



Community Transport Strategy, 2010-2012

in collaboration with the
South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership



January 2010

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This document is supported by the 'Community Transport: Evidence Base – Jan 2010'.

1. Foreword

The district of South Cambridgeshire consists of approximately 900 square kilometres of countryside surrounding the city of Cambridge. It is predominantly a rural area with no towns, but has 102 parishes and a number of smaller settlements.

In many parts of the district public transport is good, especially along the main roads or 'corridors'. However, there are several villages where access to a bus or train service is poor or absent - only 6 of our villages are served by a railway station, for example. This, coupled with the rural nature of the district, means that many people feel isolated within and from their communities. Accessing appropriate transport for essential and social journeys is challenging for many people, including the elderly and infirm, disabled, parents with young families and those who don't drive, including young people.

The district is one of the Government's four 'growth' areas identified for development over the next 10-12 years. The population of the growth areas is likely to be younger and economically active, often with families who themselves need transport. Conversely, the population of the rural areas is likely to become older and issues of isolation and accessibility risk becoming increasingly prevalent.

Our aim is that South Cambridgeshire will continue to be a place where people want to live, now and in the future. It should be a place where the needs of existing and future generations are met and where communities are:

- Active, inclusive and safe;
- Well-run;
- Environmentally sensitive;
- Well-designed and built;
- Well-connected;
- Thriving;
- Well-served; and
- Fair for everyone

It is with this aim in mind that we have identified the need for a Community Transport Strategy and are committed to working with other organisations to implement it. The accompanying evidence base highlights some of what is already happening and the action plan sets out what is required in order for us to aspire to true social inclusion and ensure that sufficient accessible, affordable transport is available for residents of South Cambridgeshire. Ongoing improvements in services are vital for members of our communities to be able to live independently and to lead fulfilled lives.



Councillor Nick Wright
Planning Portfolio Holder

2. Aims and Objectives

Aim: To complement conventional means of transport in order to aid independent living, increase access to services and reduce rural isolation.

This strategy will assist the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in achieving a number of the priorities in the South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Community Strategy¹. These include, but are not limited to, working with local people to address the needs of the most vulnerable in the community and supporting schemes to improve rural transport and access to services.

In particular, it will also help the District Council to meet its aims of:

- Being a listening Council, providing first class services, accessible to all
- Ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for individuals and families
- Making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live
- Assisting provision for local jobs for individuals and families
- Providing a voice for rural life

Objectives:

1. To understand the need for community transport in the district.
 - a) Map existing provision and identify unmet need in virtual and geographic communities.
 - b) Ensure that provision builds upon conventional means of transport.
2. To develop the capacity, self-sufficiency and environmental sustainability of service providers to meet the identified need.
 - a) Work with service providers to re-define, prioritise and engage with target service users and vulnerable groups as required.
 - b) Address the barriers to providing a consistent, high quality service, including the recruitment, training and retention of suitable volunteers.
3. To enable easy access to community transport.
 - a) Increase awareness and take up of existing provision.
 - b) Commit to forward planning for new and existing communities.

The objectives correlate directly with the themes in the action plan, which are based on emerging issues from the research (see Evidence Base).

It is important to recognise that the 2-year action plan for this strategy is the first step towards a more comprehensive approach to the improvement of transport services within South Cambridgeshire.

¹ Visit <http://www.scambs.gov.uk/CommunityandLiving/LocalStrategicPartnership/lsp.htm> for further information.

3. What is Community Transport?

The definition of community transport is quite broad. It generally refers to transport provided by voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, using a combination of volunteers and paid staff. Community transport can include taxi-card schemes that subsidise the cost of travelling by taxi, Dial-A-Ride services and voluntary car schemes, moped and mobility scooter hire.

Community transport schemes have long been recognised by local and national government as playing a significant role in the provision of transport to the public as evidenced by the 1997 Transport White Paper *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone*² and by the detailed guidance published in respect of Local Transport Plans and Accessibility Strategies, in which community transport plays a vital role in ensuring community members can make vital and social journeys.

Community transport schemes across the country vary in target client group and in purpose, including but not limited to:

- lone parents - reduction of isolation; access to services and social activities
- young people – access to social and employment opportunities
- former offenders – access to rehabilitation programmes
- people with disabilities – access to opportunities and independent living
- older people and the infirm – as above; door to door services provide personal security and peace of mind
- those living in rurally isolated or socially deprived areas – community activity and access to services
- those involved in health programmes and in need of medical services – access to treatment, schemes and activities
- group transport / vehicle sharing schemes – reduction of carbon emissions; environmental issues.

In South Cambridgeshire, users of existing services are generally those who cannot use local bus services because of mobility constraints (due to age, infirmity, disability), those who are isolated because of an absence of a suitable and convenient bus service in their locality and those who do not have access to a private car.

South Cambridgeshire is a diverse district, which includes the ‘necklace villages’ around Cambridge, large communities such as Sawston and Cambourne, and other small and remote villages and hamlets. The demands on community transport services will reflect the nature of the settlement as well as the nature of existing public transport provision.

Community transport delivery must be linked to and integrated with public transport policy. It is crucial for South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) to continue to work with partners in order to manage change effectively.

² A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone - <http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/previous/aneudealfortransportbetterfo5695>

4. Interested people and partners

There are many stakeholders to this Community Transport Strategy. Each of these has had the opportunity to input into the strategy throughout the consultation period (Oct 2009 - Jan 2010) and all stakeholders should, and will be given every opportunity to, be involved in the implementation of the action plan.

Stakeholders include:

- Individual residents of South Cambridgeshire, particularly the elderly, infirm, disabled and those isolated by the rural nature of their accommodation (or their relatives on their behalf), including young people.
- Groups of existing and potential service users who collectively need transport. These might include members of a luncheon club or other society, mobile warden scheme members, or residents within sheltered accommodation.
- Member organisations of the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and its theme groups, including:
 - Transport and Access Group (a theme group of the LSP and the designated Steering Group for the strategy).
 - South Cambridgeshire District Council – elected members and relevant officers.
 - Cambridgeshire County Council – elected members for South Cambridgeshire as well as relevant officers, in particular the Transport and Access Team and Adult/Older People's Services.
 - NHS Cambridgeshire (formerly Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust or PCT) – public health team.
 - Improving Health Partnership (a theme group of the LSP) and the related Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Obesity Group.
- Third Sector CT agencies operating in South Cambridgeshire, including:
 - Cambridge & District Dial-a-Ride
 - 3CT (Haverhill Community Transport)
 - Royston Community Transport
 - Nene & Ouse Community Transport
 - Papworth Community Transport Scheme
 - Care Network
 - Age Concern
 - Various Voluntary Car Schemes
- Parish Councils and Parish Plan Committees.
- Health Sector Provider Services
 - Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CUPFT) – Addenbrookes Hospital, Patient Services.
 - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT) – providing mental health services
- The Community Transport Association (national body representing community transport schemes)

Other stakeholders are also invited to contribute to the delivery of the Community Transport Strategy on an ongoing basis.

5. The Evidence Base

The document 'Community Transport: Evidence Base, Jan 2010' sits alongside this strategy. The evidence mapping has included looking at the local and national context, various pieces of local and national research as well as some bespoke local mapping of existing community transport provision against demographic and lifestyle information and discussions with local stakeholders.

The evidence base will develop as more research is gathered (see Objective 1, page 11, for further planned research).

The key issues and recommendations arising from the findings in the evidence base, in relation to the objectives listed on page 4, are:

Objective 1. To understand the need for community transport in the district

a) Identify unmet need in virtual and geographic communities

Needs Analysis

Secondary research into lifestyle factors and essential service provision³ shows clearly that the picture for South Cambridgeshire regarding community transport and accessibility is a complex one.

Existing mapping data needs to be verified and additional mapping undertaken in order to create and assess an accurate picture of the need within South Cambridgeshire for service development amongst the various service user groups.

The action plan within the strategy is key to identifying priorities and resources and partnership approaches in order to make a significant impact on community transport provision to South Cambridgeshire residents.

b) Ensure that provision builds upon conventional means of transport

Public Transport Corridors

An essential component of a comprehensive transport service for residents of South Cambridgeshire is public transport. It is not feasible to deliver all transport, even supplementary transport for the most needy within the district, through community transport alone. Community transport schemes need to dovetail with public transport and, in some cases, travel from remote rural areas to existing and future transport corridors, such as the new guided busway.

Concessionary Fares

The national scheme of providing free bus travel to the over 60s is in place in Cambridgeshire. In South Cambridgeshire there is no provision for extending this on a discretionary basis to the users of community transport schemes. Other districts within Cambridgeshire provide this service to varying degrees, and there is a complex but

³ The need for additional mapping features in the action plan and should be the basis for the development of services

practicable system in place for Local Authorities to fund journeys that originate in their district.

The results of the national consultations on Travel Concession Authority status and grant funding, as well as the current pressure on public sector finances, will determine whether and to what extent South Cambridgeshire District Council can consider this discretionary element of concessionary fares.

Objective 2. To develop the capacity, self-sufficiency and environmental sustainability of service providers to meet the identified need

a) Work with service providers to re-define, prioritise and engage with target service users and vulnerable groups as required

Eligibility

The eligibility criteria currently used vary from scheme to scheme and this can be confusing for service users. Partners involved in delivering this strategy need to identify their priorities for the delivery of community transport services and simultaneously identify appropriate and consistent eligibility criteria.

Hospital Returns/Patient Transport

The provision of patient transport services is to be reviewed by the health sector. Community transport planning will need to take future changes into consideration and work with the health sector, particularly in relation to eligibility criteria, passengers with a clinical need for transport and return journeys from hospital, the need for which is currently not being met.

Environmental Impact

Environmental concerns are high on the agenda of partners involved in this strategy. Work needs to be done, both to reduce the impact on the environment of community transport schemes and also to improve rates of active, versus passive, transport. Group transport schemes and cycling initiatives are examples of how this can be achieved.

b) Address the barriers to providing a consistent, high quality service, including the recruitment, training and retention of suitable volunteers

Implementing Quality and Sharing Good Practice

The various community transport schemes need to be sharing information with each other about users and journeys in order to be able to meet the needs of residents.

Taking a Collaborative Approach

Partners in the statutory and voluntary sector must work together with the users and potential clients of local community transport schemes to improve services within South Cambridgeshire.

Performance Management

Performance management data from community transport schemes needs to be collected in a comprehensive, standardised and systematic way in order to be able to make comparisons and further develop community transport services.

Marketing and Communications

There is a shortage of volunteer drivers for community transport schemes whose existing volunteers are often not much younger than the people using the service.

There is a need for a comprehensive publicity campaign that attracts volunteers and clients.

Licensing

Research into community transport schemes across South Cambridgeshire has brought to light the issue of vehicle licensing and the lack of clarity in Department for Transport guidance regarding the different requirements for commercial vehicles (taxi companies) and community transport services that exist for 'social kindness'.

There is a need for partners to work closely with the South Cambridgeshire District Council licensing officers to ensure that community transport schemes comply with current licensing legislation.

Objective 3. To enable easy access to community transport

a) Increase awareness and take up of existing provision

Marketing and Communications

There is anecdotal evidence across the district that people don't know enough about community transport schemes to be able to use them. Where people are aware of the existence of such services, they may not realise they are eligible and in some cases, are disinclined to use them because of the perceived stigma attached.

There is a need to publicise services in a consistent and systematic way to ensure that community transport is a valid option for those living and working in South Cambridgeshire.

b) Commit to forward planning for new and existing communities

Service Development

One key challenge of this strategy is in seeking to provide and co-ordinate services that are flexible, reliable and appropriate within a limited budget. Consequently, there is a need to adapt and use existing services differently, as well as find new ways of providing community transport services.

Strategic Engagement in Relevant and Related Work Areas

There are many strategies and plans across the district and countywide, which make reference to accessibility and rural isolation, e.g. strategies related to obesity, disability, growth areas and health inequalities.

It is important to make explicit links to these related strategies and action plans to add value, ensure co-ordination and avoid duplication. The Evidence Base document can be viewed at www.scams.gov.uk/communitytransport or by contacting Kathryn Hawkes on 01954 713290.

6. Monitoring and Review

The Community Transport Strategy will be overseen by a Steering Group, which will meet no less than three times per year. This group will monitor progress on the action plan when they meet and report progress to the LSP and SCDC. The action plan will be reviewed and re-drafted every two years on a rolling basis. The strategy is seen by SCDC as part of a countywide and partnership approach to addressing community transport planning issues. The findings and progress will feed into the development of the next Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-14.