the community. Works closely with a wide range of other charities and local organisations. Solicits donations of vehicles from the local community, refurbishes them, and places them with individuals who are referred by partner agencies. | No evaluation available. Some basic impact information on website |
| Good News Garage | Burlington, Vermont, USA | Provision of vehicles to low income households Operation: 1996 - present | "Wheels to work' and 'Ready to go' – two programmes based on donation of old vehicles - fixes them up and gives them to low income families. Car donors receive free towing and a tax deduction, local businesses are utilized and communities are strengthened. | No evaluation available. Annual reports and website have some impact data. |

Effectiveness of interventions

Rural transport essentially consists of the provision of a set of scheduled service systems for moving large numbers of people, and/or provision of private vehicles to move individuals and smaller groups. Each has a role to play within a rural transport system, and their effectiveness often depends on the extent to which the systems are both integrated and comprehensive. The characteristics of a rural transport system will vary depending on needs of the local population (e.g. demographic mix, employment and service needs), the local economic geography, and the state of the communications network. The issue goes beyond the transport network itself to include access to broadband (which can significantly alter service delivery and the need for travel).

Meeting overall goals

The overall goals of a rural transport system will determine which mix of delivery alternatives works best. The notion of ‘accessibility planning’ might be appropriate if the focus is to link isolated communities with key services such as education, health, shops, (Lucas and Currie, 2011) and with employment centres. If the goal is reducing social exclusion, a different approach might be required. Any national or state-wide approach needs to be flexible to deal with different needs and geographic contexts within the variety of rural areas addressed. Fixed schedule bus services, for example, are most efficient running along main transport corridors linking service centres, or linking outlying districts with employment centres. For those that can access such services they are likely to form the cheapest and most reliable form of public transport. Variations are seen in some other countries on certain fixed routes – for example the post buses in Switzerland (and some other alpine regions) that combine public transport with postal delivery services, link isolated communities in the high alps with public transport networks in the lower valleys, (but usually only providing a limited and subsidised service). In some parts of Wales and England, seasonal fixed route scheduled bus systems servicing tourists (e.g. coast path walkers) are also available to local residents during the period of operation, but are not targeted at their needs. Similarly, some case studies (outlined in Table 1 and discussed in more detail in the Annex to this report) have shown multiple benefits associated with the expansion of existing school transport services for rural children, whereby trained volunteer and/or dedicated third sector employees drive residents to and from local towns on an expanded but established timetable using school buses.

Scheduled services

Fixed route and scheduled bus services tend to be what most people think of when public rural transport is mentioned. A major advantage of scheduled services is the regularity of service, but a widespread problem highlighted in the interventions examined (Table 1) has been the limited availability of services outside regular working hours, which severely limits social interaction for all age groups. For large numbers of rural residents, such transport links are not accessible, and a range of alternative flexible schemes have been tried. These include fixed schedule bus services, but with flexibility to alter exact routes to pick-up/drop-off passengers from more remote locations that are off the regular route. Taking this idea one step further are the various driver/responsive or dial-a-ride systems, often using mini-buses and volunteer drivers. These can be more effective in enabling people to access services, requiring advance booking, and payment for the service. In more densely populated rural locations the schemes can be cost effective, especially if services such as central booking, repair and maintenance, vehicles and drivers are pooled or shared among multiple organisations. They go some way to alleviating rural isolation, but also have several drawbacks, including:

- a tendency to be limited in terms of hours of service
- targeted mostly at needs of older people rather than the young or those with families
- require some level of subsidy to operate
- are heavily dependent on volunteers.

One of the most effective schemes currently operating is in South Staffordshire, which runs an 'integrated transport system' with the aim of linking different forms of transportation to address a wider range of needs. A key element of the system for rural residents is the Connect service, a flexible scheduled system, which carried over 10,000 passengers in its first year of operation, although even here the sustainability of the system is in doubt as it targets only a small proportion of the rural population. For example, Connect has only 2,250 currently registered users but delivered an estimated 38,000 passenger journeys in 2015 (South Staffordshire Rural Transport Partnership, 2015), suggesting the service is used regularly by a relatively small number of residents.

A similar system operates in Gloucestershire where 'community transport' delivered by the voluntary sector plugs the gaps in the scheduled services of the public transport network 'as well as meeting the more specific needs of particular groups or individuals in the community' (Gloucestershire County Council, 2017). Community transport covers a wide range of activities from voluntary car schemes to social enterprises involved in various types of service delivery for local authorities, but a common issue is the need to find external funding to support the service, which raises questions of economic efficiency.

Voluntary car schemes

Voluntary car schemes, even if limited in scope, can also play a role in an integrated transport system, as illustrated through an analysis of health-related transport services in South Staffordshire (South Staffordshire Council, 2014). The six voluntary car schemes surveyed in the county during 2013-14 indicated an average of 2-12 calls a week for transportation to hospital appointments, the majority from those aged over 65 years. Reasons given for reliance on the services of voluntary car schemes to get to hospital appointments included: 'unable to drive', 'no one able to take me', 'poor public transport arrangements', 'unable to travel by public transport due to poor health', and 'taxi fares are too expensive'. Issues also included timing of appointments not aligning with public bus timetables, and difficult and/or expensive car parking at hospitals. Voluntary car schemes were clearly filling a gap in transport provision, not only in transportation, but in providing support through waiting and attending appointments with older people when requested.

Various parts of the UK, including Wales, currently have schemes in place providing voluntary drivers to enable people to access medical services, operated through NHS Trusts. Volunteers receive training, a uniform, and a mileage allowance to use their own car in transporting people (see for example: South Central Ambulance Service, 2017). A recent response to a request for information (Cox, 2017) indicated that in January 2017 the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust had a total of 258 registered volunteer drivers. Volunteer drivers are used to transport less critical and more able people to medical services, thus freeing up ambulance resources for those with more critical needs or who might require medical treatment during transport to hospital.

Provision of vehicles to individuals

The third approach, provision of vehicles to individuals, offers a range of initiatives, some of which are currently being explored in the UK. Provision of vehicles can take the following forms:

- temporary short term loan (similar to car rental)
- longer term loan
- purchase and ownership.

Car clubs are an example of a temporary short-term loan, whereby a person pays a small membership fee to get access to a range of vehicle types, for periods of a few hours to days

of even weeks. Although the idea is growing the main drawback is access to the location of the cars, which is limited as even the largest car club has only 60 sites across the UK (Carplus, 2016). The second drawback is a reliance on external grant funding to purchase and maintain vehicles until such time that there are sufficient members and hiring of vehicles to make the programme financially self-sufficient. Hiring costs and limited access means the majority of users have so far been those in professional employment needing a second car for limited periods.

Longer-term loan schemes, such as Wheels-to-Work suffer from similar problems of financial self-sufficiency (Countryside Agency, 2005; Motor Cycle Industry Association, 2010). The aim of Wheels-to-Work has been to support young people in rural areas gain access to education and employment. The scheme is delivered locally in a number of locations but is heavily reliant on subsidies for purchase and maintenance of the vehicles (mostly scooters and mopeds). While the scheme has delivered benefits to those who gain access to a vehicle, the reliance on grant funding has kept the number of beneficiaries low. It also currently suffers from cutbacks brought about by austerity measures imposed on local government.

Going one step further, the 'Good News' and 'Second Chance' garages (in different states of the USA) provide low-cost ownership of used vehicles to low-income families to assist in access to employment and services. The schemes are very similar in operation: both solicit donations from the community (in exchange for tax deductions) and work closely with social services and other voluntary sector organisations who refer individuals that they believe would benefit from access to a vehicle. The criteria for provision of cars are quite strict but the costs are low and impacts on households that benefit are high. Additional benefits around community cohesion and local employment (fixing and repair of cars) are also reported. Both garages also run low-cost auto repair services, available only to low income families that meet the relevant criteria.

Summary of schemes

None of the approaches or schemes described above solve all of the problems of rural transport, but each potentially has a role to play. Rural transport is likely to require some element of financial support, whether in the form of subsidised scheduled service, or support for provision of vehicles. Solutions will need to be tailored to local conditions and community needs will need to be considered in relation to wider rural delivery capabilities.

Policy implications

Provision of rural transport creates a distinct set of problems for policy makers concerned with tackling rural development, rural poverty, and a range of issues associated with social exclusion across different age groups. The review of transport interventions in this report also illustrates the difficulties of meeting requirements across variable rural contexts, where standardised and fixed public bus services are never going to fulfil either the accessibility or social needs of the population. Wales has a mixed set of requirements owing to the variable nature of local populations and the geography of the country. For example, coastal access needs are very different from those of inland Wales, and from those of old industrial areas such as the coalfield valleys of south Wales. What works in one area will not satisfy the demands of another area, although this does not necessarily eliminate the requirement for an overarching transport policy capable of delivering an integrated transport strategy.

Meeting local needs

Analysis of interventions suggest the need for an agreed set of overarching policy goals, with flexibility for prioritisation within defined sub-regional areas to address local needs. It also suggests that the priority of any rural transport network is to make services and employment accessible at the local level. As services tend to congregate in specific population centres, regular bus (and to a lesser extent train) services between population centres will continue to be important. Access to employment is more difficult as employment support services are likely to be situated in larger population centres, and job opportunities may be scattered across large areas and/or located around more distant specific growth poles (often urban areas). Fixed public transport services can address some of these issues but restricted schedules and hours of operation limit their effectiveness and often do not address social exclusion issues.

The evidence suggests that significant social benefits arise when rural transport services meet local needs. Evaluations and cost-benefit studies of schemes are limited, and where carried out are often difficult to access and narrowly focused making it difficult to assess returns on investment. There are arguments for continuing to subsidise public transport interventions based on the potential improvements to social welfare, health, access to training and employment, and reductions in social exclusion, but there is limited evidence as to the effectiveness of the mix of private, subsidised, and voluntary transport schemes that deliver services in rural areas. For example, a report on rural bus services in Scotland (BBC Report, 19 January 2017) noted that while subsidies for more than 200 private bus companies had increased, both number of services and passengers had fallen, and fares had increased 18 per cent over a ten-year period.

A recent study of community transport in Scotland (Canning, Thomas and Wright, 2015) noted that while community transport provides benefits across a range of policy areas, including transport, health, social services and leisure, the magnitude of the impact is difficult to determine. Based on five case studies the report determined that community transport 'generates a Scotland-wide social welfare benefit (consumer surplus) for users... [of] £2.8 million per annum in Gross Value Added (GVA) ...and cost savings to local authorities, the NHS and other public bodies'. Care should be taken in utilising these findings as results were based on relatively small sample sizes (N=212 across all case studies) which were skewed to older sectors of the population, and the estimated GVA was based purely on salaries of 75 staff employed across five case studies. Age Scotland (2012) have suggested there are potentially large benefits to be gained from expanding the national concessionary travel scheme to include community transport schemes. The study included urban as well as rural schemes noting that in 2011-12 approximately £4.5 million was spent on supporting community transport schemes. The study suggested that if the concessionary travel scheme were extended to community transport schemes significant costs savings would result through improved health benefits and reduced health expenditure (in excess of £2 billion per annum).

Transport schemes utilising the voluntary sector to provide services (e.g. volunteer drivers for health trusts) reduce public sector costs through relying on volunteers to volunteer time and make the investment in vehicles in return for a relatively modest monetary allowance. Volunteers are effectively subsidising service delivery. This may be politically expedient, but whether it is economically efficient, and socially acceptable in the long-run, is unknown.

One recent study (Kotecha et al., 2017) of Community Transport Organisations (CTOs) described the challenges (without recognising the inherent contradictions) of operating transport schemes as 'businesses' that require external funding sources, diversification of their portfolio, community support, and capacity to deliver a quality service with highly trained staff (including volunteers). Based on a limited empirical study (four case studies) the report suggested that successful CTOs:

- operated with a mix of paid and volunteer staff
- needed people with the 'right mix of skills' including leadership and business skills, and time
- had strong governance, and an ability to adapt to changing situations
- integrated with other voluntary sector organisations; and/or local councils 'can be a key determinant of success' especially if the local council provides a subsidy

The report also suggested that community support was essential to success (for both recruiting volunteers and utilisation of services), and while grant funding is important 'because it is difficult to generate adequate income from community transport', CTOs might be more financially sustainable if they raised revenue through charging membership fees.

Policy needs

A nationally-driven policy on rural transport could helpfully define clear strategic goals for the outcomes rural transport is intended to support. Once societal goals have been agreed, it is possible to then determine (locally or nationally) what mix of interventions will meet local needs in each area, which elements should receive financial support, to what extent, and what form that support should take (e.g. start-up grants, operation and maintenance support, fare subsidy) in different parts of the country. An important foundation would be a clear evidence base on which to build, one that identifies the social and economic costs and benefits of alternative schemes and integrated approaches.

A set of regional or sub-regional studies is required to identify needs across rural Wales. Studies will need to be carried out through partnerships of stakeholder organisations, which represent local transport needs, and local providers. It is important, in undertaking such studies, that transport needs are considered in relation to a wider set of issues. These would include new technologies that can alter service delivery (e.g. medical tele-conferencing), use of smart cards to pay for a range of transportation services, and even the location of rural services; drawing on benefits of localised resource centres, hubs, and integrated delivery, all of which may reduce service-related demand for travel.

More difficult to address are issues surrounding access to recreational services and social interaction, for different sectors of the rural population (adolescents, parents with young children, old people), all of whom may have variable transport needs. In terms of social inclusion and wellbeing, these issues will also need to be considered in the design of rural transport systems.

The evidence suggests that a range of flexible bus schedules and demand responsive systems can address a significant number of needs. Flexible bus schedules (i.e. fixed departure times but with the ability to deviate to a certain extent from fixed routes to make specific pick-ups/drop-offs), and demand responsive networks (not restricted to time and place), with capacity for sharing vehicles across administrative or transport network boundaries can be effective, and might benefit from more sustained financial support than fixed schedule bus services.

Provision of vehicles to households is a double-edged sword and depends to a certain extent on the approach taken. Car clubs and brokerage schemes can provide access to vehicles in

the short term but the small number of sites where vehicles are located limit their utility in rural areas (where extensive travel might be required in order to access vehicles). Exploration of the potential for further localised or community level car clubs might be worth investigation but will require capital start-up funding and face the risk of insufficiently high level of use to make them financially sustainable.

Provision of private vehicles as a policy option

The alternative, of providing private vehicles to individuals on a permanent basis has the disadvantage of reducing the demand for public transport, but it has been demonstrated to have significant benefits. The Good News Garage (2015), for example, not only helps people to gain and keep employment but also builds social capital through providing the means for those that are relatively well-off to support those in need through donation of vehicles. There is also a small potential for job creation through vehicle restoration, repair and maintenance. Activities of this nature depend strongly on carefully drawn selection criteria and partnership work for their success, relying on a system of referrals from social service agencies and others. Incentives may also be required to encourage donations of vehicles. Start-up grant funding is required for purchase of facilities, and continuing low levels of financial support may be needed to cover operations (although there is some suggestion that not-for-profit operations can be largely financially self-sufficient in the long-run, through fund raising and donations of high value vehicles that can be restored and auctioned).

The Good News Garage also offers an example of the value of integrated activities, as services offered have expanded into low-cost vehicle repair for low income families and a mini-bus transport scheme (Ready to Go) to help rural people access child care and employment. There is no reason why such a scheme should not operate in Wales (or other parts of the UK). Vermont is not too dis-similar in physical and demographic characteristics to Wales, there are vacant properties available across rural Wales, and there is likely to be support for vehicle donation.

Preliminary investigation will be required, as the Wheels-to-work scheme in England demonstrates that not all vehicle provision schemes are effective. The England scheme focused on provision of mopeds and scooters to young people to help them access employment and training. Evaluation suggests the schemes are expensive to set up (high capital costs) and to operate (ERS Research and consultancy, 2009) and although lengthy waiting lists are reported in some areas, few councils are considering scheme continuation. There are also questions over whether such vehicles are better suited to urban rather than rural environments.

Conclusion

Rural public transport is likely to remain more expensive, and harder to deliver, than urban public transport. Distance and low-density populations will always mean the public service delivery will cost more than in urban areas, contributing to the 'rural premium' (i.e. the higher cost of accessing services in a rural area).

Integrated scheme delivery offers greater potential for meeting the range of transport needs across rural populations. Flexible delivery mixing fixed and variable schedule bus services, demand responsive schemes, and possibly targeted vehicle provision to individual households offer scope for meeting the majority of transport related demand. Meeting demand may also require consideration of the timing and location of certain types of service provision (e.g. health, employment and benefits). Linking transport needs to service delivery also potentially offers scope for reducing certain kinds of service related travel demand.

Technology developments (logistics software, computer designed flexible scheduling, etc.) potentially provide the means to reduce costs of coordinating a number of transportation delivery systems through maximising utilisation of vehicles and centralising back-office support systems.

The most difficult needs to meet are the diverse recreational and social needs of the different sectors of the rural population, both young and old. Encouraging the development of voluntary organisations that could utilise public vehicles outside of school/work hours offers some scope for enhancing social interaction, but reliance on volunteer drivers can limit hours of operation, and a community transport approach based on volunteers and inconsistent grant funding is unlikely to compensate for decreased public transport services (House of Commons Transport Committee, 2014). There may be some scope for the consideration of public subsidy to pay for qualified drivers to operate schemes outside of working hours to enhance social interaction, but again this requires deeper investigation than can be proved in this report.

Provision of vehicles to individual low-income households delivers a range of benefits from increasing the potential for employment, widening access to child-care, and improving social capital. Vehicle provision schemes may have high start-up costs and incentives to encourage vehicle donation but a pilot scheme could usefully explore the potential for operation in Wales and the likely extent of benefits.

Overall, a stronger evidence base utilising empirical research across Wales is required to provide a solid foundation for policy development in relation to rural transport.

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Appendix 1 – Further information on interventions explored in this report

Fixed schedule public transport systems

Rural transport Programme, Eire

Recent restructuring (2016) of rural transport in Eire resulted in consolidation of delivery into seventeen Transport Co-ordination Units (called 'Local Link'). The programme manages 1,000 rural public bus services along with dial-a-ride type services, and is estimated to deliver 250,000 rural transport service trips nationally, with an estimated 1.765m passengers accessing the rural transport services provided.

Prior to restructuring Eire had created a 'Rural Transport Programme' (RTP) in 2007 with its origins in an earlier pilot programme (the Rural Transport Initiative, 2002), established to address issues of unmet transport needs from a social inclusion. The RTP was set up by Pobal, the agency for community development and social cohesion, with a specific focus on responding to rural isolation and enhancing the mobility, accessibility and community participation of local people. Significant grant funding was received from the Department of Transport (increasing over the 2003-10 period from €3 million to €11 million), but with decreases from 2011 onwards. The RTP was delivered through 35 Rural Transport Groups (RTGs), established to operate only in cases of market failure (i.e. where services funded under the Programme would complement and not compete with the existing public transport services), although older people and those with disabilities formed the core customer base. The services were managed mostly by voluntary management committees and delivery was heavily reliant on volunteers (operating as drivers, passenger assistants, managing community car schemes and other activities). The types of transport services that were provided by the Rural transport Groups included:

- i. Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) – respond to requests for services and operate by making specific trips to pick up and drop off passengers at the door;
- ii. Scheduled Fixed Transport –services with a regular route, stopping places and timetables
- iii. Scheduled Flexible Transport – timetabled regular departure points in either direction, but with deviations from the route to pick up/set down passengers closer to their destinations.

The level of service provided increased over the period 2003 – 12 as follows:

| | 2003 | 2012 |
|------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Number of vehicle-trips | 40,000 | 217,686 |
| Number of passenger journeys | 151,000 | 1.73 million |

In 2009 the McCarthy Report recommended abolishing the network which led to political and community opposition. A review (2011) covering the period 2002-09 noted the structure for the delivery of rural transport services resulted in a disproportionately high level of administrative costs compared to operational costs, and suggested re-structuring delivery into 18 units with a Transport Co-ordination Unit to carry out a wide range of duties. The review also identified a weakness in terms of the poor data regarding quantification of social inclusion impacts. As a result the RTP was reformed in 2014 and management moved from Pobal (with no experience of managing public transport) to the National Transport Authority (NTA) (with no experience of rural isolation). There are indications that the rural transport sector has delivered efficiencies while delivering broader social goals (such as reducing isolation).

An additional proposed activity by the NTA was to introduce a “Local Area Hackney Licence” for rural locations meeting certain criteria. The objective was to facilitate a low cost entry to the hackney market for transport provision in rural areas that, otherwise, would be unlikely to have such services. Its features include:

- Limited area of operation – Area of pick up would be limited to a specified distance from a nominated base location and the licence holder would be prohibited from plying for hire in towns (i.e. restricted to villages and rural areas);
- The need for a “Local Area Hackney Licence” must be validated by a local community or business organisation;
- Low entry cost – low licence fee and simple vehicle standards;
- Drivers must be resident in local area and the requirement to sit the Skills Development Programme under the SPSV licence is waived;
- The driver would not be permitted to ply for trade on public roads or at taxi ranks.

Flexible transport systems

South Staffordshire Connect, England

South Staffordshire Rural Transport Partnership undertook a detailed analysis of a range of taxi services, community transport, public transport, and health and social care transport, before funding a new flexible bus service. The partnership, consisting of Staffordshire County Council, South Staffordshire Council, and Seisdon Peninsula Locality Clinical Commissioning Group, worked together to create and fund a '*demand responsive bus service*' as the best option for rural residents that would provide access to services and help alleviate rural isolation. A range of transport services has also been developed for rural households including flexible bus services and demand responsive car schemes.

South Staffordshire Connect is a local bookable bus service, which is flexible and will pick people up from their home. The bus operates weekdays from 8am to 6pm (Saturday 10am – 4pm) although buses are unavailable for an hour in the morning and afternoons on weekdays as the buses are also used for school runs. The Connect is aimed at residents of South Staffordshire who live away from regular bus routes or find it difficult to use a standard bus. Potential users must register first before using the service and meet the following criteria:

- want to make a journey which isn't possible by local regular bus services;
- cannot use regular bus services because of a disability or mobility difficulty.

Since September 2016, the Connect service has been operated by two separate transport providers: the north of the district is operated by West Midlands Special Needs Transport group; the south of the district is operated by Community Transport West Midlands. The services are open to all ages, journeys are allocated on a first come, first served basis, and fees vary as follows:

- Concessionary bus pass holders £1.50 single and £2.50 return
- Adults: £2.50 single and £3.50 return
- Children aged 11 and over £1.50 single and £2.50 return
- Children under 11 and Your Staffordshire Card' holders (11-15 years) £1.20 per journey
- Your Staffordshire Card holders (16-19 years) £1.30 per journey

Early estimates of dial-a-ride journeys were quickly exceeded and five months after starting the service was delivering 250 per week (almost double the estimated number). During the first 12 months of operation (2012-13) a total of 1,650 South Staffordshire residents registered to use the Connect service, which carried more than 10,000 dial-a-ride

passengers and over 7,600 day centre passengers (i.e. a total of around 18,000 passengers for the year). The Year one report noted that the service was

“...designed to support the County Council’s Day Care modernisation programme as well as addressing social and rural isolation. The service allows residents who are unable to use regular public transport due to a mobility challenge, or who live more than 800 meters from a regular and commercial bus route, access to local community based services (GP services, shops, clubs, etc.) or transport hubs, thus promoting independence and wellbeing.”

A later report noted the service was supported by funding from the County council (a figure of £600,000 was mentioned but it is not clear whether this is just for Connect or a range of local bus services). The service was reported as having delivered 25,000 passenger journeys in the first 2 years, with 2000 people registered to use the bus (although only 200-300 use it regularly). Access to the transport Partnership website indicated 2,250 registrations increasing by around 30 per month and 38,000 passenger journeys. (South Staffordshire Connect: The story so far and where next. Powerpoint presentation November 2015, accessed on 20th February 2017 at: <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/communities/ssrtp-newsletters.cfm>)

Staffordshire Association of Voluntary Car Schemes

The association provides an opportunity for car schemes across the county to offer mutual support, network and share good practice. Membership of the association is open to any voluntary car scheme in Staffordshire. The scheme was originally set up with a small annual grant; currently the Community Council provides support but at a much reduced level.

South Staffordshire Locality 4 Voluntary Car Scheme

The Community Council of Staffordshire, as a member of the South Staffordshire Rural Transport Partnership, has been instrumental developing the Locality 4 Voluntary Car Scheme which covers a number of parishes. The scheme provides a service for those who have no other way to make hospital and other essential journeys. It is staffed by volunteers, must be booked in advance by phone, and costs are dependent on distance travelled.

60+ Community Transport (CT), Oxfordshire, England

Community First Oxfordshire supports the 60+ Community Transport (CT) schemes in the county. A total of 1,300 volunteers make 75,000+ single journeys each year, primarily taking older people to medical appointments and accessing other services.

The group provide the only comprehensive local support service for CT groups in Oxfordshire, and also develop and mentor new CT schemes. Examples of activities include:

brokering free volunteer driver parking in OU hospitals, provision of umbrella public liability insurance (reducing costs for CT car schemes), management of the OCTA badge parking permit system, and administration of the Oxfordshire Community Transport Advisory Group. The group also established the Red Arrow Car scheme (in 2014) using volunteer drivers in partnership with Age UK Oxfordshire to support the 'Circles of Support' initiative to help people leaving hospital to feel better supported at home. A team of 20 drivers provides back-up to the county's existing community transport schemes prioritising assistance to older and more vulnerable people.

Community Transport Strategy, East Riding of Yorkshire, England

One example of a current community transport (CT) service delivery that claims to have developed a sustainable model is the network of Demand Responsive MiBUS services in the East Riding of Yorkshire. 18 routes operate on a weekly basis, taking people to shops and other facilities. The services operate on a pre-booked, door-to-door basis, with bookings being taken through East Riding Council's Call Centre. In 2011/12 the scheme reports that approximately 900 MiBUS door-to-door services undertook 67 single and 5,726 return passenger journeys (an average vehicle occupancy rate of 6.5 passengers per trip). Given that anywhere from 2 to 4 seats might be removed from a minibus to accommodate wheelchairs it is estimated that the system operates at 60% of total capacity (thus qualifies for a supported bus grant), and suggesting the potential for a 10% overall increase in utilisation (i.e. an additional 1,200 return passenger journeys per year). No evaluation report has been identified.

Community-Centred Local Rural Transport pilot scheme, South Lanarkshire

This project was pro-actively developed by the Rural Development Trust (RDT), a charity to support rural communities in Scotland. In 2009 the RDT approached South Lanarkshire Council, proposing to extend statutory school bus services through community use. The aim was to develop a pilot scheme that would continue to operate school transport with the addition of community transport opportunities, including in the evenings and in school holidays. Buses utilised out of school hours would be driven by community volunteers.

The project ran from 2009-2011 using two 16-seat bio-diesel minibuses driven by RDT staff or trained community volunteers with fares charged on a per-mile basis with a minimum payment rate. Community consultation was used to agree and plan the relevant non-school routes. An additional £24,000 per year pump-priming funding was granted to RDT to develop and geographically expand the service for two years from 2009.

An external evaluation of the pilot was carried out by consultants in 2012.

(<http://www.ruraldevtrust.co.uk/attachments/article/12/Rural%20Development%20Trust%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf>) The evaluation noted an increase in uptake of school users

of the service in the period of operation suggesting that the combination of school and community transport has been beneficial to both types of users and recommends expanding the scheme and bus capacity. Enabling the school bus service providers (the RDT) to also run a community transport scheme is cited as the main factor in the success of the project. The service is still operating after 5 years. (<http://www.ruraldevtrust.co.uk/index.php>)

Provision of vehicles

Car clubs, UK

Car clubs in the UK have greatly expanded in recent years. One recent estimate suggests there are over 27,500 members of car clubs in England and Wales outside of London using more than 1,000 vehicles. Clubs are provided by a mix of commercial and not-for-profit organisations, usually serving local communities, and most appear to have been started and/or expanded with support with some kind of grant funding. The rapid expansion of car clubs in the UK was initiated by the award of £0.5 million to Carplus in 2014 from the Department of Transport to “develop and expand car clubs in England”, and an additional £1.8 million in 2015 to expand the project and trial shared electric bike schemes. Examples of car club schemes include the following:

Co-Wheels Car club, UK

Co-wheels provides car access to people who would otherwise be unable to access a car. It is a community car club providing low cost vehicle rental available across UK (currently around £4.50 per hour with as little as 5 minutes notice). The Club received £0.5 million grant funding in 2014-15 from Big Issue and Ignite Social Investment funds to expand. The number of employees increased to 34 by 2015; membership doubled 2014-15 to 3,803 with 41% having below average income. There are a total of 480 cars in the fleet in 2015 of which 33% are ‘ultra low emission’ vehicles.

The club operates as a social enterprise managing 4 franchises and 50 car clubs across the UK. To access cars people must become members (current sign-up fee of £25 Members and minimum spend of £5 per month). Members can use any car in the Co-wheels network across the UK network of 60 locations (some in rural areas), which can be hired hourly, overnight, or on daily rates. Customer profiling reveals people most likely to use Co-wheels are ‘Affluent Professionals’ and people falling within the ‘Urban Squeeze’ type (i.e. less wealthy than the average UK population, young and ethnically diverse, with fewer qualifications than average).

Co-wheels Huntly is a community car club for Huntly & District promoted by Huntly & District Development Trust (HDDT). Users must join and receive a smartcard they can

use to rent vehicles. Funded by the Climate Challenge Fund & Aberdeenshire Council through HDDT's Room to Roam Green Travel Hub project. Co-wheels Huntly operates as a franchise of the social enterprise car club operator Co-wheels .

Co-wheels Shropshire is a not for profit car club managed locally by a board of voluntary directors, with 50 members (households) and seven cars available in Shrewsbury and Ludlow. All cars are fuel-efficient Fords, of various sizes. Cars can be booked by the hour at £3.75 per hour, or for longer periods at £25 per day. The car club is open to anyone over the age of 18 who has held a driving licence for a least one year, and has 6 or less penalty points on their license. There is no upper age limit, and no premium charges for young drivers.

Derbyshire Community Health Services (DCHS) works with Co-wheels to provide pool cars for business and some private use by staff. Initially 10 vehicles were used as pool cars based at 5 community hospital sites across Derbyshire. The fleet now has 20 vehicles to cover more sites across Derbyshire, help it to establish a public car club and to integrate it with expanded business use of the vehicles. The combined business use and public car club use has enabled the car club to achieve higher vehicle utilisation.

Good News Garage, Burlington, Vermont, USA

Vermont faces a wide range of issues relating to rural transportation problems, in particular a lack of access to cars for getting to work and/or finding work. 'Wheels to work' and 'Ready to go' – are two programmes based on the donation of old vehicles, which are then fixed up and given to low income families. 'Ready to Go' is a transportation program for individuals and families in Vermont that uses donated mini-vans for clients to access essential life activities, including jobs, job training and childcare. The programme provides more than 30,000 rides annually within Vermont and works in partnership with the Vermont Department for Children and Families, Economic Services Division to provide the service.

Good News Garage has provided more than 4,600 vehicles to families throughout New England since 1996 (Good News Garage, 2017). Those donating cars receive free towing of the vehicle from their property, and a tax deduction. Good News Garage allows states its main goal is to “repair and provide as many cars as possible to local families”. It operates programmes that both provide and repair cars to low income families. The 2015 Annual Report identifies revenue of \$4.172 million of which \$2.1 million is accounted for by the value of donated vehicles, and highlights the following:

- 33,620 rides scheduled through the 'Ready To Go' programme in Vermont,
- 4,400 reliable vehicles placed with families in need since 1996.

- 1,898 total vehicles donated, a 17 percent increase over 2014.

One example of how the Garage operates is the system established in the neighbouring state of New Hampshire. Good News Garage clients in New Hampshire are referred by a number of organisations (e.g. Division of Family Assistance (DFA) Family Service Specialists, New Hampshire Employment Program (NHEP), Employment Counselor Specialists, or others providing post-employment services). All referrals must meet specific criteria to qualify for a vehicle:

- Applicant has a valid New Hampshire driver's license
- Applicant must be participating in an approved work or training program
- Applicant does not have any vehicle in the household and lacks access to transportation

An Impact Study conducted by the University of Vermont and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 2006 identified the following outputs from a sample survey of recipients of programme support:

- 61% of those surveyed reported a decrease in their reliance on public assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF) due to the vehicle;
- The majority of the people who had decreased their reliance had done so completely, that is, 49% of the sample reported zero reliance on TANF due to the vehicle
- 37% reported a decrease in their need for food stamps due to the car
- 60% attributed obtaining employment to the car
- 83% attributed the ability to keep a job to the car
- 58% reported an increase in community participation due to the vehicle
- 48% attributed an increase in their level of education to the car
- 60% attributed an increase in training to the car
- 90% reported an improvement in hope for the future for themselves and their family members within Vermont due to the car
- 87% attributed an increase in self-confidence due to the car

On average, the Garage spends more than \$1,500 on every car provided to ensure it is safe and reliable before providing the vehicle to those in need. Cars that are not suitable, too expensive to repair, or very high value are sold at auction and the proceeds help pay for operations.

JumpStart REPAIR Program

The programme was established in 2016 in New Hampshire to provide repair assistance funds of up to \$500 for individuals. Fees to support the initiative are provided by private and corporate donations. Individuals must meet the following criteria to be considered:

- Have a valid driver's license in the state of residence
- Be employed or have a verifiable job offer
- Provide a written estimate from a certified mechanic detailing the repairs needed and cost to perform the work
- Provide a Vehicle Condition Report (in the application) and a written statement from a certified mechanic stating that the vehicle is worth repairing
- Have a "sponsor" who can validate the applicant's situation and need for a car

Second Chances Garage, Frederick County, Maryland, USA

The Second Chances Garage provides low-cost transport and repairs to low income families. This is a not-for-profit activity and 90% of all proceeds are invested back into the community. The garage is a charity that operates through soliciting donations of vehicles from the local community, refurbishing them, and placing them with individuals who are employed and referred by partner agencies. The Garage also provides a 'Reduced-Cost Auto Repair Service' to qualifying individuals.

Donated vehicles are examined to determine what needs repair or replacement. If the vehicle is in good condition (and has under 200,000 miles on the clock), it is repaired, inspected (State inspection – similar to UK MoT test), and placed into the "program". It is reserved in the system until provided, for a nominal fee, to an individual or family referred by one of more than 20 partner agencies in the Frederick area. If the vehicle doesn't meet the strict criteria to be a 'program' vehicle, it is repaired and sold to the public from the Garage's used car lot.

There is also a 'Reduced-Cost Auto Repair Program' available to individuals and families that currently have a vehicle in need of repairs. Local residents who qualify economically have repairs done to their vehicles for approximately half of what a normal garage would charge for the same work. To qualify individuals must currently receive assistance or services from another agency, (e.g. food stamps, housing/medical assistance), and have annual gross household income below a specified level.

The basic eligibility requirements for clients to enter the Low-Cost Car Program include the following:

- Must be a legal resident of the United States.
- Must be gainfully employed.
- Must have an active, ongoing relationship with a Partner Agency or be a recent program graduate.
- Must be at least 25 years of age (may be younger if there are dependent children in the household).
- Must be able to afford vehicle ownership with approximately \$200 a month of expendable income to cover auto insurance, gasoline, maintenance/repair costs, and savings for a car 2-3 years down the road.
- Must not own or have a vehicle titled in one's own name or have access to a vehicle in the household.
- Must have no current or pending criminal or DUI/DWI (i.e. drink driving offences) charges.
- Must have no outstanding insurance violations.

Clients can only enter the programme through submitting a formal application through a partner agency, along with a 'Program fee' of \$500 and a further \$278 (as of February 2017 to pay title/tags/registration fees). Applications must also be supported with a referral letter from a Partner Organisation explaining why the individual would be a good candidate for the programme. Partner Agencies are required to be actively involved in supporting their *"clients' pursuit of obtaining a vehicle"*.

Wheels to work, Nottinghamshire, England

Wheels to work is a moped and bike loan for people needing access to study or employment, with at least 25 schemes in operation across the country in 2013 (ACRE, 2013). The Nottinghamshire Wheels to Work runs a Moped Loan Scheme operated by Rural Community Action, Nottinghamshire, whereby individuals are loaned a moped for up to six months at a cost of £25 a week (£12.50 for apprentices and those in college full-time). The fee covers insurance, tax, breakdown cover, servicing and maintenance, compulsory basic training, protective clothing and on-going support from the Wheels to Work team. Those borrowing a moped must have a provisional license and take care of it, (e.g. regular cleaning and basic maintenance such as topping up the oil).

Acre in their 2013 report suggested that although 25 schemes were operating only 7 Rural Community Councils were considering new schemes, despite the fact the existing schemes were oversubscribed with long waiting lists. Funding was reported to be a major deterrent to schemes in terms of establishment and operation, with high capital investment required, and high costs per person supported. In addition with local authorities reducing funding support the financial aspects of such schemes were in doubt.

Wheels to Work (W2W) scheme in the North West

The W2W scheme aimed to support youth mobility in rural districts of the North West of England through the loan of mopeds. Although the NW is associated with larger towns and cities including Manchester and Liverpool, one-sixth of the region's 7 million population is rural. Following a regional proposal spear-headed by Cumbria Connexions in 2005, funding was awarded by the then NW RDA. The programme then ran to 2008.

An evaluation carried out in 2008

(<http://www.wheels2workassociation.org/docs/W2WNWFinalEvaluationReport.pdf>)

Found that the most participants used the loan service for 6-9 months. By the end of the scheme 437 individuals took part and cost benefit analysis concluded that for participants who were on 100% benefits the scheme had saved the tax payer £2,670 per participant mainly because, in addition to scooter loans, the scheme provided a range of additional support (including rider training). The cost to individuals to participate in the scheme varied, from between £13 and £26 per month (or £312 at the top rate pa). While details of the total cost of the project are not explicitly provided in the evaluation, comparative data between the opportunity cost benefit of the scheme suggest that the unit cost of the scheme (scooter and associated actual and in-kind services) for the region is £2,639.

Tees Valley Transport Brokerage Project, West Tees Valley, England

This Project is led by Tees Valley Rural Community Council (TVRCC), Link-Up in East Cleveland, and eVOLution in Darlington. It is a 3-year project funded by the BIG Lottery's Reaching Communities Grant Programme and ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) aimed at extending TVRCC's minibus brokerage scheme in East Cleveland to cover the West Tees Valley.

This is not a scheme that provides vehicles, rather it provides access to vehicles through linking organisations that have a minibus with those that need one, so it is more of a rental agreement system. The scheme is a minibus brokerage service that brings together individuals and groups who need affordable transport, with locally owned mini-buses. The brokerage service provides residents with greater travel opportunities whilst earning increased revenue for minibus owner/operators by maximising usage of their vehicles. Communities benefit from increased travel opportunities, from using a 'one stop shop' which deals with bookings and allocation of vehicles and drivers, and usage of local minibuses is increased.

ACRE (2013) noted the service was managed from a community transport hub, which is also capable of organising other CT services such as volunteer car transport. The minibus project operated with LEADER funding from October 2011 to October 2012 followed by three years of Big Lottery funding in 2013. Under LEADER the scheme delivered approximately 3,000

passenger journeys carrying a mix of 56% elderly residents (shopping trips, sporting fixtures, health destination visits, social outings), 28% young and school age children (extracurricular activities, sports coaching, dance lessons, to and from school transport, youth club/brownies etc.). The remainder being community groups attending events

Average charges were reported as £1.80 per mile for a 12-16 seat vehicle; elderly people benefitted from reduced social isolation whilst other sections of the rural community were able to more easily access goods and services. In addition 26 drivers were trained (five of whom came from external agencies).

LincShare, Lincolnshire

At the other end of the spectrum from provision of cars are schemes that involved sharing vehicles and/or travel costs. LincShare is a car sharing scheme for reducing travel costs and providing access to transport for those without cars.

More than 1,300 people are signed up to LincShare - a free car sharing 'matching service' for all those who live, work and travel around Lincolnshire. People who don't drive or have access to a car can also car share. At the point of registration with the service the person signing up specifies what they want in the way of travel, and when, those signing up are not committed to car sharing all of the time. The website suggests the most likely sharing will be on linear transport routes connecting rural and urban areas (i.e. centres of employment), and suggests some people save over £1,000 per year on fuel costs.

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