COMMUNITY TRANSPORT INQUIRY
WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEERING SERVICES
WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Main Point I: Urban versus Rural

West Dunbartonshire is more often than not placed in an urban setting by policy makers and strategists; nevertheless this view which is replicated in similar communities across Scotland distorts the suburban reality of our communities where large percentages of population live in residential districts less akin to urban tenemental communities found in cities such as Glasgow, and Edinburgh. This raises issues around

- Distance to public services such as health and education
- Distance to commercial services such as retail
- Distance to bus stops in suburban districts
- Percentages of properties with access problems such as front and back door properties with non-traditional steps and gardens
- Geographies – bound by urban and rural areas in which some services are accessed

Main Point II: Need versus Perception

Various geographic and thematic communities have a perception of need that is seldom monitored or evaluated which in itself can cause issues impacting service delivery. There is a need to improve our understanding of existing services and critically customer needs;

- Improve knowledge of customer needs
- Target those most in need, for example those with complex needs and most isolated from the wider community e.g. proximity to Glasgow & Paisley hospital provision by mile but not reflected in potential transport arrangements
- Defined eligibility criteria
- Reduce duplicated services
- Improve co-ordinated support

Main Point III: Voluntary versus Public Sector

Through the Public Service Reform agenda various organisations and individuals have sought to enhance the role of the 3rd Sector in delivering Community Transport, more often than not the most successful delivery
agents of this type target the traditional market of older clients and NHS contracts.

With an ever changing public service framework greater work needs to be undertaken to ensure

- Realistic partnerships between the public sector transport authorities and 3rd sector based on openness and a willingness to meet customer needs
- Acceptance of the changing demography of community transport needs; today’s customers will be very different from tomorrows
- Role of technology in driving down costs
- Role of volunteers in governance is fit for purpose
- Role of volunteers in service delivery is seen as a addition to public delivery rather than a threat
- Diversification of markets to allow Community Transport Associations to compete on a level playing field
- Need to realistically subsidises - if commercial can’t make it pay why would we think that Community transport could?

Main Point IV: Social versus Community

Social transport services in local authority areas are delivered by social work and Community Health Partnerships often confused with the Community Transport model.

More often than not social transport provision covers a gambit of delivery options such as delivery to individuals and voluntary organisations from local government budgets including CT. Nevertheless, with declining budgets and rationalisation based on need local authorities and health boards are moving to a more needs based approach allowing community transport to be viewed as a possible vehicle to positively re-asses provision of transport services. This raises various questions on;

- Cleary evidenced and needed
- Political will or community ambition / aspiration
- Public sector or 3rd Sector delivery

To ensure a robust defence of Community Transport and ensure a diverse delivery model across our communities it is critical that any changes to policy or support ensure

- Evidence based approach to transport need
- Services based on customer needs
- Flexibility in approach to service delivery
- Agreed co-ordination through Community Health & Care Partnerships or where they do not exist use of existing partnerships
- Services monitored and evaluated on a national standard

West Dunbartonshire Community and Volunteering Services
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