

Countryside Agency Southwest

Presented by: - Helen Morgan, The Countryside Agency Southwest.

Background

The Countryside Agency remit is to work for people and places in rural England. Thus their interest focuses on how the rural element is covered within the next DLTP. The CA has carried out a large amount of work, which directly relates to Devons LTP.

Key Issues Highlighted: -

The Countryside Agency has produced a number of documents which directly relates to DLTP, The main documents, 'Transport in Tomorrows Countryside' document and 'Local Transport Plans' highlight themes, concepts and policies which the CA would like to see reflected in Devons next LTP. The Countryside Agency is also running a regional workshop in the autumn to look at incorporating Rural Issues in LTPs.

1. 'Transport in Tomorrows Countryside' - Summarised Principles

- **Accessibility not Mobility**
- Improved accessibility in the context of **Sustainable Development**
- Transport Infrastructure planned to **respect the countryside**
- **Cost of Car Use** -The cost of travel by different modes should be changed so that the car is not perceived as cheaper then public transport.
- **Travel Demand Management** -So that the forecast rate of traffic growth in the countryside is reduced.
- **Preference** -For long distance journeys that will involve travel through rural area preference should be given to modes that have the lowest environmental impacts.
- **Safety** -The public should feel safe and secure travelling by any mode of transport in the countryside.
- **Sustainable Transport Solution** -Communities must be empowered to invest in new transport solutions, safe in the knowledge that hey will be able to run and maintain them into the future.
- **Increased Mode Options** -People should be able to choose modes or a combination of modes for their journeys that will vary accordingly to the particular circumstances of their journey, rather than finding that one mode is always their preferred and only choice.
- **Expanded Transport Networks** -Networks should be established that provides for access to a good range of services and provides for people to reach and travel around the countryside with ease, by public transport and non-motorise modes.

2. 'LTP Good practice Guidance'

(Document based on the first round of LTPs - contains examples of schemes, which have been successful in the rural areas).

- Highlights the importance of Rural Transport Strategy within the LTP and the need to:
- Enhance accessibility
- Manage the need to travel
- Reduce the Impacts of travel on the countryside
- Improve transport choice.

3. LTP Regional Seminar / Workshop

Workshops that Look at rural Issues in the next LTP aimed at Local Authority officers, and hopefully including GOSW and DFT.

Recommendations for the Next DLTP (2006-2011)

Devon has been a successful authority in representing rural issues within its LTP. However there are further improvements, which the countryside agency would like to see in next LTP.

1. Greater Consultation with Devon RTP as they are best placed to give local knowledge and experience to make specific comments. With the countryside agency being dissolved the RTP offers a consistent source of information and advice on rural affairs.

2. Consider How RTP Can Help Deliver LTP Objectives

Consider what the LTP objections and how the RTP can contribute.

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3. Clarification of Capital and Revenue Needed

A clear definition of Capital funding would create greater opportunities for accessing revenue funds through the LTP. It would also help to generate further funding for future projects.

4. Definition of Rural Required

A clear definition of rural would create greater clarity. This could perhaps around a hierarchy of settlements from Market/Coastal towns through to 'Honey Pot' Villages and isolated Hamlets.

5. 'Rural Proof' Objectives of Local Transport Plan

All objectives should be 'Rural Proofed' against the Countryside Agency criteria.

6. Include a Rural Transport Strategy

In the First LTP Devon has done well in combining its LTP with its own Rural Transport Strategy. In the second LTP this can be built on with ensuring that objectives and areas within the plan are rural proofed (I.E. Look at how objectives for the whole county are going to be implemented in rural areas).

7. Set specific Targets and Indicators for each LTP Objective for Rural Areas

Having specific rural targets would make it clearer to monitor progress. Countywide targets do not always translate well from urban to rural.

8. Links to the ROWIP and Consult ROW officers

Consult ROW office – part of LTP consultation.

Handouts

Helen Morgan circulated the following handouts: -

- **Summary Sheet- Rural Issues In Devon LTP**
- **Transport in Tomorrows Countryside**
- **Local Transport Plans- A Better Deal For Rural Areas**

Panel Discussion: -

- Examples of best practice that the Countryside Agency recommends can be found in Local Transport Plans a Better Deal for Rural Areas and on the Countryside Agencies web site.
- Community Transport offers flexible solutions to specific areas its best to consult the Rural Transport Partnership on this. They have local knowledge on specific areas where schemes are working and where further progress can be made.
- The Countryside Agency is being disbanded, funding for the Rural Transport Partnerships, core costs delegated funding and existing projects with formal grant approval– have guaranteed funding until March 2006. After this point the countryside agency is lobbying DFT, DEFAR and Central Government to secure future funding for LTPs.
- The current countryside Agency RTP funding is offered for a maximum of three years, within available funds. The funding is designed to act as a start up cost, not to sustain the projects long-term.
- The Countryside Agency is not anti car – it can form part of a number of very effective transport initiatives e.g. Community Car Clubs.
- Transport initiatives needs to be area specific, schemes need to be appropriate to the characteristics of the region.
- Wheels to work in many areas have proved very popular, however it is not just a scheme for young people. Devon should investigate the option of opening the scheme up to all ages.
- A range of requirements for youngsters needs to be taken into consideration, including social needs (e.g evening bus opens up social opportunities e.g. Youth Club).
- The social requirements of youngsters need to be taken into consideration (E.g. Evening bus- opens up social requirements – e.g. youth clubs).

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- Neil Constable – Countryside Agency ROW officer – can contribute with further information into ROW area.
- Accessibility is the greatest priority for the next DLTP from the Countryside agencies perspectives, followed closely by consultation with Rural Transport Partnerships.