

## **Devon Sustainable Community Strategy**

### **Initial Assessment of Accessibility and Transport Implications on Key Themes** *Compiled by Bruce Thompson, Devon County Council*

Accessibility and transport are not currently being identified as themes in their own right. Rather, this is a key cross-cutting issue that should permeate all the other themes and that needs to be properly reflected in their specific priorities. An initial gap analysis has identified the following issues under each of the themes (this is very much work in progress):

#### **Stronger Communities/ Economy/ Inequalities**

Accessibility to services; reducing barriers to travel and transport; enabling people from all sectors of society to have access to work and essential services in all communities including in rural areas.

#### **Safer Devon**

The link between fear of crime and how it acts as a barrier to using public transport.

#### **Housing**

The need to link the locations of social housing and the provision of adequate transport. With employment areas becoming increasingly dispersed away from town centres, and work patterns becoming increasingly 24 hour/ 7 days/ week, a necessary element in working to break limited employment expectations or the cycle of non-employment is to make work accessible to those areas through an effective public transport network.

#### **Stronger Communities**

Transport is an essential feature of viable and vibrant communities, to enable all in the community to have access to essential services. For those who have the most difficulty (those who do not drive or without access to a car), access is of a high priority in order to address social inequalities.

#### **Children & Younger People**

The need for more flexible transport (public transport) to enable them to make use of the 14-19 curriculum and extended schools etc. Also, the contribution of public transport to giving them independence and quality of life.

#### **Older people**

There is a clear link between the quality of life of older people and their ability to access public transport. As people get older there are more likely to: (a) no longer driver, (b) need more health care etc., (c) have reduced quality of life; transport and access becomes an increasingly important issue with advancing age.

#### **Environment and Energy**

There is a clear link between green fuels for the public at petrol stations and DCC green policies; DCC needs to advocate with major petrol and supermarket companies that all Devon petrol stations have green fuel pumps by 2009.

#### **Health**

The ability to travel to hospitals and other health outlets is essential to all. Currently health care is more available to those with cars than those without cars, and therefore there is an inequality for those who do not have access to a car – often the most vulnerable in society or those who need good access most. Therefore there is a strong link between Transport and Access to health care, and the health and wellbeing of people. Access to health services is also a preventative issue (a) as poorer ability to get to health outlets = later intervention in the event of chronic conditions; (b) in terms of wellbeing and mental health.

#### **Culture**

Improving access to cultural activities; public transport is key in involving those who tend to be less involved in cultural activities.

#### **Summary**

Transport & access is a key element of success in achieving our aims on all the above themes. Without improvements in transport & access, the problems of inequalities and lack of prevention will remain. Partnerships play a key role in making real improvements to transport and access; real

opportunities exist, given the will, to improve access and achieve real benefit in relation to all the above themes.

Key Issues arising from this analysis are a need to achieve real improvements in:

- Access to health services – through strengthening existing partnership working
- Access to Employment through building a partnership approach with employment agencies
- Rural access and public transport
- Enabling young people to access public transport for education, employment and social needs.