

Detailed Chapter on Devon's Accessibility Strategy

'...‘accessibility planning’...offers a new way to find and solve local problems, checking whether people experiencing social exclusion can reach the services they need, and identifying action to take if they can't. Action could be through improving public transport, introducing more innovative travel options, or changing the location or delivery of the services people need.'

(“Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion”, Social Exclusion Unit, February 2003)

1. Context

The ability of people to get to services and facilities such as work, school, college, doctors, hospitals and shops can have a significant impact on their quality of life. The Government requires all local transport authorities to use accessibility planning techniques to understand the links between social exclusion and transport. Helping to ensure that people can access the services they need is not just a matter of improving local transport, but also of changing how, when and where services are provided.

“These solutions require a range of public services and other organisations to work together over the long-term, including those involved in land-use planning, crime, education, healthcare and social services.”

(‘Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion’, Social Exclusion Unit, Feb 2003)

1.1 National Context

Accessibility planning was introduced by the Government's Social Exclusion Unit Report “Making the Connections” in February 2003. This report set out the Government's strategy for improving access to jobs and key services. It stated that all local transport authorities would carry out ‘accessibility planning’ which would be incorporated into the second round of LTPs, as a shared priority with Central Government.

Accessibility planning encourages authorities to promote social inclusion by tackling the accessibility problems experienced by those in disadvantaged groups and areas in a coordinated, integrated way. The Department for Transport [DfT] stated that accessibility planning involves “ensuring that people can get to the services they need – either by being able to travel to the service or by the service being available where they are” (Department for Transport Guidance on Accessibility Planning in Local Transport Plans, December 2004, p.3).

The focus is on those opportunities that are likely to have the greatest impact on life chances:

- Employment
- Education
- Health care
- Food shops

In doing so, accessibility planning provides an overarching framework to develop and deliver solutions to accessibility problems in a way that addresses local needs and priorities.

Potential accessibility problems could include:

- Availability, affordability and accessibility of local public transport
- Design, location and delivery of non-transport services
- Ability of the community to reach those services by foot or cycle

1.2 Countywide Context

Being able to access everyday key services such as jobs, education, food shops and healthcare is vital for the quality of life and economic prosperity of Devon's residents.

"Get it right for older people and you get it right for everyone" (Help the Aged Devon).

"The priority should be equity of access to services where no-one feels disadvantaged by virtue of where they live or their own personal circumstances" (South Hams District Council).

"Schemes such as Fare Cars and Wheels to Work moped schemes have a high potential and need to be developed further" (Connexions Cornwall and Devon).

"There is a high dependency of children over 16 to rely on parental transport. This has been proven to contribute to social problems within households" (Devon Wheels to Work coordinator).

1.3 Key Facts and Statistics

- 41% of respondents found they had difficulty accessing or interpreting travel information. 72% of respondents without access to a car experienced problems accessing social and leisure activities. ("Young People and Transport in Rural South Devon", Dr Zoe Harris, 2004)
- In North Devon, 64% of unemployed respondents highlighted transport as a reason for not being able to obtain a job. ("Study of the Transport Needs of Young People in North Devon District Area", 2003, Nicholas Curley)
- The main transport difficulties experienced by young people were access to after school activities, access to weekend leisure opportunities and meeting friends. (Devon Big Voice Reloaded Questionnaire 2004)
- 31% of people without a car have difficulties travelling to their local hospital, compared to 17% of people with a car. Nationally over 1.4 million people say they have missed, turned down, or chosen not to seek medical help over the last 12 months because of transport problems.

2. Devon County Council's Accessibility Strategy

Devon's accessibility strategy has two complementary elements:

- (a) an overall Devon-wide approach to improving accessibility, and
- (b) a focus on tackling evidence-based accessibility problems in priority areas where higher levels of social exclusion and poor access by public transport to key journey destinations prevail.

The three accessibility strategy priorities for the period 2006 to 2011 are:

Priority 1: Support and sustain existing community and voluntary transport services

- Ensure continuation of the work of the Devon Rural Transport Partnership;
- Put in place a stable and secure funding regime for existing community transport initiatives and services which contribute to accessibility;
- Engage community transport groups and partners in service planning;
- Ensure compliance with Government guidance in developing a collaborative approach to voluntary sector funding; and
- Developing a Devon Community Transport Compact to mirror the national Compact.

Priority 2: Work in partnership to deliver improved accessibility

- Contribute to the Devon Health Transport Partnership which will focus on:
 - Rural access to GP surgeries and hospital appointments;
 - Hospital access issues;
 - A possible single contact point for the public, to access information on transport and decisions on eligibility to non-emergency NHS transport Patient Transport Services;
 - Adopting effective transport commissioning practice; and
 - Effective collaborative working between Devon County Council passenger transport vehicles and health service patient transport services vehicles.
- Contribute to the work of the Devon Post 16 Partnership - the transport partnership for 16-19 year olds which includes representatives from Devon County Council (as local education and local transport authority), schools and colleges, neighbouring local authorities, transport operators, Learning and Skills Council, Connexions and the Devon Youth Network:
 - Development of smart ticketing systems in order to provide wider access to travel and discounted fares including for travel during evenings, weekends and holidays;
 - Emphasis on local bus services rather than contracted services;
 - Enhanced travel information with wider accessibility including the Young Transnet Information Project; and
 - Independent travel training for students with Special Needs, including a "Buddy" system.

Priority 3: Deliver accessibility through better public transport

- Devon County Council will:
 - Support the provision of low floor bus services across Devon.

- Improve access to public transport for people with communications difficulties through the “Devon Access Pass”.
- Arrange driver training for bus operators to help bus drivers’ deal with incidents, avoid conflict and be aware of the needs of all passengers.
- Support the establishment of ring and ride services in areas not currently served and the extension of existing schemes to evenings and weekends.
- Support Shopmobility schemes in the Districts which currently have no provision.
- Support the Devon Wheels to Work scheme.
- Support car clubs and community car schemes.
- Provide demand responsive transport and community based transport initiatives, such as Fare Cars, in rural areas to address local accessibility needs.

3. Partnerships

3.1 Engaging Strategic Partners

Devon County Council has been very proactive in involving partners, service providers and stakeholders in its accessibility planning work. This collaborative approach ensured that the widest possible evidence base was assembled, the broadest array of potential solutions examined and ensured partners felt responsibility towards implementing the results of the work. A plethora of various partnerships are already established in Devon to look at issues of local and countywide concern. Therefore instead of trying to establish new partnerships it was felt best to utilise and consolidate the work of existing partnerships, by feeding accessibility planning into the work they are (already) doing. By involving partners from the outset, in discussions from the strategic to the delivery scale, we ensured that partners felt ownership of the whole process.

Among the strategic partners involved were representatives of the Devon Rural Network and the Devon Strategic Partnership. The Devon Strategic Partnership [DSP], established in response to the Local Government Act 2000, has been a key partnership organisation for accessibility planning. The DSP has a Spotlight Theme of improving access to services for the most excluded people. Discussions with the DSP’s Common Ground Partnership, who lead its social inclusion work, ensured that the LTP acknowledged that accessibility is heavily influenced by non-transport factors (e.g. personal confidence, information) and that many barriers to using transport (e.g. fear of crime) are perceived. The approach of the County Council was one of recognising that transport is only one part of improving accessibility, but that there was a strong relationship between transport and quality of life. Accessibility planning will need to be embedded in all decisions concerning the provision, location, design and delivery of services. In many cases, “accessibility planning” was already being carried out and promoted by the different established partnerships, but not using that terminology and without the evidence base to support the approach taken.

3.2 Cross-Border Working

Neighbouring transport authorities will be key partners in progressing joint accessibility solutions in border towns during the Local Transport Plan period, and addressing cross-border accessibility issues and cross-border transport provision. This process has already been initiated with Plymouth City Council at Derriford Hospital (see *Section 7*). Somerset County Council will be a key partner in producing an accessibility action plan for the East Devon-Somerset border priority action area.

Cross-Border Partnership Working at Derriford Hospital

An excellent example of cross-border accessibility working is occurring at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth between Plymouth City Council, Plymouth Primary Care Trust and Devon County Council. Much of the area surrounding Plymouth is dependant on the city for employment, education, shopping, health and leisure services and other facilities. Derriford Hospital serves residents of Princetown and the Salcombe coastal area of the South Hams, two priority action areas in Devon's accessibility strategy.

Studies have shown there to be a significant correlation between provision of public transport, low car ownership and missed appointments at Derriford Hospital. Thus improving accessibility by public transport to Derriford will help meet multiple objectives including the Primary Care Trust's own attendance targets and Plymouth City Council's target of improving accessibility to the hospital from areas of low car ownership. Future work in formulating action plans for these areas will require Devon County Council to collaborate closely with the Primary Care Trust and Plymouth City Council. This collaborative, partnership approach will be essential in helping to identify issues and problems and devising a holistic range of potential solutions.

Other key partners who have been engaged are:

- Devon Health Transport Partnership
- Groups representing the deaf and people with learning and communication disabilities.
- Devon Post-16 Partnership

The key accessibility issues raised by the strategic partners were:

- Access to further education opportunities
- Access to healthcare
- Access to employment, training and vocational opportunities
- Lack of information
- Poor integration of services
- Crime and fear of crime

The success of engaging strategic partners was evident, when members of the Devon Strategic Partnership's Rural Task Group, stated that they would use the LTP's strategic and

local accessibility assessments and accessibility indicators and targets, to feed into the revised Devon Rural Strategy.

3.3 Engaging Local Partners

Devon's County Community Strategy Officers [CCSOs] have been used to feed accessibility planning into the work of local agencies and organisations, especially the Local Strategic Partnerships [LSPs]. The LSPs were a key tool to engage local communities, stakeholders and partners in incorporating accessibility planning into Community Strategies and everyday decision-making. The Government's Social Exclusion Unit Report¹ specifically stated that LSPs should be used by local transport authorities to ensure effective joining up between different partners involved in accessibility planning at a local level. Linkages were also established with representatives of other local partnerships throughout Devon including the Ilfracombe-Bratton Fleming-Combe Martin Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder. The LSPs highlighted issues of local concern which provided a solid background to the strategic and local accessibility assessments. For example, the work being done on accessibility for the LTP was fed into the Torridge LSP's work on redrafting the Torridge Community Strategy.

The LSPs bring together representatives from many organisations including:

- » Healthcare
- » Religious and Faith Groups
- » Jobcentre Plus
- » Emergency Services
- » District Councils
- » Local Authorities
- » Devon County Council

4. The Process of Accessibility Planning

Devon County Council has implemented a staged, iterative, pragmatic approach towards accessibility planning for its LTP - an approach recognised by the Department for Transport for its effectiveness in identifying and addressing local accessibility issues. This has sought to mainstream accessibility planning throughout the work of the authority, involving stakeholders at all stages of the process to deliver services in tune with local needs. The aim is to see accessibility planning as a 'process', which needs to be owned, developed and adopted by various partners.

Devon's accessibility strategy was prepared through two stages:

1. Data collection, assessment and problem identification
2. Option appraisal and the development of targeted action plans

¹ Social Exclusion Unit (2003) "Making the Connections", Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion, Social Exclusion Unit, February 2003.

4.1 Stage 1: Strategic Accessibility Assessment

4.1.1 Strategic Mapping

Devon County Council has used mapping tools to make strategic and local accessibility assessments of the main accessibility challenges in Devon, helping to understand the links between social exclusion and transport. For the provisional LTP, submitted in July 2005, a strategic area-wide assessment was carried out to show access to work, learning, healthcare, healthy affordable food and leisure from each census output area across the county. This strategic mapping was primarily based on data from the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation, car ownership levels and the 2001 Census. The resulting maps were amalgamated into a composite map which identified significant accessibility problems in areas of Exeter, Bideford, Barnstaple, Teignmouth, Ilfracombe, Tiverton, Totnes and Torrington. This was used to formulate the provisional Devon Local Transport Plan's 'framework accessibility strategy'.

The initial strategic accessibility assessment was evaluated in autumn 2005. This evaluation found that the initial strategic mapping was not accounting for high levels of car ownership and poor public transport access in many of Devon's rural areas. A second round of strategic mapping was carried out using 'Accession'² mapping software for the final Devon Local Transport Plan. [Traveline data](#) on bus services and timetable information, along with the Department for Transport's core accessibility indicators and various local data profiles (e.g. primary schools) were fed into Accession. Using Accession ensured a more robust evidence base to the second round of strategic accessibility assessments, calculating accessibility by public transport to the government's key accessibility priorities:

- primary schools
- secondary schools
- acute hospitals
- supermarkets
- urban centres

to represent access to education, health, healthy affordable food³ and employment⁴.

The calculations from Accession were outputted into ArcGIS software to produce easily understandable accessibility maps at a countywide scale. The accessibility measure used was a temporal one, which was deemed to be the most appropriate in such a large, geographically diverse county as Devon. However, there were some limitations of the Accession mapping software, most notably in terms of its failure to take account of

² Accession is a new software tool provided by the Department for Transport to local transport authorities, drawing together transport, land use and socio-economic information to identify whether people can get to jobs, education, health and other key services/facilities

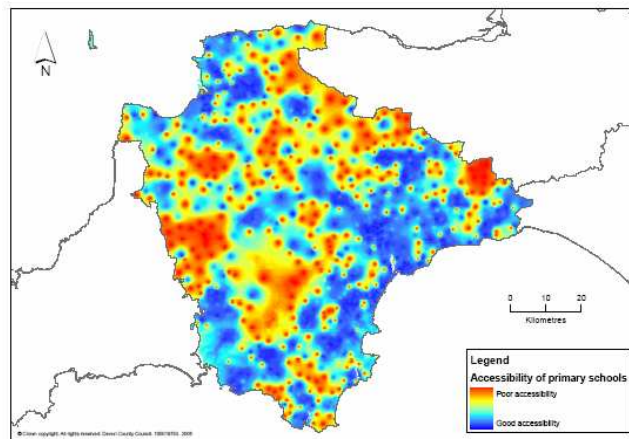
³ It was decided that the best destination to use for access to 'healthy affordable food' was supermarkets.

⁴ Specifying a work or 'employment' destination is difficult for a countywide analysis, therefore access to the nearest major urban centre was considered to be the most appropriate measure of accessibility to employment opportunities.

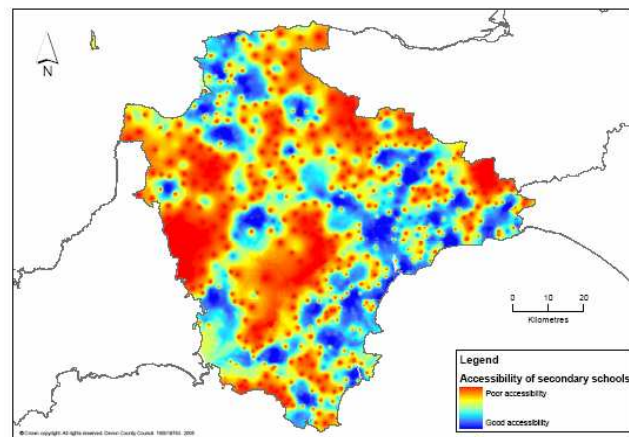
topography, community, voluntary and privately-run bus services and the prerequisite for an origin and a destination.

The resulting maps (see below) highlighted areas of Devon with poor public transport accessibility to key journey destinations in terms of journey time. This enabled the identification of priority areas and groups for local accessibility assessments to focus on.

Access to Primary Schools by Public Transport



Access to Secondary Schools by Public Transport



4.1.2 Reviewing Corporate Policies, Plans and Programmes

At this stage, a review was undertaken of the County Council's existing strategies, policies and plans (see Table Below) to ensure that the accessibility planning work for the Local Transport Plan had a robust evidence base and was integrated with the authority's wider vision and objectives.

The main strategies assessed were:

- ❖ The Devon Strategic Partnership's [Devon Community Strategy](#)
- ❖ The Devon Strategic Partnership's [Devon Rural Strategy](#),
- ❖ Devon County Council's Revised Strategic Plan,
- ❖ [Devon Local Area Agreement](#)
- ❖ Devon Local Public Service Agreement 2 (2005-8).

<i>Strategy/Plan</i>	<i>Accessibility Targets and Priorities</i>
<i>Devon County Council Strategic Plan (2006-2011)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling traffic congestion and improving public transport • Develop more healthy and safe alternatives to car travel • Improve access to cultural attractions • 1.6 million more local journeys by bus and train by 2008
<i>Devon Rural Strategy (2003)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring access for all sectors of society to key services and facilities • Developing an acceptable 'blueprint' to ensure all rural communities can access a target range of services and facilities • Developing public and community transport solutions
<i>Devon Local Area Agreement (2005-2008)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving older people easier access to the services and facilities they need to enjoy a good quality of life • Develop a consistent needs-based approach to commissioning transport • Improving the physical and mental health of Devon's adult population
<i>Local Public Service Agreement (2005-2008)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting independence and choice for older people and those with disabilities • Improved school attendance
<i>Devon Community Strategy (2004)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting access to learning in rural areas and for older learners • Improve transport accessibility in rural areas • Improve access to vocational learning opportunities in rural Devon • Ensure all rural communities have access to a target range of facilities and services
<i>Devon Structure Plan (2001-2016)</i>	<p>Policy TR2 – Patterns of land use, in terms of its mix, location, density and layout should reduce the need to travel and optimise the potential for the most sustainable forms of travel</p> <p>Policy TR3 – Travel demand will be managed so as to minimise unnecessary travel, make the most effective use of transport networks and promote the use of sustainable travel modes</p>

4.2 Stage 2: Local Accessibility Assessments

4.2.1 Choosing Local Priority Action Areas

An analysis of the strategic accessibility maps identified several areas that experienced significant difficulties in terms of access by public transport to health, education and employment opportunities. These 'action areas' formed the subject of more detailed local mapping. The strategic maps were used to achieve a consensus with the various partnerships regarding the priority action areas for the LTP's accessibility planning work.

Where possible these Priority Action Areas were linked to the Devon Strategic Partnership's seven "targeted communities". This ensured high levels of integration between social exclusion and transport targets in developing accessibility planning for the Local Transport Plan. The list of priority communities is based on an updated profile of poverty and disadvantage in Devon, including analysis of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation from 2000 and 2004. Targeted communities in the first phase include wards of Ilfracombe, Barnstaple, Exeter, Teignmouth, Bideford, Princetown and Rural Torridge. The aim is that by 2014, no community in Devon features in the most disadvantaged quartile nationally.

The initial Priority Action Areas for the LTP are:

- Rural Torridge
- Princetown
- Ilfracombe / Bratton Fleming / Combe Martin⁵
- East Devon-Somerset border

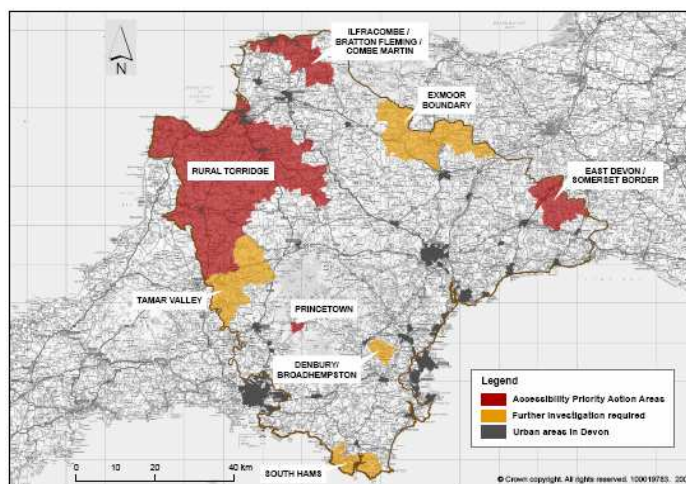
In accordance with our aspiration of seeing accessibility planning as a process rather than a 'task-and-finish' project, the strategic accessibility mapping identified several other areas which will be considered for local accessibility assessments during and beyond the LTP period:

- South Hams
- Exmoor Boundary
- Tamar Valley
- Denbury / Broadhempston

The priority actions areas thus ensured a widespread geographic coverage throughout Devon (see map below). The relevant CCSOs for each of the identified areas were contacted following the strategic mapping to communicate to local partners throughout Devon their role in improving accessibility to key journey destinations in their local area.

⁵ Ilfracombe-Combe Martin-Bratton Fleming is the subject of a national management pathfinder programme.

Priority Action Areas for Accessibility Planning:



4.2.2 Programme for Developing Action Plans

Following this process of marrying social exclusion data with the strategic mapping outcomes, the programme* for the Priority Action Areas is:

Action Area	Local Mapping	Completion of Local Accessibility Action Plan
Rural Torridge	January 2006	August 2006
Princetown	September 2006	March 2007
Ilfracombe / Bratton Fleming / Combe Martin	April 2007	November 2007
East Devon-Somerset border	December 2007	July 2008
South Hams	August 2008	March 2009
Exmoor Boundary	April 2009	November 2009
Tamar Valley	December 2009	July 2010
Denbury / Broadhempston	August 2010	March 2011

*[*Note: The programme remains indicative prior to further consultation with all partners on the most appropriate timetable for the development of action plans]*

Provisional allocations have been made within the Towns, Villages and Rural Communities Programme to progress any capital transport schemes that may be identified through the Priority Area Action Plans.

4.2.3 Gathering An Evidence Base For Devon's Priority Action Areas

Rural Torridge and Princetown were chosen as the first two priority actions areas to develop specific accessibility action plans for, linking with the Devon Local Area Agreement's challenge of improving transport accessibility in rural areas. These two rural areas already have well-established local partnerships that consider access to services as a local priority, they are among the seven targeted communities, and emerged from the strategic mapping as two areas with significant problems in terms of access to key journey destinations by public transport.

The County Council's Social Inclusion Unit provided an evidence base of key issues facing residents in Rural Torridge and Princetown.

General Topic	Detailed Criteria	Key Areas			
		Rural Torridge	Princetown	Devon	England
Population	% of People Aged 5-24 yrs within population	21.7%	27.0%	22%	25.2%
	% of People aged 65+	20.3	13.7%	22.8%	15.8%
Economy & Employment	Unemployment	4.2%	9.2%	3.9%	5.0%
	Economically Active Population	64.4%	43.2%	65.3%	66.9%
	Income Less than £15,000	27.2%	25.1%	29.0%	No data
Skills & Learning	% of People (16-74 yrs) with no qualifications	30.8%	39.69%	26.65%	28.9%
Health, Care & Wellbeing	% of People (16-74 yrs) who considered health as 'not good'	8.6%	12.1%	8.6%	9.0%
	% of People living with limited long-term illness	18.2%	23.3%	19%	18.2%

The key issues that emerged in Rural Torridge and Princetown are:

Princetown⁸	Rural Torridge⁹
Outmigration of young people	Low educational attainment
Ageing population	Limited educational opportunities
Poor educational attainment	Limited access to employment opportunities
Limited access to employment opportunities	High levels of unemployment
High levels of unemployment	Poor health
Poor health	

⁸ Princetown has approximately 3,000 households

⁹ Rural Torridge has approximately 10,000 households

4.2.4 Accessibility Planning in Princetown

A partnership has already been established in the town of Princetown ('Princetown Partners') to look at key issues facing the local community. At a meeting in October 2005, this partnership decided on 3 key issues that Princetown faced, one of which was access and transport. The result of this meeting was Devon County Council funding towards a Fare Car scheme in Princetown to the neighbouring settlements of Tavistock and Yelverton. The scheme was introduced in November 2005 for a 6 month trial period. The aim is to increase residents' access to Derriford Hospital, Tavistock Community College and to other evening and social activities. Princetown Partners meets every 6 weeks to which a representative of the County Council attends. Devon County Council officers are also involved in monthly youth workshops at Princetown which seek to improve accessibility to journey destinations for young residents and listen to their key access issues and concerns.

Representatives of the Princetown Partners include:

- Police
- Jobcentre Plus
- Local Churches
- Primary Care Trust
- Parish Council
- Dartmoor National Park Authority
- West Devon Borough Council
- Devon County Council
- Local Residents
- Tenants Association

Whilst research into the accessibility issues in Princetown has already begun, there was only time to develop a draft accessibility action plan and conduct local accessibility assessments for Rural Torridge prior to the final Local Transport Plan submission in March 2006 (see Section 6).

4.2.5 Deciding on Priority Groups for Accessibility Planning

"A society can be judged on how it treats its children and older people"
(Phil Woolas and Baroness Kay Andrews, January 2006¹⁰)

Following discussions with local and strategic partners, stakeholders, service providers and analysis of a wide array of evidence (e.g. Devon Community Strategy), it was decided that the priority groups for Devon's accessibility strategy would be the elderly and the young.

¹⁰"A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending Inequalities for Older People", *A Social Exclusion Unit Final Report*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London, January 2006.

The justifications for choosing older people and the young are:

1. Devon Local Area Agreement has 3 key priorities, shared with Central Government, which are:
 - Children and young people
 - Healthier communities and older people
 - Safe and secure communities.
2. Devon Local Area Agreement aims to ensure that older people have easier access to the services and facilities they need and that the physical and mental health of Devon's children and young people is improved.
3. Improving the life chances of children and young people, promoting a healthy and caring Devon and ensuring a 'county for everyone' are goals of the Devon Community Strategy.
4. Devon has proportionally more older people than England and Wales.
5. One of the priorities of the Devon Local Public Service Agreement is promoting independence and choice for older people.
6. Devon County Council's Revised Strategic Plan has 5 priorities which include promoting independence and choice for adults and giving children and young people the best possible start in life.
7. Key issues that the CCSOs and local partners in Rural Torridge and Princetown highlighted were access of the elderly to healthcare and of young people to education opportunities.
8. Research has shown that older people are more reliant than younger people on public transport, that car ownership declines with increasing age and that lack of mobility can prevent older people from participating in social activities¹¹
9. The UK Government's Green Paper ('Youth Matters')¹² stated that it would work to ensure that all young people are given the best chance in life to succeed by making services more integrated, efficient and effective (para 13) and making it easier for young people to access services (para 33).

The Government's Social Exclusion Unit Report¹³ specifically stated that social exclusion can be particularly acute in later life because:

- a) Rare that those excluded in mid-life can break the cycle of exclusion in later life
- b) Impact of key life events (e.g. bereavement) can lead to exclusion in later life
- c) Impact of age discrimination
- d) Failure of services to react to this complexity of exclusion in later life.

¹¹ Office of National Statistics, Social Trends 34

¹² Department for Education and Skills (2005) "Youth Matters" *Youth Green Paper*, HMSO, Norwich.

¹³ "A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending Inequalities for Older People", *A Social Exclusion Unit Final Report*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London, January 2006.

4.2.5 Deciding on Priority Journey Purposes for Accessibility Planning

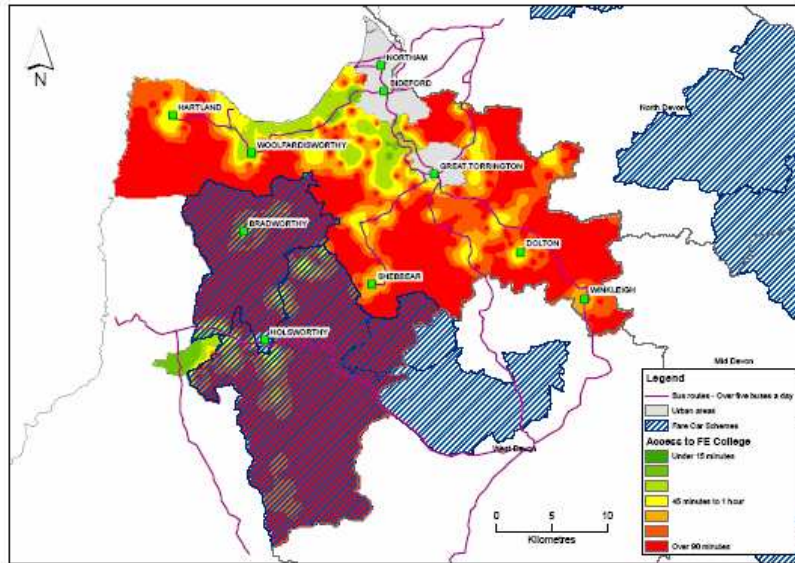
Health and further education were chosen as the two journey purposes that the local accessibility assessments should map access. Links were drawn between older people and healthcare provision and younger people and educational attainment. Health and further education were therefore chosen because:

1. Access to health and further education were the journey destinations considered to have the most significant impact on the quality of life of the two priority groups
2. The strategic mapping showed Rural Torridge and Princetown to suffer from significant problems in accessing acute hospitals by public transport.
3. Access to healthcare and further education opportunities were named by the Labour Government's Social Exclusion Unit Report (February 2003) as among those journey destinations with the greatest impact on life chances.
4. Access to healthcare and further education were the overriding priorities highlighted in discussions with representatives of the Torridge Local Strategic Partnership, CCSOs and the Devon Strategic Partnership's Common Ground Partnership as having a detrimental impact on residents' quality of life and causing people to leave an area.
5. Establishing healthier communities is one of the Devon Local Area Agreement priorities.
6. Improving access to all forms of vocational training in rural Devon is a key action in the Devon Community Strategy.
7. Rural Torridge has the highest proportion of people lacking basic skills in Devon
8. Improving access to further education opportunities directly links to the Devon LPSA 2 priority of improving productivity and skills.

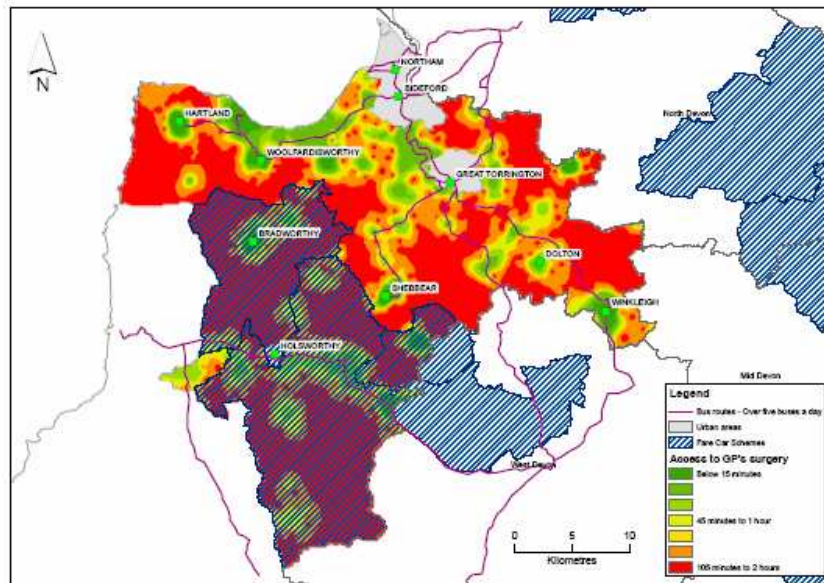
4.2.6 Local Mapping

The Accession mapping software was then used to map local public transport access to healthcare opportunities in the form of General Practitioner (GP) surgeries and further education opportunities in the form of further education establishments from households in Rural Torridge. The detailed mapping enabled specific age group households to be mapped. For Rural Torridge (see Section 6), access maps using Accession were produced for the 65+ age group to GP surgeries and for the 16-24 age group to further education.

Map Showing Public Transport Access to Further Education in Rural Torrington



Map Showing Public Transport Access to GP Surgeries in Rural Torrington



4.3 Stage 3: Option Appraisal

Having identified the specific local priority action areas and groups through the strategic accessibility assessment, it was then necessary to identify key local accessibility problems and consider a range of actions to address them.

[As discussed earlier, this was only carried out for Rural Torridge prior to the LTP submission]

The Government's Social Exclusion Unit Report (February 2003) cited key measures that authorities could use to tackle poor accessibility:

- Improving physical accessibility and availability
- Widening travel horizons
- Safer streets and situations
- Making travel more affordable
- Reducing the need to travel

The maps from the local accessibility assessment were used as a tool to discuss accessibility problems, issues and priorities with various interested partners, in a process called 'option appraisal'. The accessibility planning process ensured that communication had already been established with the LSPs prior to this stage. Option appraisal was carried out with the Social Inclusion Group of the Torridge LSP (see Section 6) at the start of 2006 and a similar process will now be used with the LSPs of the other action areas over the Local Transport Plan period. For each priority area, a range of potential actions, both short and long term and the barriers to their implementation will be considered. The options generally involved taking services to the people or people to the services, the latter demonstrating integration with the government's objective of delivering a full range of services in one place.

4.3.1 Barriers and Resources

A key element of the 'option appraisal' process was an engagement with local partners who understood the local accessibility problems and the barriers to implementing improvements. In particular key considerations to address were:

- Do they contribute to Devon County Council objectives?
- Do they contribute to partner objectives?
- Can they be practically developed and implemented?
- Do they offer best value for money and are resources available?

Potential barriers to accessing transport include:

- » Cost of public transport services
- » Accessibility and availability of public transport
- » Mobility constraints
- » Crime and safety (e.g. unlit bus stops, fear of crime)

A crucial element of this process was examining potential funding sources to ensure that the actions could be delivered and represented value for money.

Potential resources include:

- ❖ Staff availability, skills and capacity
- ❖ Existing and potential budgets
- ❖ Potential income from users of services
- ❖ Voluntary and community sector resources
- ❖ Efficiencies gained from joint working
- ❖ Availability of accessible locations

4.4 Stage 4: Developing Accessibility Action Plans

The 'option appraisal' will lead to a series of locally-appropriate actions for tackling the accessibility problems identified in Rural Torridge. This will then be used to create a detailed, local accessibility 'action plan' for each priority area, as is being progressed in Rural Torridge.

Among the measures that could be introduced in priority action areas are:

- Reducing the cost of travel
- Providing demand-responsive transport (e.g. Fare Car)
- Improving travel information and awareness (e.g. personalised travel planning)
- Co-ordinating the timing of services
- Addressing crime and fear of crime
- Improvements to the physical location and delivery of services
- Providing specialist transport
- Subsidising personal transport

What emerged from the 'option appraisal' in Rural Torridge was consensus that improving accessibility often requires small-scale innovative improvements (e.g. integrating services) rather than providing new transport services. For example, Rural Torridge could look at the example of Nottinghamshire's 'Shop in a Box' where traditional village shops are repackaged into portable buildings that provide a meeting point, IT facility, local products and essential grocery provision in one place.

Each action plan will seek to agree specific schemes for improving local accessibility alongside wider, more fundamental accessibility improvements, such as the incorporation of accessibility planning into the Local Development Framework process, particularly in deciding site specific development allocations. Actions will be prioritised according to those that offer the greatest accessibility improvement or benefit per unit of financial investment and those with stakeholders committed to implementing them.

Each element of the action plan will identify:

1. The Problem
2. Potential Solution/Action
3. Partners to carry the action forward
4. Funding and financial resources
5. Monitoring issues

An appropriate local leader and potential funding source will then be assigned to each action, ensuring that responsibilities for taking actions forward are evenly spread among local partners. This process is still awaiting completion in the case of Rural Torridge. The result will be specific, measurable and locally-appropriate actions that will be amalgamated into a tightly-defined accessibility action plan. The action plan will be sent to representatives of the LSP for their comment and consideration, before it is signed off by all partners. Wherever possible accessibility action plans will be submitted by the partners together.

4.5 Stage 5: Monitoring and Review

The progress being made in terms of improving accessibility across Devon will be measured through the use of challenging indicators and targets, developed in partnership with local communities, stakeholders and service providers.

4.5.1 Establishing A Countywide Accessibility Target

The Provisional Devon Local Transport Plan (2006-11) had two countywide accessibility targets:

- Increasing the % of households in rural Devon, from the 2004/05 baseline, with access to a daily public, community or voluntary transport service.
- Increasing the % of rural households within 30 minutes total travel time of selected key services and facilities by public transport.

As with the original strategic accessibility assessment, these targets and indicators were analysed and reassessed to create a provisional countywide target. Colleagues suggested other targets, which are being progressed primarily through other LTP targets and would not be appropriate accessibility targets. Suggestions included:

- 100% Wheels to Work Coverage
- 100% Ring and Ride Coverage
- Shopmobility schemes in all large towns (i.e. population over 10,000)

The Final Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 includes the target (Target A1):

“Reduce the number of population without access to a town centre by daily public, community or voluntary transport by 15% by 2010/11”

This target is essentially the same as the first target in the provisional plan, but has been altered slightly to take full advantage of the capabilities of Accession, which enables a solid evidence base for calculating and monitoring the target.

In order to determine a realistic 2004/05 baseline figure for the Accessibility target, Accession was used to calculate the number of people without access to a daily public, community or voluntary transport service. The Accession calculations were outputted into ArcGIS so that the data could be manipulated to include Fare Car schemes and therefore produce a figure,

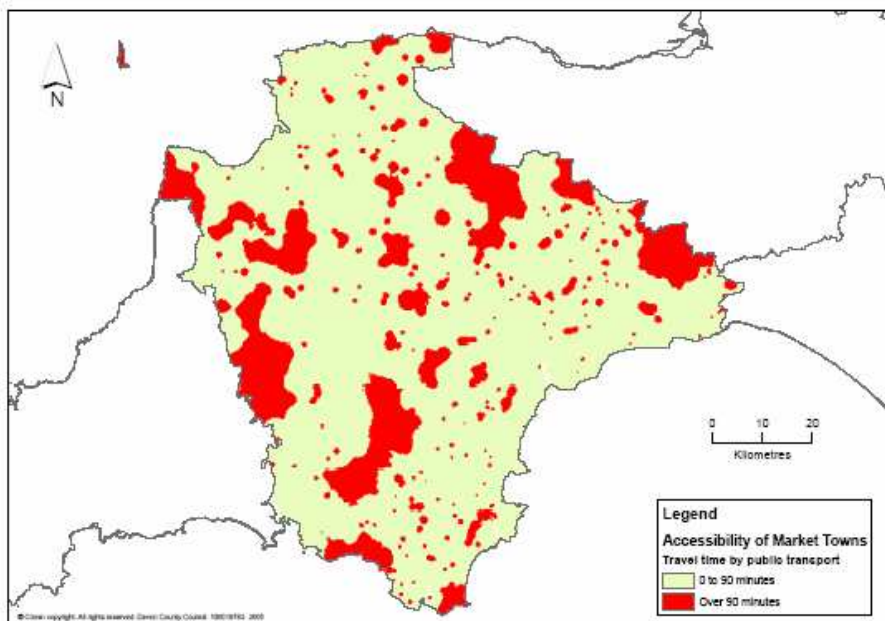
which included *all* daily transport services, including those that are not timetabled or do not have a specific bus stop. The resulting map (see below) enabled a calculation of the 2004/05 baseline figure. Following discussions with those who deal with transport delivery on a daily basis, the map was used to establish a countywide accessibility target for the Local Transport Plan that was both challenging and achievable.

The development of accessibility action plans for each of the accessibility priority action areas will enable the development of local accessibility targets in collaboration with a wide range of partners, including neighbouring transport authorities.

4.5.2 Monitoring and Review

The expertise gained in developing the evidence base for the accessibility planning work for the Local Transport Plan, particularly regarding the Accession mapping software, should facilitate appropriate and quantitative monitoring of countywide and local accessibility targets.

Map showing the 2004/2005 Baseline Data of Access to a Daily Public, Community or Voluntary Transport Service



5. Delivering Accessibility Improvements Throughout The County Council's Work

As well as using the LTP to deliver accessibility improvements, through the use of capital support and the development of accessibility action plans for priority action areas, the County Council is seeking to 'mainstream' accessibility planning in the other work it does.

5.1 Culture and Social Exclusion

Integrating accessibility planning into the County Council's work on culture and social exclusion is already being progressed through the partnership arrangements between the Council's accessibility planning work and the work of the Common Ground Partnership of the Devon Strategic Partnership. At a more local level, it is through communicating with the CCSOs and presentations to LSPs that the council is seeking to ensure that accessibility planning is incorporated into LSPs' social exclusion work and the revised Community Strategies.

5.2 Ongoing and Revenue Support

In terms of ensuring ongoing capital and revenue support for accessibility planning, this is crucial to ensuring ongoing service delivery. The key targets that help in this regard are the council's aspiration of achieving 100% Ring and Ride coverage in Devon, and its ongoing support for community transport schemes through the work of its transport coordination service. These include support for community buses, car schemes, wheels to work, shopmobility and existing fare car schemes. Other ways the council contributes to ongoing support for accessibility planning is its work with the Devon Health Transport Partnership, which involves working on a collaborative basis with Primary Care Trusts to improve people's access to health care appointments, improve the system's efficiency and influence decisions on the location and delivery of services. Similarly Devon County Council also contributes towards meeting accessibility targets through its financial contribution towards supported public transport (e.g. school and social services transport).

5.3 Dealing with the barriers to using transport

The County Council is helping to reduce the barriers to using transport by funding initiatives to identify and reduce barriers to transport. These include the Devon Access Pass, introducing text booking for private hire vehicles and developing linkages with Independent Travel Training to provide improved independence to people with disabilities.

6. Case Studies of Accessibility Planning in Devon

6.1 Developing an Accessibility Action Plan for Rural Torridge

Rural Torridge was chosen as the first local priority action area for accessibility planning in the Devon Local Transport Plan. This rural area was chosen as the pilot because it has a well-established local strategic partnership, is a 'targeted community', and was shown to have significant transport accessibility problems.

The maps that resulted from the strategic and local accessibility assessments were used as a tool to debate the key accessibility problems in Rural Torridge with representatives of the Social Inclusion Group of the Torridge LSP, in the process of 'option appraisal'. Local evidence was examined in Rural Torridge to provide a firm foundation for the debate, especially the Torridge Community Strategy ('Working Together'). Different partners in the Torridge LSP highlighted key access problems for residents of Rural Torridge, and were then encouraged to examine potential short and long term actions to resolve the identified issues in a question and answer session.

Among the organisations represented were:

- Healthcare
- Jobcentre Plus
- Religious and Faith Groups
- Job Centre Plus
- Emergency Services
- Torridge District Council
- Devon County Council
- Community Transport Association

This interactive discussion led to several highly innovative, locally-appropriate actions for tackling Rural Torridge's accessibility problems. It was agreed that all partners would need to help with funding and financial resources and delivering actions in order to make the accessibility action plan a success. These were then prioritised with local partners and representatives of Devon County Council, according to various criteria (e.g. funding) and worked into a tightly-defined accessibility action plan for Rural Torridge (see below).

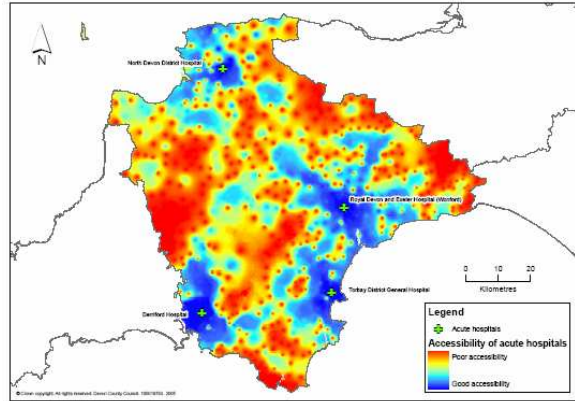
The action plan is only a draft; such was the consultative nature of this work. The next stage will be to assign an appropriate local leader and funding source for each action in the plan and to agree this with various partners. When finalised, this plan will act as a pilot to establish a common approach to producing accessibility action plans across Devon.

Issues, Solutions and Potential Partners in the Rural Torridge Accessibility Action Plan

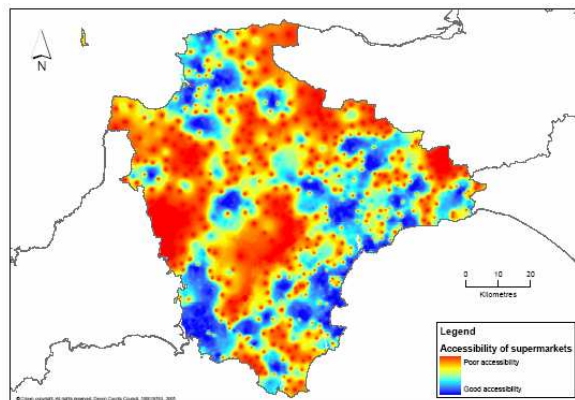
Issue	Solution	Potential Partners
Access to out-of-school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demand responsive transport (e.g. Fare Car) - Integrate transport provision with extended schools programme - Sponsored bus (e.g. Ilfracombe/Bratton Fleming/Combe Martin Pathfinder programme) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community & Voluntary Transport (CVT) ▪ Devon County Council [DCC] (Transport & Education) ▪ Schools
Poor access to adult education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigate potential for bringing services to village centres - More flexible service provision - More flexible use of community/village centres - Greater travel awareness/information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Council for Devon ▪ Torridge District Council ▪ DCC
Access to Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Car Sharing - Workplace Travel Plans - Wheels to Work - Travel Discounts - Better coordination of timing of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employers/ Businesses ▪ DCC ▪ JobCentre Plus ▪ CVT
Seeking employment – a misconception that you need to access JobCentre Plus to access employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information dissemination/travel awareness to targeted groups - Internet access provided at neighbourhood hubs/community centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connexions ▪ JobCentre Plus ▪ DCC (Transport & Economy) ▪ Service Providers
Spatial Planning – new developments located away from sustainable transportation links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence local planning authorities through the Local Development Framework [LDF] process - Influence Development Control process (e.g. Section 106 Agreements) to ensure the development of sustainable and secure communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Torridge District Council ▪ DCC ▪ Developers
Access to food shopping by older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internet shopping – provide volunteer assistance - Planning process – easily accessible developments - Shopmobility - Demand responsive, individualised transport (e.g. Ring & Ride) - Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supermarkets ▪ Volunteering bureau ▪ DCC ▪ Police ▪ CVT

7. Other Strategic Accessibility Mapping Results Using Accession

Access to Acute Hospitals by Public Transport



Access to Supermarkets by Public Transport



Access to Urban Centres by Public Transport

