

Dynamics of Community Transport in Cumbria

Exploring Future Opportunities
and Best Practice

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Loughborough University, on Industry Placement at:
ACTion with Communities in Cumbria**

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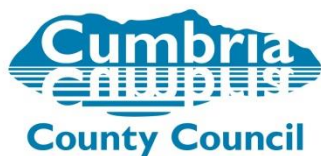
ACTion with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) is the community development organisation and Rural Community Council for Cumbria. The organisation champions community and rural issues, with a wide-range of resources available for voluntary and community organisations. This includes written and video case studies of community projects and guidance on community engagement, community planning, governance, business planning, funding and running community buildings. For more information please contact:

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- Burton/Holme Voluntary Car Schemes – Peter Smith
- Alston Moor Community Transport – Sue Gilbertson

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1. Executive Summary

The aim of this report is to identify the current dynamics of community transport (CT) and explore the future opportunities and best practice that could be utilised through all areas in Cumbria.

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria has worked with a number of different organisations and CT groups to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the CT currently in place.

To achieve this numerous CT Groups across Cumbria have been visited and interviewed to gain an understanding of what works well and where improvement could be made.

Surveys have also been completed with members of the public living in the local communities to gauge their current feelings and expectations of CT

External factors such as the rural locations, ageing population, weather and employment have also been taken into account.

It is evident that successful community transport schemes take place throughout Cumbria. Successful schemes should be shared with other areas so they can be considered and possibly adopted.

Publicity would also be beneficial as surveys show lack of public awareness:

The Travel Needs Survey that took place in April 2018 evidenced that 83% of Millom respondents were unaware of CT and 51% were interested in learning more about the options and opportunities available to them.

1. There needs to be better advertisement as to what is available:

- (a) Social media – Facebook page to target the younger and/or more IT generation;
- (b) Hospitals and other medical services to promote the local CT services;
- (c) Leisure facilities and education networks to promote the local CT services;
- (d) Transport Groups, CCC, Parish and Town Councils to share best practice of successful schemes.

2. Introduction

Purpose of the report

This study has been funded by Cumbria County Council and commissioned by ACTion with Communities in Cumbria to investigate the current arrangement of CT in Cumbria. The study will demonstrate the range of CT, highlighting the key issues and challenges, exploring future opportunities whilst promoting best practice.

Organised CT has the potential to address important public issues such as rural accessibility to essential services. The study will recommended cost effective opportunities and best practice that could integrate CT with local needs and services to reduce concerns such as social isolation, deprivation and unemployment.

Key words: CT, challenges, opportunities, rural accessibility to essential services, local needs and social isolation.

Structure of the Report

The project method is outlined below:

Chapter 1 – Executive Summary

Chapter 2 – Introduction

Chapter 3 – Literature Review

Chapter 4 - Context

Chapter 5 – Key Issues and Challenges

Chapter 6 – Opportunities

Chapter 7 – Best Practice

Chapter 8 – Recommendations

3. Literature Review

Social scientific studies of transport and concerns over transport needs have been abundant over the past decade. Literature confirms there has been considerable interest in third sector trends, local geography, rural deprivation, communities and social isolation. Key issues and challenges have been evidenced in the UK and are now focused, in Cumbria.

Nearly 10 million of the UK population live in areas of England defined as rural. Gov.uk defines rural areas using the rural urban classification, *“the classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlement with more than 10,000 resident populations”* (Gov.uk 2014).

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) is the community development organisation and Rural Community Council for Cumbria. Their key focus is championing community and rural issues:

“We support communities to plan for their future, develop projects, work with others, and influence and change policy.

We are active in rural areas among communities affected by disadvantage whether this is economic, social or physical.

We provide practical advice and support, deliver training, and offer independent facilitation” (Cumbriaaction.org.uk 2018).

Working with ACT during my placement year, I have been made aware of the challenges rural communities face on a daily basis and personally discussed these with locals who are affected.

While researching into transport and mobility needs in rural communities and the service provision available, a variety of key themes were made abundantly clear. The literature displays a variety of different arguments towards transport provision, services available and the mobility needs of those in rural communities. It is recognised amongst literature that the relationship between rural areas and service provision has evolved from much broader theoretical concepts developed in response to the new emerging social agenda.

Gray, Shaw and Farrington 2006 link the concept of social capital with mobility and social exclusion. In addition Lucas 2012 makes the connection between transport and social exclusion, and Urry highlights the relationship between mobility and the increasingly dispersed social capital and networks. Sheller and Urry, 2006 argue how issues of ‘mobility’ are centre stage in human geography and transport.

4. Context

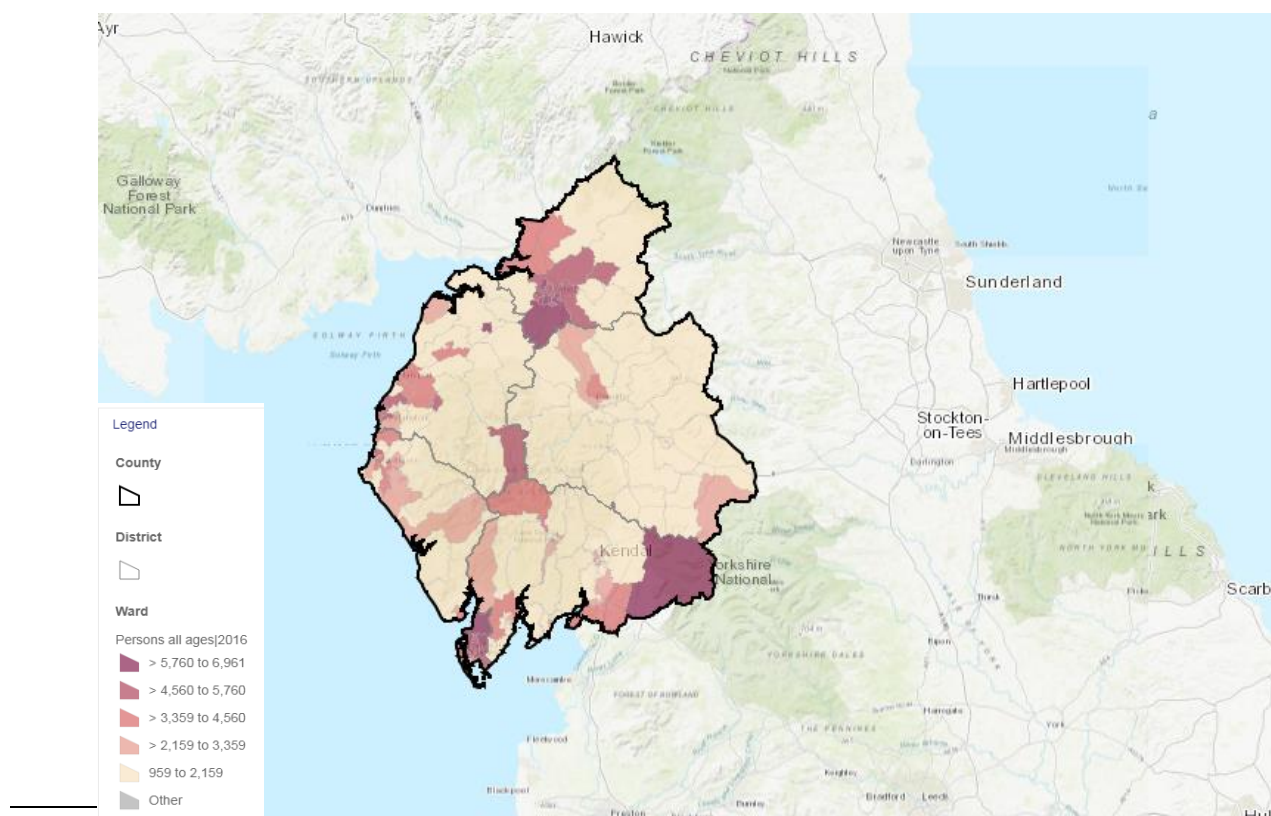
Setting the Scene

Geography

Cumbria is located in the North West of England. The area is bounded to the North by the Scottish council areas of Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish borders, to the West by the Irish Sea, to the South by Lancashire, to the South East by North Yorkshire, and to the East by County Durham and Northumberland. The County consists of six districts; Carlisle, Eden, South Lakeland, Barrow, Copeland and Allerdale. Cumbria is predominantly rural and considered one of England's most outstanding areas of natural beauty, containing two World Heritage Sites; The Lake District National Park, part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Hadrian's Wall. The county's landscape varies greatly and is extremely diverse ranging from mountains, lakes, moorland, lowlands, valleys and coastal plains.

Maps of the Area

Figure 1 – Cumbria county border, district borders and distribution of the population.¹



¹ Source: Cumbria Observatory – Population

Population

The county is mainly rural and sparsely populated; the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimated that in MID-2016, Cumbria's population was approximately 500,000. It is estimated that 49.3% of the population are male and the remaining female. Females have a 3.8 year longer life expectancy (2013 – 15). Cumbria's population is 98.5% White British. Cumbria has areas that are significantly more built up and populated than others; Carlisle is the largest centre of the population, followed by Kendal and Barrow.²

A defining characteristic of Cumbria's demographic structure is its 'super-ageing' population. Allerdale, Eden and South Lakeland have the smallest proportions of the younger demographic and the largest of the oldest. Recent demographic trends suggest that Cumbria's population of 0-65 year olds will continue to decrease proportionately in comparison to the increasing number of residents aged over 65.

"Cumbria's population is ageing rapidly, particularly in rural areas. Since 2003, the number of residents over 65 has increased by over 20%, a faster increase than the national average of 17 %".³

This is as a result of increased life expectancy and demographic trends; people are living longer, shown in Figure 2. These trends also represent the older, more affluent people that are moving into the county for retirement and an improved quality of life. The younger generation is moving away to seek different lifestyles, further education, employment and housing opportunities.

"These trends are projected to continue at least until 2029 due to continued migration and increasing longevity".⁴

With an ageing demographic comes the increase in health and disability issues. Along with Cumbria's ageing population being higher than the national average, so are the numbers of people affected by ill health or a disability. This reflects the positive correlation between an ageing demographic and well-being. Ill health and disability can restrict an individual's mobility leading to social exclusion. Elderly residents living in rural, more isolated areas face further challenges trying to access basic health services and facilities.

"Within Cumbria the challenges faced by our communities to age well vary between the rural and built environment. Connectivity to services in rural areas is a challenge. In rural

² Cumbria Observatory – Population

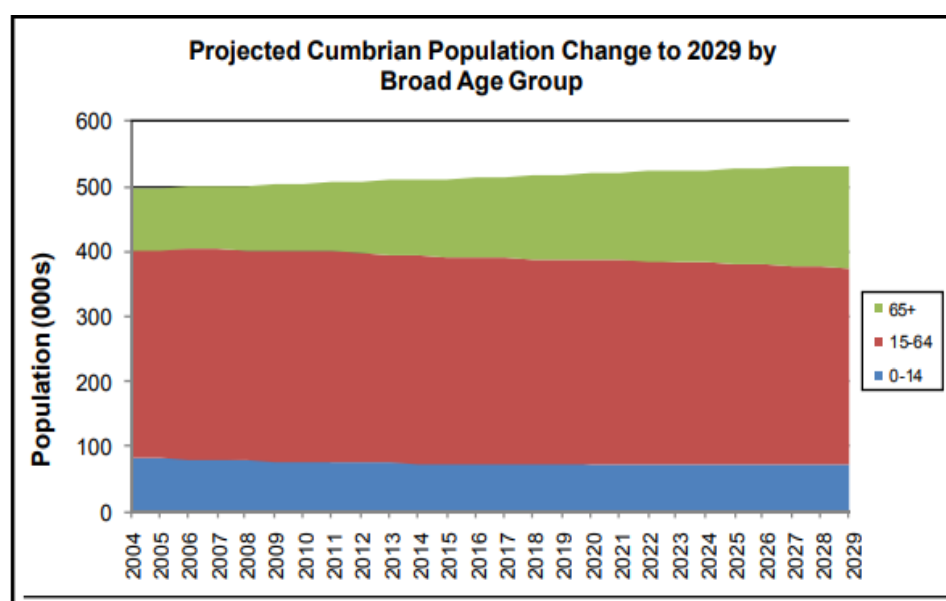
³ Cumbria Observatory – Population

⁴ Cumbria Economic Strategy (2009-2019)

areas older resident, particularly those who have lived in an area for some time, rely initially on informal community networks (DEFRA 2013 Rural Ageing Research Summary Report Findings)”.⁵

With public transport being cut over the recent years, elderly residents have become more reliant on friends and families to take them to regular health appointments. This suggests a need for different transport options across Cumbria, including a more robust and consistent approach to CT.

Figure 2 – Cumbrian population change projections 2004-2029, ONS Sub-national population projections.



Deprivation and Unemployment

“Home to The Lake District, flanked by the Pennines and with mile-upon-mile of stunning coastline, nowhere else in England boasts such a rich variety of inspirational and exhilarating landscapes. Despite the obvious beauty of the county, Cumbria faces a range of underlying economic challenges that arise partly from the geography and history of the county, and partly from the many external factors that have had a negative impact over the past two decades; 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak, competition from low-cost airlines and global tourism, the decline of traditional manufacturing industries, steelworks, mining and the decommissioning of Sellafield nuclear site”.⁶

⁵Cumbria JSNA – Older People Topic Summary

⁶ Cumbria Economic Strategy (2009-2019)

The west of Cumbria is known for its history in heavy industry. The decline over the years has a lasting effect on the local economies and left a legacy of unemployment leading to the intergeneration of poor health and education. As detailed in Cumbria Children and Young People's Plan 2016- 19:

"Cumbria's population is ageing faster than most of England, and a high number of young people leaving the county to find education and work. Parts of Cumbria also have experienced long term economic decline and have high rates of child poverty".⁷

There is evidence that the younger generation are moving away for more economic opportunities, health services and education. The out-migration of young people needs to be reduced, Cumbria needs to attract and retain the skilled and talented. Cumbria University makes this point; the University was originally set up for Cumbrians to stay in the area and go to university. Research also proves there is a value in young cumbrians leaving and returning in their 30s.

"Dealing with those material processes first, critical research has drawn attention to the material realities of social exclusion which systemically work at many levels to hinder the life chances of some young people and affect their ability to leave or stay in rural places like the Northern Fells. Shucksmith (2004) identifies the following key systems of social exclusion: Private; State; Voluntary; Family and friend networks".⁸

The tourism based economy in the East has provided seasonal and part time jobs, coupled with low wages. This has resulted in local people struggling to gain affordable housing. North of the county has pockets of deprivation suffering from the decline of the manufacturing industry and availability of local services. Previous researchers have stated that there is a need to tackle the pockets of deprivation in Cumbria and improve the quality of life. This could be ameliorated to some extent by improving transport links in order to overcome the geographical barriers and isolation.

⁷ Cumbria Young People's and Children Plan (2016-2019)

⁸ Cumbria Young People's and Children Plan (2016-2019)

Access to Essential Services

Figure 3 – Rail and bus routes in Cumbria⁹



⁹ Source: Cumbria County Council – Travel Map (accessed 19 February 2018)

Public transport continues to decline in Cumbria, with towns and parishes such as Millom in South Copeland, losing all commercial registered bus routes. These reductions affect the more vulnerable populations such as the elderly and young people disproportionately as they rely heavily on public transport.

Transport is regarded as a critical service to ensure that patients and service users can access health and social care when needed. A new health initiative, The Success Regime, was announced by the Secretary of State in June 2015. This programme focused on delivering a sustainable health care system for the future with the national initiative to support health and care systems which have faced significant and sustained challenges. *“There are a number of key challenges across the West, North and East of Cumbria that highlights the particular importance of transport locally including:*

- *Distance and accessibility from home and between key healthcare sites;*
- *Lack of motorways or strategic road network;*
- *Access to public transport;*
- *Rural settings; and*
- *A ‘Super-ageing’ population*

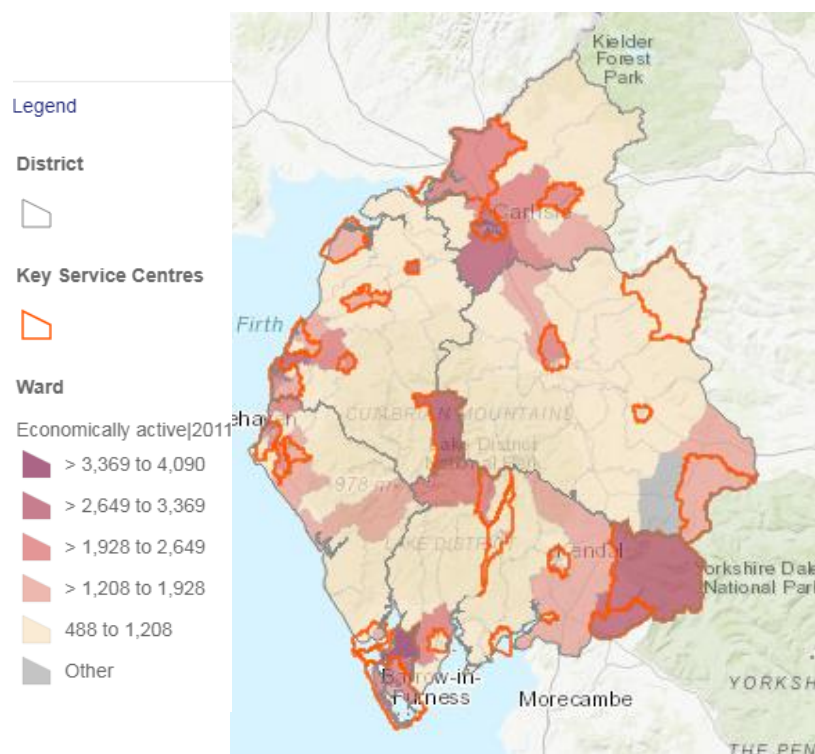
The Success Regime Transport & Enabling Group are of the opinion that consideration should be given to transport in its broader sense, with services such as public transport, CT, transport in the community, patient transport services and car parking policy having as much priority as paramedic ambulance provision”.¹⁰

The programme has finished and the Success Regime care at a distance Group is now embedded in the Sustainable Transformation Plan (STP's).

¹⁰ Success Regime – Non-Emergency Transport to Healthcare Services – Baseline Report (2016)

Figure 4 – Key service centres¹¹

The map highlights how key service centres are sparsely distributed across the county. This provides evidence of the importance of transport and access to services in Cumbria.



Dispersed communities and service centres create challenges:

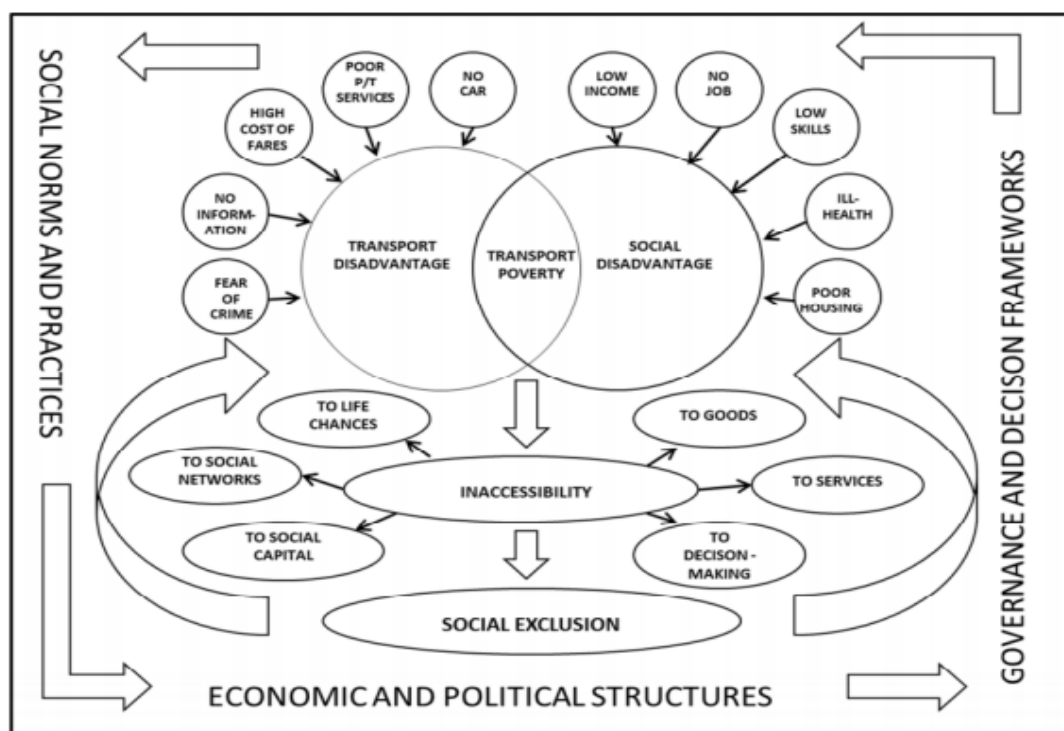
- People have limited access to services;
- People have to travel further to access basic health care;
- Services delivered at distance can be more expensive;

Areas can become deprived and isolated due to the geographic barriers to essential services. Residents living in rural communities rely on transport in order to access their nearest service centres, some over a 50 mile round trip. Some residents have to depend on family and friends when public transport is withdrawn or impractical. Taxi fares can be excessively expensive (e.g. Whitehaven to Carlisle, 35 miles, £80 - £100 each way) but within some areas of Cumbria there is no other alternative. These challenges reduce the level of independence and increase social isolation. There is clearly a need in these communities for a robust sustainable transport scheme to tackle the challenges faced when trying to access essential services.

¹¹ Source: Cumbria Observatory – Economy and Employment

Table 1 and Figure 5 – 4 key dimensions of access to essential services and the relationship between transport disadvantage, social disadvantage and social exclusion.¹²

Access to personal transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car ownership and use • Use of taxis • Cycling for non-recreational purposes • Mopeds and motorcycles
Access to public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses • Trains • Local authority maintenance fleet
Access to community transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dial-a-ride • Voluntary car schemes • Community minibuses • Car pool
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel time to key services • Distance to key services • Road length • Personal health circumstances



¹² Lucas (2012) The relationship between transport disadvantage, social disadvantage and social exclusion

Community Transport Policy Drivers and Strategies

National

“1. Community Transport (CT) is a very broad term for local road passenger transport services delivered by charitable and other not-for profit organisations, typically where there is no viable commercial market. The core work of community transport organisations (CTOs) has traditionally included:

- Door-to-door transport, from relatively informal lift-giving by volunteer car drivers to more organised scheme such as Dial-a-Ride or Dial-a-Bus, for people with disabilities and mobility difficulties;*
- Minibus travel for defined groups of people, particularly the elderly or others who struggle to get out and about on their own, for example to take them on shopping trips; and*
- Community bus services, where there are no existing commercial routes, such as in remote rural areas.¹³*

2. The Transport ACT 1985 legislated for a light touch licensing regime for these types of services relative to conventional, profit-making operators. Sections 18 to 23A of the Act provides exemptions from full Passenger Service Vehicle (PSV) operator and Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) driver licensing requirements, including the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC), which are designed to ensure stringent service and safety standards in the commercial sector.¹⁴ The system is intended to be a more proportionate and cost-effective regime for services of community benefit that might otherwise not exist.

Not-for-profit CT services have therefore been allowed to operate under:

- Section 19 permits, which may be used to operate minibuses carrying nine to 16 passengers (or larger vehicles with a special s19 ‘large bus permit’) where they are run on a not-for-profit basis and carry restricted groups of passengers (e.g. school children or people taking part in specified community activities); and*
- Section 22 permits, which may be used to operate vehicles carrying nine or more passengers, also on a not-for-profit basis, and carry members of the general public i.e. provision of community bus services where no commercial routes exist.*

¹³ Mobility Matters (CTT0271); Transport Committee, Passenger transport in isolated communities, Fourth Report of Session 2014-15, HC 288 paras 32-7

¹⁴ See ‘Public service vehicle (PSV) operator licensing guide’ and ‘Become a lorry or bus driver’, GOV.UK, accessed 28 November 2017

3. *Permits may be issued by the regional Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain, the independent statutory body, and a range of “designated bodies”, including community organisations concerned with “education; religion; social welfare; recreation; and other activities of benefit to the community.” Designed bodies also include local authorities, which can issue permits to themselves, for use in relation to in-house CT services run by council staff, and to local organisations concerned with the community benefit activities listed above*.¹⁵

*“Community transport operators provide vital services that encourage growth and reduce isolation by linking people and communities to existing transport networks, jobs, education, shops and other local services. The majority of CT operators are in effect also providers of social care services, especially to people who are elderly, isolated and disabled. They are generally motivated by compassion and philanthropy, not profit.”*¹⁶

Over the past few years the National Government has provided support to encourage CT across the country:

- Since 2014, the Government has provided over 400 new minibuses for community groups;
- Financially contributing towards the CT Association in England to provide support to CT operators; and
- Offering direct support to operators through the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG)

Cumbria has received BSOG grants for 5 different CT groups:

- Muncaster Microbus
- Fellrunner
- Brampton
- Brathay
- Aspatria

This research is conducted with BSOG grant.

¹⁵ Section 19 and 22 permits not for profit passenger transport', GOV.UK accessed 28 November 2017

¹⁶ Community transport and the Department for Transport's proposed consultation – House of Commons (2017)

Local

CT provides affordable transport for members of the community, by members of the community, whatever their age. Cumbria County Council (CCC) offers transport options across the county, aiming to make transport accessible to accommodate passenger needs.

CCC service includes (approximately):

- Voluntary Car Schemes; (50)
- Community Minibuses; (8)
- Rural Wheels (6), Village Wheels (8) & Community Wheels (2); and
- Dial-A-Ride (2)

CCC commissions and supports a number of schemes throughout the county by using voluntary and third sector transport organisations. The County Council has a budget of £360,000 per annum to support the growing number of CT groups, operators and volunteers to continue their delivery.

CCC is the Strategic Transport Authority with responsibility to planning transport provision. Cumbria is currently on its 3rd Local Transport Plan (2011-2026). This plan is produced by CCC as a statutory document to set out how transport services will be improved and managed over the next 15 years.

The 3rd Local Transport Plan states:

“It is very expensive to serve sparsely populated rural areas with ordinary bus services. Our Rural Wheels service allows people to get to the shops, healthcare, and other facilities during the day. We support voluntary car schemes across Cumbria which help elderly and disabled residents to live independent lives. We also support transport brokerages developing flexible ways to access services and leisure activities. In areas where frequent bus services are not viable, the voluntary and community sector will play an important role in providing alternatives. We will work in partnership with the private operators and communities to deliver the required local services”.¹⁷

In the last county elections, all parties standing supported the continuation of support to community transport services.

¹⁷ Moving Cumbria Forward – Cumbria Transport Plan Strategy (2011-2026)

5. Key Issues and Challenges

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria has worked with a number of different organisations and management groups to assess the broad understanding of the weaknesses and threats of the CT currently in place.

To achieve this numerous CT Groups across Cumbria have been visited and interviewed to gain an understanding of their successes and where improvement could be made.

Table 2

Weakness	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will either fail or success on the number of volunteers;• The service wouldn't operate without people; volunteers and passengers;• Reliant on a few key individuals;• Sustainability and diminishing support from the County Council;• Demographics and geography of Cumbria is so varied, need to adapt depending on location;• Not terribly resilient;• Communication amongst volunteers; and• Demographic limiting volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will either fail or success on the number of volunteers;• The service wouldn't operate without people; volunteers and passengers;• Demographic limiting volunteers;• The willingness for more people to get involved;• Loss of funding; local authority or government cuts;• Change in policy on what defines 'non for profit'; and• People's willingness to pay.

Third Sector and Volunteers

The Third Sector is often referred to as the voluntary and community sector, characterised by the unpaid Trustees who provide governance to the organisations and the volunteers who provide support. Although linked to unpaid staff and volunteers, the third sector is a significant employer; an estimated 110,000 full-time equivalent employees in the North West.

“The majority of Third Sector Organisations (TSOs), and particularly the smallest organisations, have very limited income and do not employ staff. They are, as a consequence, entirely dependent upon freely given time to operate and deliver the work required.

- *The sector depends on regular volunteers (80.6%), especially the smallest organisations which also tend to rely more heavily on volunteers who can work unsupervised (60.3%);*
- *Many TSOs work with volunteers who are service users and beneficiaries, in particular the very smallest organisations – suggesting that the benefits of volunteering are multi-dimensional; and*
- *Few TSOs see disadvantages in using volunteers”.*¹⁸

The national increase in retirement age and Cumbria’s ageing population has affected the retention of volunteers in organisations that depend on them and reduces the amount of freely given time to TSOs. The 1997 change in category D1 licenses put an age limit on volunteers able to become CT voluntary minibuss drivers.

Younger volunteers have to take additional tests to gain the legal category licenses that older volunteers have by right. This challenge has added to the average volunteer age being over 50 years and limits the volunteers that can operate CT minibusses without training. Training and the test can cost around £250, although CCC is willing to pay this expense, the main challenge is finding volunteers willing and able to take the time to pass the tests.

Recommendation 1:

- A campaign to recruit new volunteers; and
- Promote Neighbourliness to encourage informal social networks and support.

¹⁸ Chapman T and Hunter J (2017) third sector trends in the north of England: A summary of key findings, IPPR North.

Concessionary Travel

“In Cumbria transport is a major issue as there are a number of barriers facing older people including the limited public transport infrastructure; the relative isolation of many of our rural communities; and the low population number to support sustainable services ... For many older people driving or travelling as a passenger can be a helping hand to maintaining independence and preventing isolation. Accessible and affordable public transport is a key factor influencing active ageing. Cumbria has a large land mass which is overwhelmingly rural; 54% of Cumbria’s resident live in rural areas compared to 18% across England & Wales”.¹⁹

Transport should be easily accessible to everyone. CCC administers the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) in Cumbria. The objectives of the ENCTS were to reduce social exclusion in older people and ensure that bus travel remains within the means of those with limited income and mobility difficulties. This scheme provides free off peak travel on scheduled bus service for older people and people with disabilities.

CCC optimises the use of the NOWcard in Cumbria. This scheme allows free travel for members of the public whom are either elderly or disabled. CT accepts NOWcards as a form of payment on the registered community bus routes. The card pays for the fare and the transport group claims 58% back from CCC. Although these schemes were set up to create easier, more accessible travel, it has created some challenges to CT as it can cause challenges/reduce sustainable income. CT groups lose out on 42% of journey fares with passengers who hold a NowCard. In addition, people may not use the service as they consider CT for the elderly.

Rural wheels use a ‘smartcard’ that is monitored by CCC. Rural wheels passengers pay though being a member and holding a ‘smartcard’ that they top up and use on their journeys. It has been stated that elderly passengers can be discouraged from using the service as they have to pay for what they would usually get for free on their NOWcards. Another challenge is that some elderly residents have NOWcards and ENCTS cards however due to the lack of public transport; they are unable to use them as there is no service to use them on.

Recommendation 2:

- MP’s are asked to consider the use of NowCards on CT with full refund of the subsidy.

¹⁹ Cumbria JSNA – Older People Topic Summary (2016)

Community Transport Groups

CT groups are distributed around the county. These groups come together within their local community to help provide transport for the community. CT groups are made up of volunteers who work tirelessly to meet the need and demand of people needing to travel, they organise the schemes and operate the services. A key challenge highlighted in the investigation of this study was the decline of these volunteers.

It was stated, '*community transport will either fail or succeed on the number of volunteers*'.

CT groups tend to be made up of a small number of volunteers. This applies added pressure and can reduce the resilience of CT groups. The service can become unsustainable and unreliable if one or two volunteers leave. The complexity of organisational requirement increases when volunteers are utilised. If the CT service was a commercial service instead of 30 volunteers it would only need 4 to 5 full or part time workers to provide the same service. This complexity means communication amongst CT volunteers is crucial; however it is more difficult to consult a large number of volunteers quickly if there is change.

CCC provides advice and financial support to CT groups in Cumbria. CCC distributes government grants and funding to the CT groups in order to create sustainability and encourage independence amongst communities. Diminishing support from CCC can therefore challenge the sustainability of certain CT groups. The majority of CT vehicles in Cumbria are subsidised by the Government and therefore rely on funding to continue operating. CCC can help fund and subsidise CT as long as operators fit the 'non for profit' definition set by the government. Some CT groups would not be sustainable without CCC and government funding; therefore it is a key priority to make sure they continue to gain the support. Changes to policy and legislation can also create challenges and unintended consequences to CT groups.

Along with Government funding, CT services are designed to meet the need of passengers and to generate income, to create enough funding to sustain a service in a particular area. In many areas of Cumbria, commercial services have been reduced due to the lack of passengers and a CT service has filled the gap. CT services still need passengers in order for them to operate; it is either use it or lose it.

Recommendation 3:

- CCC continues its support to CT groups and continues to work in partnership to develop, assess and implement transport solutions.

Section 19 and Section 22 Permits for road passenger transport in Great Britain

“The Government remains committed to supporting the community transport sector and to maintaining the permit system. However, concerns have recently been raised that some community transport operators that use permits are competing with commercial operators. Community transport operators can only rely on non-commercial exemption if all the operators service fall within one or more of the following categories:

- *The service is free of charge;*
- *Any charge for service is substantially less than cost;*
- *Any charge for service equals (or exceeds) cost;*
- *Occasional services (organised on a voluntary basis); and*
- *Incidental services”*.²⁰

With the Government recognising commercial operator concerns, CT operators have been challenged to assess their practice of:

- Operating under the correct permit
- Have drivers properly licensed and trained
- Run vehicles that are properly maintained and legal

(For more information visit: GOV.UK. (2018). Getting an MOT: How the MOT test works. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/getting-an-mot/the-mot-test> [Accessed 11 May 2018])

All operators need to make sure they hold the correct license and are efficiently capable of driving a minibus. In 1997 the type of driving licence drivers obtained after passing their practical test changed. A challenge is making sure that drivers have the correct licenses before operating minibuses.

Operators may have the correct licenses however; the majority of individuals pass practical driving tests in cars not minibuses. Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) continues to be a great opportunity nationally and locally making sure drivers are properly trained to drive a minibus. This costs to deliver and as mentioned, needs committed volunteers.

²⁰ 2018 Consultation on the use of section 19 and section 22 permits for the road passenger transport in Great Britain – Department for Transport

CT operators need to be made aware of the differences between the requirements in driving cars to the requirements of larger vehicles, making sure they are legal and road worthy. These stringent rules and regulations can discourage and prevent volunteers from taking up CT volunteer roles.

Recommendation 4:

Cumbria Community Transport Forum continues their promotion and support on licensing, along with CCC support.

Car ownership and usage

With public transport continuing to decline in Cumbria, the dependancy on car ownership is increasing. Residents have to rely on cars and other personally owned vehicles, either for personal use, sharing car journeys or giving lifts to friends and family members. 79% of households in Cumbria have access to cars and vans. This statistic, from the 2011 Census, is higher than the national average (74%) and reflects how dependent Cumbria is on car travel.²¹

A survey in Millom in 2018 concluded that residents felt as though they wouldn't be able to travel out of the local area without a car or acquiring a lift. With Cumbria's service centres being so sparsely distributed, residents of certain villages may have to travel long distances to access essential services. Not having a car for these types of journeys creates difficult and geographical barriers to services.

Commercially viable transport routes tend to use main roads. Many rural communities live off main roads and have significant distances to travel to gain access to the main road.

Adding to this concern, approximately 36% of households have no access to private transport in rural areas. As stated in the context, the older generations tend live in the more rural areas of Cumbria. Without access to private or public transport these residents can easily become socially and geographically isolated. Households with no access to private transport are put at an immediate disadvantage when located in a remote area, away from services and amenities and unable to access those by public transport.

Recommendation 5:

- Shared cars and promotion of co-cars should be increased.
- Driverless cars and pods be investigated for sparse populated areas

²¹ Source: (2011) Census – Second Release – Key & Quick Statistics

Social Isolation

Social isolation is a widely researched and complex phenomenon, with far reaching mental and physical wellbeing consequences. Personal isolation can lead to loneliness and a feeling of 'disconnect' which can occur at any stage in life.

Government research on the National picture (Jan 2018) states:

- More than nine million people always or often feel lonely;
- Around 200,000 older people have not had a conversation with a friend or relative in more than a month; and
- Up to 85% of young disabled adults – 18-34 – feel lonely

Social isolation is commonly considered for older individuals and groups as they have a tendency to be more vulnerable, especially those with physical disabilities or poor mental health. Cumbria's ageing population exacerbates the issue of social isolation; with an ageing population comes the increase of health and disability problems.²² Cumbria Community Foundation illustrated the picture of social isolation in 'Cumbria Revealed' (2017):

- *"Across the county, the number of single person households is 71,700 (15%);*
- *Of the 205,000 households across the county with residents ages 50 and over, 1 in 4 are of people living alone;*²³
- *Of the above single households, 49% live in rural areas (compared with 15% nationally); and*
- *The chance of premature death is raised by 30% for those who are lonely".*²⁴²⁵²⁶

These statistics are based on the 2011 Census Data. CT can be seen as a solution to help tackle loneliness and isolation as it provides:

- Access to health and other services, and to social opportunities;
- Opportunities to leave the house with door-to-door services, encouraging independence; and
- Creates the chance for passengers to socialise with drivers and other passengers.

²² Social Isolation and Loneliness – Cumbria Observatory (2015)

²³ Department of Communities and Local Government – 2014- Based Household Projections: England 2014-39 - 2016

²⁴ Social Care Institute for Excellence 'At a Glance 60: Preventing Loneliness Among Older People' May 2015

²⁵ Andrew Steptoe, Aparna Stankar, Panayotes Demakakos, Jane Wardie – Social Isolation, loneliness and all cause mortality in older men and women – 2013

²⁶ Cumbria Community Foundation – Cumbria revealed A County of Contrast (2017)

Geography

A vast proportion of Cumbria is mountainous; the majority of the county lies within the Lake District while the Pennines, consisting of the Yorkshire Dales and North Pennines, are located East and South East of the county.

This type of terrain can make it difficult for elderly residents and people who have a disability, that affects their mobility, to access transport. Bus stops and transport links tend to be located on main roads and in many rural communities residents tend to live off these roads. This makes it difficult for potential passengers to access the transport services as they may need to travel significant distances. Although walking to a bus stop could be possible, some may be miles away, up a steep incline, or at the end of a dangerous country round.

These conditions are what make CT in Cumbria ideal. By operators offering door-to-door transport options, passengers are able to be connected to the service centres and essential services in Cumbria.

Over recent years Cumbria has witnessed exceptionally high rainfall breaking UK records and causing severe flooding. Cumbria faces challenges with strong winds, snowfall and freezing. These conditions need recognition on how they impact on individuals (the elderly; the isolated; those living in exposed locations and living alone) depending on the different levels of distribution.

Weather conditions in Cumbria can be particularly challenging to transport during certain times of the year. With heavy snowfall or severe flooding communities can be easily cut off and isolated.. Cumbria is aware of the weather conditions that create problems throughout the year for rural and urban communities.

Recommendation 6:

CT could offer a 4 wheel drive service to residents who are unable to access essential services and connect to other transport options during these conditions. A challenge would be finding volunteers who are confident and willing to drive in these conditions.

This recommendation links to the Beast from the East 2018, where volunteers from the 4x4 organisation assisted those in need of transport, whether stuck or isolated.

Case Study: Millom

Recommendation 7:

This case study shares good practice, the flexibility of local solutions and the benefits CT can bring to a community.

Executive Summary

Millom Town Council and ACTion with communities in Cumbria (ACT) have worked in partnership to assess resident's appetite for community solutions and car sharing after the loss of public bus routes in the town.

The aim of this report is to identify future travel solutions for Millom following the loss of the commercial bus routes in 2011/2015 and 2017. To achieve this, local surveys have been carried out with the residents of Millom. The survey received 112 responses in total, 51% were completed hard copy and 49% completed online.

- 23% of participants surveyed indicated they had a disability that restricted their mobility;
- 25 % of those surveyed do not have access to a personal vehicle;
- 87.5% thought that the current bus service was either poor or very poor.; and
- Interestingly between 60 and 80% of those asked were unaware of any local CT schemes and those who were aware of some current schemes said they didn't meet their needs.

It is clear from the survey that there is a requirement in Millom for a robust transport scheme and 50% of the people interviewed were interested in community solutions. It is also clear that current community schemes would benefit from additional support and additional publicity. Schemes working well in other areas of Cumbria should also be shared as good practice.

The Town Council and ACT will now consider the next steps to address the challenges.

Next steps:

1. The Town Council will investigate option for a Parish Council Voluntary Run Car Scheme and promotion of the CCC Car Scheme;
2. A timetabled, pre-booked and frequent service implemented by community resources; and
3. Options to allow older people to use their National Concessionary Travel Pass in Millom.

6. Opportunities

Numerous CT groups were also visited to gain understanding of what works well and where there are possible opportunities. These strengths and opportunities were researched alongside weakness and threats with the following results:

Table 3

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two main objectives: (1) reducing social isolation (2) increasing social cohesion;• Cares for the community, volunteers will go the extra mile;• The service wouldn't operate without people, volunteers and passengers;• Meet the need and demand of users through the availability of vehicles and volunteers;• The service builds relationships with regular passengers to encourage people to become a cohesive unit and bring together the community;• Volunteers are committed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demographics and geography of Cumbria is so varied, need to adapt depending on location;• New and sustainable routes;• Reduction in National Companies;• To develop and work together with other transport organisations to fulfill the need;• Promotion of CT;• CT groups to obtain both Section 19 & 22 permits;• Collaborate with the private sector; and• Joint working with the public sector.

With all the different CT options and opportunities available CT groups do their best to operate and provide services to benefit their local communities.

Reduction of National Companies and commercial services has created new opportunities and possibilities for CT. CT groups don't wish to compete with commercial services, their aim is to fill the gaps when the demand is evident. These circumstances open up opportunities to gain more passengers and possibly extend existing or create new routes.

CT main objectives are to reduce social isolation and increase social cohesion, build and bring communities together. CT operators care for the community and are willing to go the extra mile to meet the need and demand of users. The service helps build relationships with the drivers and regular passengers, bringing together the community and building on becoming a cohesive unit.

National Opportunities

Evidence stated by the Department for Transport reinforces the point that:

"The Government recognises that community transport (CT) is fundamental to the sustainability and independence of communities. CT service not only to connect people – giving them access to public services, employment, education and other transport modes – but can make a real difference to the quality of their lives.

This is why the Department for Transport provides financial support to the sector. Since 2014, the £25m Community Minibus Fund has provided over 300 local charities and community groups across England with over 400 minibuses to use for the benefit of their passengers. We also provide funding through the Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG), with around £3.5 million forecast to be paid directly to CT operators this financial year, and provide the CT Association (CTA) for England with £200,000 of funding each year.

CT is a very broad sector. It includes, but is by no means limited to:

- *Dial – a – ride service;*
- *Charities who provide free or heavily subsidised transport to vulnerable or elderly people (often run entirely by volunteers);*
- *Other voluntary service, such as day centres or lunch clubs which provide transport as part of their offer – such as Age UK;*
- *Community organisations which make minibuses, car, motorcycles and/or bikes available for anyone in their area to use;*
- *Local ride sharing schemes;*
- *In-house local authority transport services;*
- *Youth organisations – such as the Air Cadets, Scouts or Guides – who use minibuses as part of their core activities; and*
- *Social enterprises or other not for profit groups who provide both activities of the sorts listed above but raise funding towards them by bidding for transport contracts (often paid drivers and other staff to undertake that work".²⁷*

²⁷
Department for Transport (CTT0234)

Local Opportunities: Community Transport and Transport within the Community

Community Wheels and Community Minibuses

Community Wheels is a service run by CCC with a number of minibuses operating under a section 19 permit. CCC is allocated Government funding for the purpose of developing CT services. With this, around 10 accessible minibuses are owned by CCC across the county. Community Wheels aims to provide regular transport, driven by volunteer driver, in areas where scheduled services are not available or sustainable.

CCC and CT groups from around the county are generally working towards the same aim. Communities come together to form local CT groups where minibuses are operated under section 19 and 22 permits in order to try and meet transport need and demand. Many of Cumbria's rural routes are subsidised by CCC enabling them to continue journeys from rural areas into the local towns and other villages. Volunteers manage these services covering the roles of coordinators, admin and drivers. These services operate in communities where no alternative routes exist or commercial bus routes have been withdrawn.

CCC supports a minibus brokerage system, Cumbria Community Transport Association, that enables groups and organisations within the community to use accessible and affordable community minibuses.

Any group or organisation within the community can use the community minibuses as long as they are 'not for profit' e.g.

- Associations;
- Charities;
- Clubs
- Societies
- Schools
- Volunteering
- Organizations
- Youth Groups

There are over 30 minibuses available for hire and most are wheelchair accessible therefore disabled individuals can also access community minibuses throughout Cumbria.

All passengers are required to pre-book their seat. Community groups can either hire on a self-drive basis or with a driver supplied.

Voluntary Social Car Schemes

There are approximately 50 Voluntary Social Car Schemes set up across Cumbria. Voluntary Social Car Schemes are provided for people who have no access to other means of transport. These schemes are made up of volunteer drivers and coordinators that provide a door-to-door service to take individuals to their chosen destination at a cost effective price. The service can be used for a variety of different purposes:

- Making connections with public transport;
- Doing the weekly shop;
- Medical appointments; and/or
- Visiting friends and family

Voluntary Car Schemes create a safety net for residents that need that extra support.

Rural Wheels

Rural Wheels provides a door-to-door demand response transport service. The service is for people who do not have or are unable to access scheduled bus services. Rural Wheels will also be used when Community Wheels minibuses have reached their capacity, or when a mini bus isn't necessary for the number of passengers. The service operates for a variety of purposes, similar to that of Voluntary Car Schemes.

Rural Wheels is available to anyone who lives within rural Cumbria. Town Centre locations including Maryport, Workington, Whitehaven, Carlisle and Penrith are not eligible for Rural Wheels. The service does not duplicate other County Council provision and therefore cannot be used for journeys to day care, nursery, school or college. Before using Rural Wheels potential passengers are advised to check their eligibility for patient transport as Rural Wheels cannot be used for hospital appointments and treatment if patient transport is available.

Rural Wheels also:

- Uses a 'smartcard' to pay for travel and has a central booking system to plan journeys/ number of passengers;
- Passengers sharing journeys will benefit from a reduced rate of 25p per mile;

- Passengers living more than 10 miles from their nearest town will be charged at a maximum of £4.00 per single journey;
- Transport is charged at a subsidised rate of 40p per mile;
- Passengers are only allowed to use the service up to two return journeys per week; and
- All journeys must be booked through the booking service number; up to 2 weeks in advance and if possible no later than 12 noon on the day before travel.

Village Wheels

Village Wheels provides a timetabled service for communities to get to their nearest town in the following areas:

- Anthorn to Wigton;
- Buttermere to Cockermouth;
- Durdar to Carlisle;
- Gleaston to Ulverston;
- Greystoke and Newbiggin to Penrith;
- Levens to Milnthorpe;
- Rockcliffe to Carlisle;
- Seascale to Egremont and
- Uldale to Wigton.

These services operate on certain days, a few times a week depending on the demand. Village Wheels uses a similar scheme to Rural Wheels; smart card for payment and planning the service by booking. The service is not a registered bus service therefore passengers are unable to use concessionary NOWcards.

Recommendation 8:

The profile of support CCC offers be raised and residents encourage to lobby their elected member for continues and improved support.

Recommendation 9:

Share success stories where CCC support has assisted communities to meet their transport needs.

Recommendation 10:

Increase promotion of Cumbria Community Transport brokerage service.

Community, Voluntary and 3rd Sector Organisations

CT can be seen as an innovative transport solution. *“CT has the opportunity to benefit those who may otherwise be isolated and excluded, providing them with the opportunity to participate within their community and access education, services, and employment and health services”.*²⁸

To help tackle some of Cumbria’s key issues and challenges a number of community, voluntary and 3rd Sector Organisations have worked with local partners to develop and further the future of CT:

- Cumbria CT Forum
- Cumbria County Council
- Parish and Town Councils

Cumbria CT Forum

Cumbria CT Forum is made up of CT group representatives from across the county; along with CCC Voluntary Transport Officer; and other local partners. The forum meets every quarter to discuss operational and policy matters, receive a CCC update, and share current activities of CT groups. The forum provides advice and support to community groups interested in operating or setting up CT and helps with enquires regarding CT.

Cumbria CT Forum provides the platform to inform local community groups, schools and colleges operating minibuses on the recently published Section 19 and Section 22 Permits for road passenger transport in Great Britain. The aim of taking this opportunity is to:

- Potentially increase the number of minibuses available for CT;
- Provide information on potential options for CT;
- Encourage groups to have the confidence to support and operate CT;
- Ensure minibuses are being operated efficiently and legally.

The forum is looking into opportunities to help provide MiDAS training for minibus operators.

²⁸ Source: (2016) Success Regime – Non-Emergency Transport to Healthcare Services – Baseline Report

Power of Parish Councils and Community Councils

Local Government and Rating Act 1997 states:

*“26. – (1) A Parish council or community council may –
(a) establish and maintain any car-sharing, or
(b) assist others to establish and maintain any car-sharing schemes, for the benefit of
persons in the council’s area”²⁹*

Local management groups, Parish Councils and Cumbria County Council work together to establish theoretical business plans of what can be possible in the way of CT for particular areas in Cumbria.

Recommendation 11:

CT Forum to continue its work sharing, supporting and assisting CT groups.

²⁹ Local Government and Rating Act 1997: Powers of Parish Council and Community Councils – *transport etc.* – Part 3

7. Best Practice

It is feasible for communities to do more to support themselves; there isn't always a need for a global solution to a localised problem. It is often possible to find an answer that works at a community level, where different communities can adapt a model to make it work for their community. CT consists of volunteers who are willing to meet a requirement when people are in a difficult situation, not a mass transport scheme. The majority of volunteers give up their time to help others and be involved within the community.

Burton-in-Kendal Voluntary Car Scheme

Context

Burton-in-Kendal is a small village and civil parish in the South Lakeland District of Cumbria. In 2011 Burton-in-Kendal set up a Voluntary Car Scheme following the end of CT South Lakeland. CT South Lakeland ran out of funding pre 2010 and CCC took control of the Voluntary Car Scheme across the County. CCC Voluntary Car Scheme uses a regulated system where you need to first submit and then claim back on expenses. Burton-in-Kendal wanted to generate an independent and self-sustaining scheme which involves no money or accounts.

Burton-in-Kendal Voluntary Car Scheme is made up of 12 Parish Council Volunteers. A volunteer coordinator arranges volunteer car drivers to take passengers on pre-booked journeys, creating transport options for those who find public transport impractical. The drivers charge the passengers a fixed mileage charge, currently £0.40 per mile, collect a cash fare that they retain to cover their costs and issue passengers with a receipt.

There is an hourly bus service that travels through Burton-in-Kendal 6 days of the week; fewer on Sundays. A lot of the local residents are of the age where they find journeys to and from the village challenging due to lack of mobility or weather dependent conditions. The Voluntary Car Scheme offers door to door transport for journeys mainly to doctors' and dentists' appointments, hospital appointments, hospital visiting, shopping and similar trips. Most journeys tend to be round trips which involve waiting for passenger's to return. This type of service makes commercial taxis impractical or absurdly expensive. Burton-in-Kendal Voluntary Car Scheme has tended to local residents need, it is seen as a safety net to help people who find the commercial service inadequate.

The South East corner of South Lakeland has considerable numbers of early retired volunteers with the time to put into these types of schemes. Holme is another small village in South Lakeland, Cumbria that has set up a similar Voluntary Car Scheme that works for them.

“An extension of good neighborliness, it’s no more than if your next door neighbour needed a lift to the hospital – we have just extended it to be the whole village”.

(P Smith, 2018)

Burton-in-Kendal Voluntary Car Scheme has its challenges:

- Finding voluntary drivers;
- Coordinators having the confidence to tactfully say no to journeys where a voluntary driver isn’t available;
- Not all drivers are keen to provide social and domestic journeys where as other drivers believe those journeys are just as important; and
- A number of volunteer drivers are getting to the age where they don’t feel comfortable doing long journeys (e.g. Blackpool Hospital) therefore the coordinator needs to find a willing driver.

Policy, Liability and Insurance

The service is supported by Burton-in-Kendal Parish Council therefore the Parish Council volunteers benefit from the council’s third party public liability and personal accident insurance.

Burton-in-Kendal Voluntary Car Scheme is locally run. Rules and regulations of the Voluntary Car Scheme are up to the Parish Council, providing they meet the terms and conditions of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997. For self-protection the scheme will only provide journeys for passengers that pre-book themselves, third party bookings aren’t allowed. This makes sure that passengers are capable of looking after themselves; volunteer drivers can’t provide physical/mental support. Volunteer drivers are not obligated to accept a journey and do not need to give a reason for turning down a request.

Recommendation 12:

Burton-in-Kendal example to be widely shared and support made available for parishes interested in developing a scheme.

Fellrunner Village Bus Service

Context

The Fellrunner Bus Ltd started in Langwathby in 1979, helped by CCC and ACT, as a response to the withdrawal of commercial bus services from the rural villages of the East Fellside. The First Fellrunner bus provided a service from the rural villages of the East Fellside to connect with the Ribble bus service from Langwathby to Penrith and Carlisle. Following the withdrawal of Ribble services, Fellrunner extended its scheduled services from the Fellside to both Penrith and Carlisle. Since then as more rural communities have become isolated, Fellrunner has responded to the need by extending its services to include villages in the Lyvenett valley, Lowther valley and villages to the North West of Penrith.

The Fellrunner is a CT group operated entirely by volunteers, both a registered charity and a limited company. With approximately 25 volunteer drivers the Fellrunner now have a registered timetabled route and operate around the Eden Valley from Tuesday to Saturday all year round. They have three 17 seat minibuses based at Hopes Garage, Langwathby. The routes take passengers into Penrith every operating day and Carlisle on Wednesdays and Fridays. The Fellrunner operates on a Section 22 permit therefore there is a designated time and place to be picked up without having to pre-book. The Section 22 permit refers to the Transport Act 1985 which authorises community bus services. In addition Fellrunner hires out buses with a driver to community groups for trips out etc. These services together generate approximately 10,500 passenger single journeys per year.

The Fellrunner has been in operation for over 40 years which has benefitted the service as it is seen as reliable and consistent operator which encourages passengers to use the service. Media coverage has also increased numbers. The Timetable is displayed in many villages and on their website and they have a published telephone number. The transport group also publishes a press release when something noteworthy occurs and advertises in the Parish Magazines.

Fellrunner mainly addresses the elderly villagers' problems of rural poverty and social exclusion, together with their need to remain living independently in their own home. The need has continued to be identified in both Parish and County Council Local Transport Plans. The service allows access to health care, main line transport, shopping, financial services, civic facilities and leisure. The pro-active excursions are aimed at the need to escape from the perceived confines of home to enjoy both company and new experiences and to improve villager's well-being.

Northern Fells Group

Context

The Northern Fells Group is a community charity operating in seven rural parishes on the eastern and northern edge of Skiddaw and Blencathra. The aim was to 'fill the gaps' in community services for the area which covers approximately 200 square miles, with a population of around 3,600.

The Northern Fells Rural Project, that ran from 1999 to 2002 aimed to:

- Identify unmet health and social need;
- Map existing services;
- Pilot ways to improve service by filling the gaps; and
- Evaluate the project

A number of initiatives were set up in response to needs researched through the project and a report published '*Under the Stones*' – available at www.northernfells.org.uk. When the Project ended in 2002 the Northern Fells Group was formed to continue and develop the work.

Amongst the projects supported by grants, local fundraising and donations, the Northern Fells Group set up a Flexible Minibus Service. The service was for people of any age without access transport. 24 voluntary drivers were organised into a rota by the two employed Transport Co-ordinators.

Northern Fells CT still operates today under a Section 19 permit. The Minibus Service runs all the way up to Carlisle covering seven parishes. The service has been running for almost 17 years supporting a lot of elderly residents living in the sparse rural areas of the Northern Fells. The majority of residents can't drive and are reliant on family, neighbours or Northern Fells CT. Elderly passengers see the service as a life line for them staying in the area as they know they will be looked after. The service enables passengers to feel independent and create a social atmosphere.

In almost 19 years since the original project started, the Group has gone from strength to strength. It has drawn on wonderful community spirit and channeled it into reliable voluntary services. The project has reduced isolation for people by providing easily accessible transport as well as increasing neighbourliness and wellbeing.

Alston Community Transport

Context

Alston Cyber Moor Community Transport Group was formally set up in May 2000. At this time, the Countryside Agency was hosting an initiative, involving the rural transport plan, to address issues such as lack of provisions with public transport. Alston Cyber Moor CT Group received funding from the Countryside Agency to set up an online booking system to run a CT minibuss. Alston Cyber Moor received funding from Countryside Agency, CCC and other initiatives such as Health Cumbria.

Alston Cyber Moor CT Group bought a 15 seated wheelchair friendly minibuss and set up the online booking system for groups and organisations. The service was not to compete with private providers; there was a £1 membership fee and journeys needed to be pre booked. Alongside around a dozen voluntary drivers received MiDAS training and became certified to operate the minibuss.

The service continued for 12 years until the minibuss began to become cost ineffective, with necessary repairs needed. CCC received central government money to fund local transport schemes. In 2014 CCC provided Alston Cyber Moor CT Group with a new minibuss that would run under the CCC Community Transport Scheme.

Alston Cyber Moor CT Group leases the minibuss from CCC as a Community Wheels Bus with its primary use being to run regular services in order to fill the gap on commercial routes that have been withdrawn.

Recommendation 13:

Promote success of Cumbrias Community Transport Schemes.

Mobility Network

Context

‘Communities sorting out solutions for themselves’

ACT worked with the Chair of the Community transport Forum and called together a Symposium to discuss Rural Transport solutions in December 2016. Amongst a range of purposeful discussions, including input from three Cumbrian MP's, the suggestion was raised that the issue needed to be addressed in a different way. While it was recognised and celebrated that some communities had found sustainable and locally appropriate ways to meet travel needs, the enduring challenge of assisting isolated rural people to reach services could be looked at with a social, entrepreneurial approach.

The Rural Solutions group, formed from Symposium members, met on a number of occasions to look at approaches elsewhere in the country and to meet with entrepreneurs in the transport field.

This work is still underway with the possibility of funding from Transport for the Future through Car and Bike Plus to engage an entrepreneur.

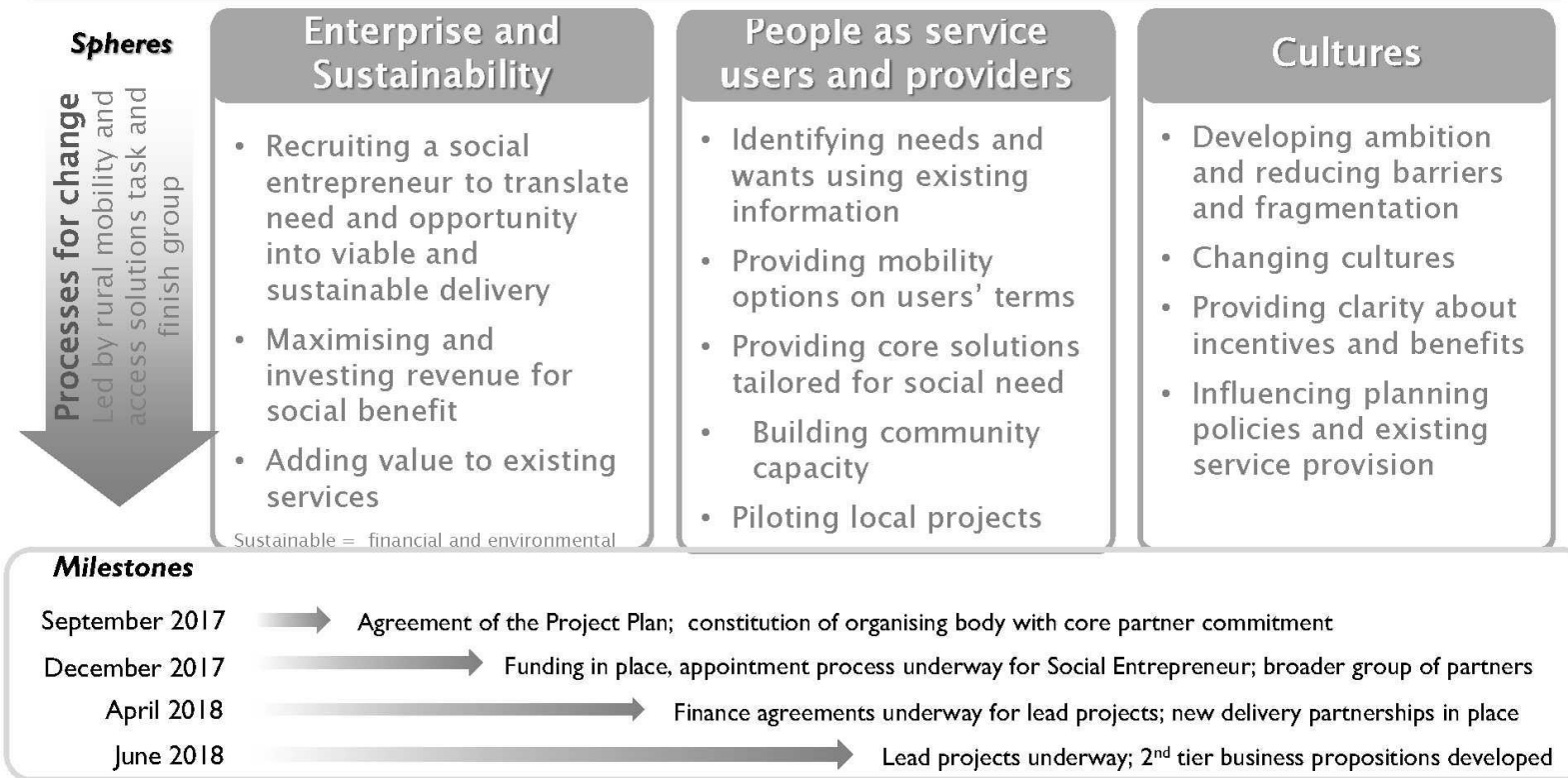
Recommendation 14:

- ACT should continue to develop this work and involve all partners in its delivery; and
- Implement the Mobility Network.

The model below was developed to explain what the group plan to achieve.

Cumbria Mobility Network

- Vision** A progressive, enterprising mobility network which meets the diverse needs, wants and opportunities in Cumbria
- Context** Diversity of user types (residents, visitors, businesses) and locales; current service supply is complex, fragmented and inefficient; Significant opportunities and appetite for change working within existing legislative framework
- Objectives** Forming the architecture for a viable, flexible and sustainable integrated mobility network
Using partnership and social enterprise to deliver in diverse communities and locales of Cumbria in a coalition of third, public and private sector organisations



Recommendations

	Text	Resource needed	By who	By when
1	A campaign to recruit new volunteers. Promote neighbourliness to encourage informal social networks and support.			
2	MPs are asked to consider the use of NOWcards on CT, with full refund of subsidy.			
3	CCC continues it support to CT groups and continues to work in partnership to develop, assess and implement transport solutions.			
4	Cumbria Community Transport Forum continues their promotion and support a licensing with CCC support.			
5	Shared cars and promotion of co-cars be increased. Autonomist cars and pods be investigated for sparse populated areas.			

6	CT could offer four wheel drives to residents unable to access essential service during bad weather conditions. This links to Beast from the East 2018.			
7	Sharing good practice, the flexibility of local solutions and the benefit to all in the community of CT is increased.			
8	The profile of the support CCC offers be raised and residents encouraged to lobby their elected members for continued and improved support.			
9	Share success stories where CCC support has assisted communities to meet their transport needs			
10	Increase promotion of Cumbria Community Transport brokerage service.			
11	CT forum to continue its work sharing, supporting and assisting CT groups.			

12	Burton-in-Kendal example to be widely shared and support made available for Parishes interested in developing a scheme			
13	The CT Forum to oversee the implication of the recommendations and look to ACT and CCC for support to implement them.			

Appendices

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