

A Toolkit to maximise Public Transport and access in the community

Where communities have significant access issues Northumberland County Council (NCC) will engage with community representative, residents and local community organisations to maximise the sustainable travel options available to that community. This leaflet gives an indication of the process NCC will follow and some of the possible outcomes.

Please note the County Council needs to work with a strong local community partner, either a Parish or Town council, or voluntary or community organisation, who is committed to the project to enable any developments to take place. Be prepared for:

- meetings, including between the Parish/Town or CVS or NCC's Transport Officers and local community meetings
- survey and consultation work: meaningful consultation involves the collection of a large number of opinions and some will have to be actively sought
- the solution: this may involve marketing, service promotion, or other types of transport service, fund raising, application forms ... it may be that the community has a role in the ongoing delivery of services

NCC will help your community to conduct a transport audit and local transport needs survey; consider the responses; evaluate the possible transport options; and assist in setting up alternative community transport solutions if required.

To start your local transport journey and follow up any of the actions in this document please contact Jan Chisholm, Community Transport Officer, Northumberland County Council:

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Getting Started:

Local transport audit and local transport needs surveys

Often, there can be a lack of awareness by the general public of the existing transport available in an area; therefore as a prerequisite in all instances it is helpful if the Parish / Town Council or community representatives understand all the available transport in the locality. The Council will help undertake a 'Transport Audit' of existing services to provide a clear picture of the destinations and key services which your community can potentially access.

The Transport Audit will be the foundation from which further services can be added if there is a demand and resources permit.

Following a 'transport audit' Northumberland County Council will help compile a 'transport needs survey questionnaire' for local residents in to evidence information about what services local people want and would use.

It is a good idea, as part of the transport needs survey, to let local people know the result of the audit before they complete the survey.

The survey can be designed to pick up unmet transport needs, along with active travel and supporting infrastructure and seek the views as to whether the correct infrastructure is there to support those who require it.

Possible Outcomes and Further Actions

Using the information gained from the transport audit and transport needs survey, a clear picture about what transport services are currently available, who uses them and what unmet transport need should emerge.

By engaging the Council on the results of your survey, a number of permutations may have been identified; examples of problems and potential solutions are shown below:

- **Does everyone in your parish know when the service operates?**
Promoting a local transport information leaflet can raise awareness of local bus services and increase their patronage which can help attract more users to help sustain the existing service.
- **Would improvements to bus shelters, footpaths and walking routes to the bus mean more people would use the service?**
If yes, here's how Northumberland County Council can help: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=673>
- **Have additional transport needs been identified?**
Yes but if they can't be accommodated on the local bus service would demand responsive or community led transport solutions be more cost effective?
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=669>
- **Is the existing bus service no longer cost effective for the County Council but is the most appropriate solution for the identified transport needs?**
If so, does the community want to continue to support the local service in partnership with the Council to help sustain the service, through a travel club, for example?
- **What about alternative sustainable travel options?**
See the Go Smarter website for walking, cycling, scooter training, car, lifts: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=16204>