

First Devon and Cornwall

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Key Issues Highlighted:-

- 1. Benefits of Buses**
 - Reduced urban congestion
 - Links communities especially in the rural environment.
 - Addresses social inclusion
- 2. Costs**

Costs of running the buses are increasing.
- 3. Rates of Pay and Benefits**
 - Amount / quality of training is increasing incurring extra cost.
 - Insurance premiums increasing.
 - Fixed overheads are increasing e.g. Fuel tax increasing.
- 4. Bus Subsidy**
 - Imbalance against rail subsidy.
 - If subsidies do not meet rising costs services will be lost.
 - Looking to get best value services

Recommendations For The Next DLTP (2006-2011)

- 1. Quality Partnerships**

To achieve the most effective bus service First supports the development of Bus Quality Partnerships.
- 2. Sustainable**

Future services must be sustainable. Capital funding should not be directed towards new routes that can't sustain themselves in the long-term.
- 3. Investment**

Investment for the future includes joint funding and capital schemes.
- 4. Competition**

Devon must continue to have competition as with a monopoly bus service costs can spiral.
- 5. Contracts**

The contract between local authority and bus companies needs developing further it needs to incorporate higher quality customer service and ensure CRB inspection is standard expectation. Guaranteed standards of the drivers should be established through qualifications E.g. NVQ – guaranteed standard of service provision.
- 6. Contractual Management**

Devon County Council needs improved contractual management. A greater dialogue is needed, sharing solutions.
- 7. Innovation**

Need to look at innovative schemes to ensure appropriate cost-effective services are being offered. This could include further investigation of demand responsive schemes.
- 8. Political Agenda**

Buses need to be higher on the political agenda. 70 % of public transport is provided by bus yet it only receives one third of the subsidy that rail does.
- 9. Real-Time Information**

Should be implemented as far as possible. It gives customers more knowledge about what's going on, uncertainty is a major deterrent for many potential users.
- 10. Easy access**

Must be an easy access network

DEVON LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN – 2006-2011

11. Smart Cards

Smart cards have great potential and should be developed further.

12. Work Together

Industry and local authorities working together

Handouts

The following handouts were issued to support this paper:-

Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

Panel Discussion:-

- Management structure for Devon for 2011
- In the future First Devon and Cornwall needs to work with Devon County Council to look at particular routes to ensure they are sustainable and appropriate.
- Currently North Devon Buses are successful and making a return. This is due to appropriate investment in the past in this area (Includes civil infrastructure and a bus priority scheme). There has also been a joint focus in this area, which has resulted in overall increase in numbers using the buses in this area.
- Congestion charging should be considered particularly in Exeter. Light rail is not recommended as the cost are too high. Lower capital schemes and a guidance bus system is worth considering in the future.
- First Devon and Cornwall and Devon County Council need to look at the buses in South Hams. There are a number of issues in this area.
 - Area requires greater investment – better bus stops and real time buses.
 - Poor image - many people just don't see them as a viable option.
 - Need to understand the market- need to target A379 to Plymouth
 - Frequency of buses – There are no buses after a certain time in the evening. This deters the potential commuter market.
 - Need better links with Plymouth hospital
- Regarding bus transport in the new community an intercept strategy is required. The A379 requires a high frequency, good quality, bus service and a high quality Park & Ride service.
- First Devon and Cornwall experience competition from companies such as Stagecoach. First Devon therefore need to maintain / raise standards in order to compete with the competition.
- The main priorities for the next DLTP from the perspective of the bus operator centres on the Council vision of Devons' buses in 2016.
- The plan should incorporate this vision and identify the challenges in achieving this. Solutions should also be included within the Plan on how these challenges can be over come.