

Transport Workshop

Leads:

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Stuart opened the workshop with a short presentation taken from his involvement in Transport research. He explained that the research was taken from all types of transport not just buses and trains but included car travel and people still using to get about by walking. The presentation will be available to supplement the feedback from the workshop.

Following the presentation it was then open to discussion which highlighted how important transport is especially for our vulnerable members of the community. I make no excuses for saying all were passionate and deeply concerned about the increasing costs, the reduction in services which creates for many a life of isolation and above all the transport providers more interested in commercial success rather than more thought of service provision. There were a number issues and concerns and they were as follows:

- ✚ Good access to services for rural areas for so that communities remain connected and some considerations, for there to be a national standard of equality of provision no matter where you live. There should be serious consideration for more statutory government regulation
- ✚ Lack of transport for older people has an adverse effect on the economy both nationally and especially locally. In the present economic difficulties we need our communities to be supporting local businesses, which is very difficult if the customers cannot get to the shopping centres. It is also important to make sure transport remembers to link services to mobility
- ✚ There are now statistics available that indicate older people are retaining their personal car use for much longer which is fine but the problem is when the time arrives for whatever reason, they are no longer able to drive and have to rely on alternative means transport. This can create a real problem in rural areas if there is no alternative.
- ✚ Conventional transport provision appears to be of different standards across the region which indicates there should be more effort into the consideration of better integration by providers
- ✚ Responsive transport is now becoming a real difficulty as the costs against income have become a priority. This means of course less provision unless those who are unable to use an alternative are prepared to pay the real cost. It is not all gloom as there is a voluntary group in Liverpool who provides this service and from one vehicle some years ago they now operate seven vehicles. The success has been enabled by the use of voluntary drivers. There are surely lessons to be learned from this success.
- ✚ Risk factor, this was an important point made on the basis that as we get older we may decide to move home for one final time in our lives. This could be downsizing, going back to ones original area (back home as they say). How many consider the possibility of living with the risk of choosing a nice quiet rural area then discovering in a short time you have no car usage and yes shock horror there is no alternative transport. Suddenly you have joined the ranks of the socially

isolated. There is surely a need to make older people aware of the risk in these well meant circumstances it really is food for thought.

The workshop I am sure could have gone on for a lot longer and as is the case at events like this time is always never long enough, that said it was a very good workshop with important contributions from most attendee's. The points highlighted hopefully give a flavour of the contributions and concerns made. Yes we are living in difficult times financially but that is not and should not be an excuse not to constantly revise the mobility of older people who rely on others to allow them to be free from isolation. For our part we must encourage our local community and the local groups to become more engaged when the opportunity arrives. If there does not appear to be the opportunity then we must all make that possible by pressing local authorities themselves to have more meaningful engagement. This was a very workshop from Stuarts and my own perspective and also very grateful to be given the opportunity.

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