

Good practice in sustainable leisure travel: Twenty case studies

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Good practice in sustainable leisure travel: Twenty case studies

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Transport for Leisure Ltd



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Summary

Over the last two decades, there has been significant growth in the number and range of public transport projects aimed at bringing visitors to leisure destinations in more sustainable ways than the private car.

This has been done for two main reasons. First, to enable those without access to their own transport - still around 25% of households in the UK and including many overseas visitors - to enjoy equality of opportunity to access many publicly-funded leisure destinations, such as National Parks, Country Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Second, to help mitigate the negative impacts of mass car-borne tourism on fragile countryside destinations.

Many of these schemes were supported by the former Countryside Agency, which, from the late 1990s onwards, grant-aided many rural transport schemes in England through Rural Transport Partnership (RTP) funding, most notably the Vital Village and Wider Welcome project funding. Wider Welcome alone was responsible for more than 100 leisure-transport projects during its three year life between 2001 and 2004.

With the end of this period of funding, it was felt important to see what had happened in the intervening period so that Natural England would have an up-to-date overview of the situation in terms of which successful projects described in literature produced by the Transport 2000 Trust and by the Agency itself in recent publications were still flourishing, despite the difficult funding regime now being experienced. The research was therefore intended to review and refresh those previous studies. In particular, Natural England wished to see to what extent the successful Case Studies and any other new projects which had emerged were meeting the following four major criteria of good leisure transport schemes:

- Schemes, services or projects which provide user-friendly and effective information.
- Schemes which demonstrate innovation, tackle social exclusion and deliver multiple benefits.
- Successful partnership approaches.
- Effective and long term funding packages or arrangements which adhere to recommended guiding principles and follow sound business planning procedures.

Methodology

The research began with a brief examination of the existing literature, not summarised in the text but which was a starting point for the study. Officers in each of the Regional Offices of Natural England with a responsibility or special interest in leisure transport matters were contacted by e-mail, both for feedback on the current situation in respect of the Case Studies highlighted in recent literature, but also any new innovative or successful schemes that they were aware of that might be considered for inclusion.

The contractor was also able to call on almost 20 years experience in managing the Countryside Agency's own Sustainable Recreational Transport Advisory Service (1997-2005).

A short list of around 25 best practice examples was selected. These were carefully balanced between different Regions of England, but one example from Scotland and two from Wales were included because they were outstanding examples of innovative and success with important lessons for England. There was also an attempt to show a wide variety of schemes and differences in scale, from projects in deep rural areas carrying only a few thousand visitors per year, to major, long established schemes in a National Park area carrying up to a million visitors per annum. Most were

fairly well established schemes, but two new (post 2006) schemes were selected to demonstrate ways currently being used to fund start-up projects.

In each case, Project Champions for each scheme were identified and contacted, by both telephone and email, using a standard questionnaire so individual officers replied in a standard format. This enabled some valid comparisons between schemes to be made.

A brief concluding section was added to each Case Study description to underline the key lessons for other destination managers and transport operators, and also the wider implications emerging from the experience of the particular project.

Out of the 25 initial schemes a final 20 were chosen. Those rejected were because the schemes in question had either ceased; were in difficulties because of a funding crisis; or busy managers lacked time to respond to queries - and where there was usually an equally good example to choose.

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1 Introduction

Defining Sustainable Leisure Travel

- 1.1 Natural England has been requested by Defra to establish and disseminate current good practice in the provision of sustainable leisure travel into the English countryside.
- 1.2 This has led to Transport for Leisure Ltd. being asked to “review (and refresh) existing good practice relating to the development, provision and promotion of environmentally sustainable leisure travel schemes”.
- 1.3 Environmentally sustainable leisure travel can be defined as “any travel activity which allows visitors to access the countryside whilst minimising some of the perceived negative impacts of private car travel, namely congestion, accident risk, disturbance, visual pollution, noise and emissions which contribute to atmospheric pollution and to global warming”. Taking sustainable development in its broader sense, this definition also includes schemes which increase social inclusion within urban and rural communities by giving greater equality of access to all members of the community, and contributing to the local economy through increased visitor spend on local facilities and services.
- 1.4 Natural England has requested that examples of good practice are selected that illustrate good practice in four clearly defined areas:
 - 1) Schemes, services or projects that provide user friendly and effective information.
 - 2) Schemes that demonstrate innovation, tackle social exclusion and deliver multiple benefits.
 - 3) Successful partnership approaches.
 - 4) Effective and long term funding packages or arrangements that adhere to recommended guiding principles and follow sound business planning procedures.
- 1.5 The production of this research is timely. Natural England is currently developing new policies in relation to sustainable transport in the countryside, reflecting one of their four Strategic Outcomes, namely “Enjoyment of the Natural Environment”. This also coincides with a period of growing awareness of the environmental impact of private car emissions, which, despite the increasing efficiency of modern car engines, has resulted in a 9% increase in emissions between 1996 and 2004 (Defra 2006). This increase is due to greater numbers of cars and ever longer distances driven.
- 1.6 The recent ending of many established sources of national funding for rural transport in England and escalating fuel and other operating costs (such as new EU regulations) has led to what can only be described as a crisis for rural leisure transport. Funding cuts include the former Countryside Agency Rural Transport Partnership Funding, the Vital Village and Wider Welcome schemes (ended in 2005), cuts in the Government’s Rural Bus Grant funding and pressure on local authority budgets. Leisure travel provision is often regarded as a low priority or marginal by local authorities, even in protected landscapes, with Sunday and evening bus services outside urban areas currently bearing the brunt of quite savage cuts.
- 1.7 Therefore, there is a serious risk of many of the major gains made in the 1990s and early 2000s being reversed by 2008 budget cuts. This is having the effect of many otherwise successful leisure travel projects either disappearing completely or suffering significant cutbacks in provision. Others face an uncertain future due to lack of commitment from local authorities, Rural Development Agencies or other partners and transport operators face rising costs and yet further reductions in financial support.

- 1.8 It is in this context that many of the successful schemes outlined in this report have to be seen as fortunate or determined survivors, in some cases defying an increasingly harsh economic environment. This is despite the widespread acceptance of the impacts of global warming and the need to reduce heavy car dependency for leisure activity. Financial cutbacks and lack of political commitment undermine the ability of local authorities and transport operators to develop viable alternatives to the private car in order to ensure access to the countryside for all the community, not just the more affluent and mobile. This is despite the growing awareness of the problems of obesity and the role that access to the countryside can give in encouraging physical and mental health through informal exercise and outdoor recreation.
- 1.9 Most of the 20 projects outlined in this report have been created or have evolved within the last decade or two decades in order to meet the needs to improve access to rural leisure destinations perceived by countryside managers or local authority public transport teams. They vary in size from major projects covering a large sub-region, such as the Lake District or North York Moors, to small scale schemes with a single minibus serving several remote rural locations. One project is driven largely by commercial opportunity by a major national operator, another was created by a local community based group seizing the initiative when neither bus operators nor local Government have been able to deliver what local people needed. Only four of the 20 have emerged purely out of what might loosely be termed the Travel Planning process - one because of severe site planning restraints, and three because of either World Heritage Site or National Park Management Plans which have prioritised sustainable forms of travel to, and through, their protected landscapes.
- 1.10 The examples selected all demonstrate good practice, but are not necessarily the best examples in their field nor the only examples of excellence under their particular category. But as the table below demonstrates, most score highly under more than one category.
- 1.11 The selection of examples was also based on being able to illustrate a wide range of different, and sometimes innovative, solutions to different travel problems - from a bus network in the Lake District carrying over a million passengers - to minibus schemes in Shropshire, the Yorkshire Dales or rural Suffolk carrying only a few thousand.
- 1.12 There has also been an attempt to demonstrate a regional spread, with examples from all over England. Three examples have been selected from other parts of the UK - two examples from Wales and one from Scotland. Not only were these outstanding examples of imaginative, sustainable travel and tourism development which should be known as beacons of excellence in a UK, but they also emphasise that with the increasing divergence that may occur post-Devolution, it is important to continue to share experiences between the countries that make up the United Kingdom. Gower, Pembrokeshire and the Cairngorms - and several other examples that could be cited in both countries - have important lessons for England and vice versa for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- 1.13 Finally, one clear lesson emerges that partly explains why some of these projects may have survived whilst others have not, this is the quality of their monitoring. Particularly in aspects such as the economic impact of the scheme indicated by visitor spend in local communities, as well as qualitative information from users to emphasise how the services are meeting their social inclusion targets. This is clearly critically important in the increasingly difficult funding regime faced by many rural transport schemes. Value for money has to be proved in terms of the social and economic benefit provided.
- 1.14 The aspect of monitoring that has so far proved more difficult to achieve is that of environmental benefit. Only one of the examples, the North York Moors National Park's Moorsbus, can point convincingly to an actual figure of the amount of CO₂ and other toxic emissions being saved as a result of a high percentage of Moorsbus users being car owners who would have otherwise driven from home to the National Park or driven within the National Park from a peripheral car park. Such figures are difficult to prove and this can never be an exact science, but there is no doubt that significant reduction of emissions is occurring because of the admittedly substantial

annual financial investment in Moorsbus and the commitment it represents. There needs to be further research into what other potential indicators could be used to measure reduction of environmental damage or disturbance by achieving modal switch. This would help secure the new funding streams that sustainable leisure travel in England so urgently needs.

- 1.15 Perhaps an even more important lesson is the fact that the existence of a scheme of excellent, fully integrated public transport to meet leisure, needs to be seen as an integral part of all visitor management strategies for a leisure destination. This may well need to include some element of traffic or demand management - the classic “stick” - against which the “carrot” of new imaginative, enjoyable, sustainable transport opportunities can be balanced.
- 1.16 Developing sustainable travel opportunities needs to be perceived as not just being about opportunities for people without cars, but also about persuading a significant percentage of those with cars to travel by more sustainable means. Achieving such behavioural change is a true realisation of sustainable development and can perhaps be achieved within the context of a carefully thought through and effectively delivered Visitor Travel Plan.

Table 1 Good Practice in sustainable leisure travel - hitting more than one target

No.	Name of Scheme	User friendly and effective information	Innovative; tackles social exclusion; multiple benefits	Successful Partnership Approaches	Effective and long term funding packages; guiding principles; sound business planning
1	The Cotswolds Explorer	x	x		
2	Jurassic Coastlinx53	x	x	x	x
3	Peak Connections	x	x	x	
4	Dartmoor Sunday Rover	x	x	x	
5	Sherwood Forester	x	x	x	x
6	Pendle Witch Hopper	x	x		
7	Shropshire Hills Shuttles	x	x	x	
8	Breeze the Downs	x	x	x	x
9	Suffolk Coastal Link	x	x	x	
10	Greenway House	x	x	x	
11	Cairngorms Heather Hopper	x	x	x	
12	The Devon & Cornwall Community Rail Partnership	x	x	x	x
13	Pembrokeshire Greenways	x	x	x	x
14	Widen the Choice - East Anglia	x	x	x	
15	Hadrians Wall Bus	x	x	x	x
16	Cravenlink	x	x	x	
17	Moorsbus	x	x	x	x
18	Norfolk Coast Hopper	x	x	x	x
19	Gower Explorer	x	x	x	x
20	Lakeland Explorer	x	x	x	x

2 Case Studies

Case Study 1 - Explore the Cotswolds by Public Transport Guides

- 2.1 Explore the Cotswolds by Public Transport is a package of promotional publications and web-site pages designed to promote environmentally sustainable tourism and travel to, and within, the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2.2 Covering 790 square miles, the Cotswolds is the largest of the 40 AONBs in England and Wales and in transport terms the most complex. There are no less than seven local transport authorities co-ordinating and providing bus services within the AONB area, two rail companies and over 40 individual bus operators. This results in a good network of services, albeit with serious gaps in provision on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- 2.3 Following a detailed audit of available services undertaken for the Cotswold Conservation Board during the 1990s, it was concluded that the priority was to market the existing network as effectively as possible to visitors and the local community, so that by increasing ridership existing services could be safeguarded and ultimately improved.
- 2.4 A marketing company was employed to devise a series of publications, listing all visitor and heritage attractions within the Cotswolds accessible by public transport, together with suggestions for attractive Taster Days out on foot, by cycle or bus. These were linked to stylised maps to simplify the network into a series of colour coded maps, all of which relate to services within three Zones. These correspond to major Gateways into the Cotswolds, the colour coding cross-referring to access to the attractions by the appropriate zonal map.
- 2.5 One of the major challenges facing any publication promoting public transport access to the countryside is the frequency in which timetable changes can date information almost before the ink is dry on a publication. On the other hand, unless information is detailed enough to be able to be used at the moment of contact or when being picked up, it is of little use to the visitor. The compromise solution has been to print three monochrome timetable supplement booklets for each of the three zones. These can be reprinted quickly and relatively cheaply every six months (in December and May) to correspond to the main national rail timetable changes. This way the booklets remain as accurate as possible. There are also clear warnings to travellers to double check times with appropriate phone lines and web-sites if there is uncertainty.
- 2.6 All the information is also carried on the Cotswolds AONB web-site, with links to other national sites. In addition there are web-based walks which link to the timetable information.
- 2.7 The Cotswolds Way, Britain's newest National Trail runs between Chipping Campden and Bath along the western edge of the AONB. An additional 20-page guide, (an addition to the three supplementary timetable booklets) Walk and Explore the Cotswold Way by public transport has been added to the series, and is published in an identical format to the other timetables. This deals exclusively with public transport access to the Way, and divides each stage of the route into 16 full or half day stages, to and from key transport nodes on the Cotswold Public Transport network. The booklet indicates actual bus times, (including links to or from major towns and railheads), detailed walking direction to specific bus stops when these are off the route, and taxi information as back up.
- 2.8 In addition to the Cotswold Way Explorer Guides, another publication 'Days out on the Cotswold Way' offers three sets of simple instructions to allow walkers to avoid the need for back-packing

along the Way by enabling them to stay in Bath, Stroud or Cheltenham for three or four nights and access the Way on a daily basis. These are primarily designed to be carried on the web, but can be downloaded by users or at Tourist Information Centres on request.

Lead Authority and Key Partners

- 2.9 Cotswold Conservation Board plus Cotswold Way National Trail Office, the Cotswolds and Malverns Transport Partnership.

Contact

- 2.10 Information and Interpretation Officer, Cotswold Conservation Board 01451 862003.

Target markets for the service

- 2.11 Primarily holidaymakers and day visitors to the Cotswolds, but also local people.

Number of people using the service or facility

- 2.12 Not known but 15,000 copies of the colour guide and 32,000 copies of the timetable booklets are circulated each year. In 2006-7, an extra 10,000 copies of the Northern Guide were paid for by the Cotswolds and Malverns Transport Partnership and were circulated via First Great Western who operate most of the local rail services within the Cotswolds.

Estimated growth/decline of the numbers of users

- 2.13 Not known.

Total cost of the service in 2007

- 2.14 The total research, design and print cost for the full set of Explorer guides costs £28,000 per annum in total. The Cotswold Way National Trail office contribute £5,400.

Monitoring

- 2.15 Evidence from Tourist Information Centres and other outlets in the Cotswolds suggests that the Explore Guides are currently the most popular publications produced by the Board, with constant requests from the public and tourist businesses, and demand often outstrips supply. It is clear that what was regarded as a difficult concept in terms of information presentation is now more widely understood and accepted by the public, including the colour coded maps.

Future development

- 2.16 Despite severe budget restraints facing the Conservation Board, it is hoped that production of the Explorer Guides can continue, and it may well be that increased involvement of the local authorities and organisations, such as the Cotswolds and Malverns Transport Partnership can contribute not only to additional print runs, but to core research and publication costs.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

- 2.17 The Cotswolds Explore Guides indicate the value for the tourist industry and benefit for transport operators of having easy to use, visitor friendly public transport information, both in printed form and, increasingly on web-sites. By combining destination marketing and good visitor information, with simplified timetable information, visitors with or without cars are motivated to use the available networks. The Cotswolds Conservation Board is the only organisation publishing information for the AONB as a whole rather than local parts of the Cotswolds, and the publications have done much to overcome the "balkanisation" of transport in the Cotswolds from a visitors' perspective.
- 2.18 The approach has been to provide information from the perspective of users rather than providers, but there may be scope for more detailed research in the future to prove how this approach to information provision is influencing travel behaviour.

Case Study 2 - Jurassic CoastlinX53 - The Jurassic Coast bus

- 2.19 The Jurassic Coast, along the coastlines of Dorset and East Devon, is, to date, England's only World Heritage Site based mainly on natural features. Jurassic Coastlinx53 is an all year round liveried double deck bus service which operates every two hours between Exeter and Poole and Bournemouth, parallel to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. It serves a significant number of attractive towns and villages along the 95 mile long stretch of coast as well as both the East Devon and Dorset Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It provides easy access to popular sections of the South West Coast Path.
- 2.20 The winter Sunday service operates between Exeter and Weymouth to a more restricted timetable, but still with four return journeys per day.
- 2.21 CoastlinX53 also links with other public transport services to and close to the coast, for example the dedicated Coasthopper 157 from Sidmouth to Exmouth, and other regular service buses to and from coastal towns link with the X53, some of which are now also branded as Jurassic Coast routes. There are also several other heritage transport links, including the Seaton Tramway and the Swanage Steam Railway. A number of local boat services are also marketed under the Jurassic Coast branding as another way of experiencing the spectacular coastal scenery.
- 2.22 The development of CoastlinX53, an existing bus route, was the result of a successful Rural Bus Challenge Bid by Dorset and Devon County Councils and operator First Bus. This enabled the purchase of a fleet of low floor, high profile Jurassic Coast branded vehicles to augment the existing bus service. The service now forms the centrepiece of the implementation of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Transport Strategy, first published in 2005. This has committed the partners to a range of traffic and demand management measures combined with improvements to the provision and marketing of sustainable access to the coast, including walking, cycling and horse riding routes and better public transport.
- 2.23 Promotion of the service is outstanding. Real imagination has been put into the production of a high quality, Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site introductory leaflet, well illustrated with interpretive photographs and text emphasising the geological richness of the coast, which does not patronise the reader. The leaflet also shows green travel infrastructure through the area including main walking trails, key heritage attractions, rail lines and bus routes, with the Jurassic CoastlinX53 given special emphasis. Separate promotional leaflets list attractions accessible along the bus routes (and also on boat routes) and there is a pocket guide to what can be seen from the bus window. There are also separate, well produced timetables. These are accessible on both Devon and Dorset County Councils web-sites, on regional and local tourism sites and they have high prominence within the Jurassic Coast World Heritage web-site.
- 2.24 The service won the Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transport (CILT) 2005 National Award for Excellence in the Rural Transport section.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.25 Devon and Dorset County Councils, First Bus, the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Steering Group.

Target markets for the service

- 2.26 This remains a key local bus service and carries a significant percentage of local people making everyday journeys for work, business, education and leisure. It also attracts significant numbers of day visitor and holidaymakers. It now forms an essential part of the area's green tourism infrastructure and is a major visitor attraction in its own right, with publicity emphasising the views from the bus window. Bargain day tickets are attractive to visitors and are competitive with the

marginal cost of using the car. Senior citizens are able to use the service free - a facility which will expand significantly with universal free travel for seniors throughout England from April 2008.

Key Contact

2.27 Jurassic Coast Marketing Officer 01305 224132.

Number of passengers in 2007

2.28 392,996.

Total costs of service

2.29 No complete figures are currently available.

Estimated growth of numbers over the last three years

2.30 Between 2002 (the last year of the old X53) and 2004, ridership on the bus grew from 56,000 trips to 122,000. In 2005/6, this figure more than doubled to 267,993 with further spectacular growth in 2006/7 to 392, 996. 2007/8 has, so far, shown a further 3.7 % growth on 2006/7, although the poor summer of 2007 undoubtedly depressed this growth rate.

Future developments

2.31 Six new buses are anticipated to join the network in 2008. The two 'Jurassic Coast By Bus' and 'Jurassic Coast By Boat' leaflets, are being combined to form a single 'Jurassic Coast Explore Without Your Car' leaflet, focusing on sustainable travel options including boat, bus, train, cycle and 'boot' (walking/South West Coast Path National Trail). Key bus stops along the route are also being branded with the Jurassic Coast logo.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

2.32 The Jurassic CoastlinX53 is an outstanding example of how high quality marketing, clear branding and the improvement of the core product with modern low floor vehicles and striking themed liveries, can transform a poorly performing bus service into not only a very good transport service that has won national recognition for excellence, but a major visitor attraction in its own right.

2.33 The process has been helped by the clear identification of the bus network as an integral part of the Jurassic Coast's Transport and Visitor Management Strategies. This has enabled the Jurassic Coastlinx53 to be given a suitably high profile and clear branding as an integral part of experiencing the coast's heritage, and visitor figures reflect this. The fact that this is also the core public transport route between Exeter and Bournemouth and intermediate settlements, means that enhancement of the frequency and quality of the service provides major economic and social benefits to the whole community. There are also significant related benefits in terms of reduced carbon emissions and greater social inclusion.

2.34 The Jurassic Coast branding is now being used very effectively to promote other linking services within the World Heritage site corridor and, as the spectacular growth in passenger numbers indicate, this is making a step-change difference to sustainable access opportunities along the whole of the World Heritage Site corridor. A demonstrable, practical benefit arising from the World Heritage site inscription. An important fact to note is that one of the driving forces behind the development and promotion of both the bus and boat services along the coast was the Jurassic Coast Transport Strategy, prepared in 2005 by Dorset and Devon County Councils. This document has many of the characteristics of a good Visitor Travel Plan.

Case Study 3 - Peak Connections

2.35 Peak Connections is a marketing project designed to promote sustainable transport opportunities across the Greater Peak District in northern Derbyshire, by creating a strong marketing brand.

Peak Connections, as a project, started in 2003 after receiving 3 years of funding from The Countryside Agency. It took its aims and objectives from the core purposes of its partnership organizations, which are to raise awareness and usage of public transport across the region by the adoption of a coordinated and innovative marketing approach.

- 2.36 The current version of the Peak Connections project started in March 2007, as partners had agreed that it was a good concept and felt that the project should continue. Although it was agreed that the brand was excellent, owing to the lack of Countryside Agency funding and a reduced contribution from partner organisations, it now has a smaller budget than in the past.
- 2.37 Following a careful analysis of the first phase (2003-7) of the project's achievements, and the experience and knowledge gained from the work undertaken in the interim period (2007-8), the following objectives have now been agreed by the project partners:
- To encourage greater use of public transport by leisure visitors and local residents as an alternative to the car, through partnership working within the greater Peak District region.
 - To promote a culture, in which sustainable transport is perceived to be a viable, environmentally friendly, accessible and enjoyable mode of transport, by the use of co-ordinated and innovative marketing.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.38 Peak Connections is hosted by the Peak District National Park Authority and works in partnership with Derbyshire County Council, Derwent Valley Community Rail Partnership, Hope Valley & High Peak Transport Partnership, The Derby and Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership, and the public transport authority members of the South Pennines Integrated Transport Strategy (SPITS).

Key Contact

- 2.39 Project Officer, Peak Connections, Peak District National Park Authority 01629 0816200.

Target markets for the service

- 2.40 Peak Connections has eight key target markets:
- leisure visitors;
 - Greater Peak District residents;
 - car users;
 - family market;
 - existing public transport users;
 - walkers;
 - the environmentally-concerned; and
 - students.

Current work and achievements

- 2.41 A review of work undertaken in phase one of Peak Connections has shown that the project has been held in high regard by stakeholders and the public alike. It is recognised that the best use of resources available is to build on the successful initiatives that have already been implemented.
- 2.42 During the interim period of March 2007 until the adoption of a new plan for the project in 2008, the project has concentrated on the retention of brand presence for the 2007 tourist season. Knowledge and experience gained during this time has also informed this plan.
- 2.43 The intention is to maintain as much of the previous work as feasible and to further develop the brand in individual, self-funding projects.

2.44 The period from March 2007 to the adoption, production and agreement of this plan has concentrated on the retention of brand presence for the 2007 tourist season. This has been achieved by the following:

- A decision was made to initially concentrate on revamping and raising the web presence of Peak Connections as this gave access to more people and represented a cost effective solution to keeping the brand alive. This was achieved by working in partnership with Visit Peak District and Derbyshire, the largest targeted marketing campaign within the area promoting the region to visitors. The Peak Connections web pages are a subsection of the overall site, a banner on the homepage serves to entice visitors to visit the Peak Connections pages and to download their own copies of leaflets, as well as encouraging them to travel in a sustainable manner.
- Five of the previous Peak Connections guides have been updated for 2007 in an electronic format accessible via the web pages.
- The voucher scheme within the leaflets, allowing users of public transport to save money on admission charges, has been renegotiated with a number of visitor attractions in the project area enabling this popular initiative to continue. For example, visitors to Chatsworth House arriving by bus can enjoy “two for one” entrance concessions, a major saving.
- To raise awareness of the web pages, 12 Tourist Information Centres within the area have all received information and laminated posters to advertise Peak Connections and the web-site, highlighting access to the leaflets.
- Funding was secured for a project to promote the Upper Derwent Valley Park and Ride bus service 222 which enabled the printing of 15,000 leaflets, distributed to Tourist Information Centres and laminated posters for use around the site to highlight to visitors the presence of the bus.
- Work, started in phase one, on the Ride and Ramble project, a walks book linking linear walks with public transport has continued.
- Numerous editorial opportunities have been taken to retain awareness of the brand.

Total Costs and Funding

2.45 Core project costs in 2005/06 were £38,466 with an available marketing budget of £67,987. These funding arrangements ceased after 2005/06, with the demise of the Countryside Agency.

2.46 Core project costs for 2007/08, including a limited marketing budget, are £20,372. The project officer's post is, now therefore part-time and the intention is that all marketing initiatives undertaken will be self funding.

2.47 Funding is secured until March 2008, with the key contributors being SPITS (South Pennines Integrated Transport Strategy), Peak District National Park Authority, Derby and Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership. Consultations are underway to replicate this arrangement for 2008/2009.

Future development

2.48 An Action Plan and programme of work is currently under preparation by the Project Officer which will be submitted to the Peak Connection project partners in 2008 for implementation in the coming Financial Year. This programme is likely to take forward the agreed objectives and continue to build on the successful initiatives already undertaken, within the constraints of available resources.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

2.49 Peak Connections is essentially a destination marketing project first and a public transport project second. By focusing on the destination, the sustainable means of access to that destination is then presented to the potential visitor. This means that the visitor is first motivated to travel and then the means of travel is emphasised, a classic piece of destination marketing, but with

sustainable forms of travel at its heart. This approach also makes it easier to bring in funding from partners and from external funding agencies, though the challenge facing the project in 2008 will be to generate sufficient funding to cover not only core costs, but specific existing and new project funding to make a real difference to visitor travel behaviour, as well as meeting the objectives of funding partners.

Case Study 4 - The Dartmoor Sunday Rover

- 2.50 The Dartmoor Sunday Rover is a fully integrated network of train and bus services from Plymouth and Exeter and nearby towns into and through the Dartmoor National Park. As well as using scheduled bus services, including the popular Transmoor Link (service 82 Plymouth-Exeter via Princetown), the network utilises the Tamar Valley line train service (Plymouth-Gunnislake) and in the summer months, the reopened Dartmoor Railway between Exeter, Crediton, Okehampton and Meldon. Full summer services (including the Dartmoor Railway) operate on Sundays and Bank Holidays between the end of May and late September, and during the rest of the year there is a good, but more limited, network. This includes commercial bus services, as well as those supported by Devon County Council and the National Park Authority.
- 2.51 Relatively few of the Sunday bus services actually operate on Dartmoor itself and many people from Exeter or Plymouth use the Transmoor Link as a scenic leisure bus ride to enjoy Dartmoor through the bus window without alighting. The service is also used by many local people to go into either Plymouth or Exeter for shopping purposes.
- 2.52 Inexpensive day "Sunday Rover" tickets at £6 for individuals and £16 for families compare favourably with the marginal cost of driving a car, as the ticket is also valid on linking bus local services throughout Devon. The network is marketed through a variety of leaflets and through both the National Park's own and Devon County Council's web-sites. There are also self guided walk leaflets available linked to services on the Sunday Rover and weekday network.
- 2.53 Primarily designed to help day and staying visitors without their own transport to access the National Park, the network is also designed to attract visitors out of their cars and onto more sustainable forms of travel, thereby forming part of the National Park's overall sustainable transport strategy. This, in turn, is linked to traffic management measures and the "Moor Care" campaign to encourage drivers to drive more responsibly and reduce death and injuries to wildlife and to Dartmoor ponies.
- 2.54 Marketing of the Sunday Rover network and tickets is done through an attractive simplified network route map, and a comprehensive Sunday Rover guide with all relevant timetables, suggestions of scenic days out on Dartmoor using various travel modes from Exeter, Plymouth, Newton Abbot, Torbay, Totnes and Tavistock. There is also a booklet of eight self guided walks, all of which are accessible by weekday and Sunday Rover bus services. However, half of the walks are specific Bus Walks - linear routes which can only be done by bus, either travelling throughout on the Sunday Rover network or by park and ride. There is also a list of places and visitor attractions to visit on Dartmoor by bus. The Sunday Rover is also promoted through the Dartmoor National Park web site.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.55 Dartmoor National Park and Devon County Council. Operated by First, Stagecoach, Countrybus and First Great Western (in Winter) and additionally Dartmoor Railway and Carmel Coaches during the summer.

Key Contact

- 2.56 Sustainable Tourism Officer Dartmoor National Park Authority 01626 831003.

Target market for the service

- 2.57 All day and staying visitors to Dartmoor National Park, also residents of the gateway towns (Exeter, Plymouth, Newton Abbot, Torbay, Tavistock and Okehampton), and visitors to those towns who want to visit Dartmoor and local people living in the Dartmoor villages served by the bus and train network.

Number of participants in 2007

- 2.58 On sponsored services on peak summer Sundays from 02 June - 29 September: Service 82 (Transmoor Link) - 3954 passenger journeys; Service 272 (Gunnislake - Newton Abbot) - 1008 passenger journeys from 02 June - 29 September.

Estimated growth/decline of numbers over the last three years

- 2.59 Total passenger numbers on the summer network (including Dartmoor Railway) have been as follows: 2005 - 23,000, 2006 - 25,000; 2007 - 20,000.

Total cost of service in 2007

- 2.60 Annual cost of the Dartmoor Sunday Rover network of services is approximately £130,000. This is for operation requirements alone, as funds are not currently available for promotion. For 2008, the operators have made a proposal that they may be willing to match local authority and National Park funds for promotion if that will help the build network. Monitoring is done by officers from Devon County Council who collate figures from the operators and pass these to interested parties.

Future Development

- 2.61 The main partners (National Park Authority and Devon County Council) are all facing budgetary cut backs so whilst all will be done to protect services there is currently no likelihood of expanding them. However, the Dartmoor Sunday Rover is viewed in a very positive way by partners, so its future is not in any doubt.
- 2.62 The fall in passenger numbers in summer 2007 can be attributed to several factors - the very poor summer weather, (including floods in the Midlands that affected travel patterns), lack of sufficient publicity and marketing (reduced funds). However, there is a concern that the network is stagnant and loss of the popular linking vintage bus service from Okehampton, owing to servicing and reliability problems, has affected ridership. In addition, the cost of providing the identical network at previous levels has increased, and Dartmoor National Park Authority has had to pool its limited funds into service provision and not promotion, which in turn has affected the bottom line of passenger revenues. For 2008, there will be a 'start of season' meeting between operators and authorities to ensure more effective promotion and co-ordinated running of the Sunday Rover network in 2008. It is also hoped that better weather will play its part in encouraging more people back onto the public transport network.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

- 2.63 The Dartmoor Sunday Rover is an excellent example of a fully integrated leisure travel network which is promoted as a major element of the National Park's overall sustainability agenda. In particular, it is closely linked with responsible travelling across the Moor, including the long established "Moor Care" driver awareness and traffic management programme.
- 2.64 An important element is the degree to which the routes and information are targeted to nearby major day-visitor catchment communities, such as Exeter and Plymouth, as well as staying visitors. The promoted leisure network is not just confined to the National Park but the whole of South Devon, thus broadening the concept out into a sub-regional Sunday and Bank Holiday green travel network and lifestyle choice. However, the dip in patronage in 2007, whilst linked to the poor summer weather, is also a clear indication of the urgent need to prioritise marketing and to secure more resources for service improvements and imaginative promotion if the 2007 decline is to be reversed. There may also be a case for more closely focused monitoring to

indicate the degree to which the Dartmoor Sunday Rover is delivering demonstrable social inclusion and environmental benefits.

Case Study 5 - The Sherwood Forester Network

- 2.65 The Sherwood Forester is a network of Sunday and Bank Holiday bus services operating through much of Nottinghamshire north of the city of Nottingham, focusing on the historic Sherwood Forest with its Visitor Centre and Country Park. It also includes a number of other heritage and countryside attractions, for example Edwinstowe, Newstead Abbey (Lord Byron's home), Rufford Country Park, Clumber Park, Cresswell Crags and Eastwood, the birthplace of author D.H. Lawrence.
- 2.66 Part of the network is commercial, part is supported by the local authority including three seasonal "Sherwood Forester" branded bus services from Nottingham, Worksop and Mansfield. This is sponsored by the County Council to give access into Nottinghamshire's countryside. There are also services that link directly to and from the Peak District where they connect with services into the National Park and the Peak Connections promotion. Bus timetables are carefully integrated to offer seamless travel opportunities, and there are key bus interchanges at Newstead Abbey Lakeside and at Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre.
- 2.67 Bargain Day Ranger tickets are purchasable on most buses, enabling a family to travel on the entire network, plus linking services, for just £10. Tickets are valid into Derbyshire as far as Ashbourne, Bakewell, Crich Tramway Museum, Dovedale and Matlock. There is also reverse movement from Derbyshire into Sherwood Forest.
- 2.68 The network is promoted by a 'Visit Nottingham by Bus' booklet, with the distinctive Sherwood Forester red arrow logo, which lists many attractions in the Forest and other parts of Nottinghamshire which are accessible on the Sunday bus network. The distinctive branding is also carried on boards on Forester bus dashboards to make them easily recognisable to passengers when boarding. There are useful discounts available at many attractions to bus travellers on production of a Day Ranger ticket. The booklet contains timetables of the main Forester and other services, and an outline colour-coded route map as well as details of attractions, tickets and a page of simple "how to use the bus" instructions, designed to help people who are not familiar with bus travel to give infrequent users greater confidence.
- 2.69 This booklet is supported by a separate 'Out and About on Sundays' leaflet that details available bus services throughout the county on Sundays, attractions and discounts. The County Council also actively promotes Service 33, The Sherwood Arrow, a commercial service which operates daily, all year, on the major spine route through the Forest, between Nottingham and Worksop via Edwinstowe, Sherwood Forest Country Park and Clumber Park (with a leaflet also available on the County's web site with a route map and summary of attractions served by the bus).

Lead Authority and key Partners

- 2.70 Nottinghamshire County Council (Transport and Countryside teams) with commercial bus operators; close liaison with Derbyshire County Council with links into the Peak District.

Key Contact

- 2.71 Nottinghamshire Transport Services, Nottinghamshire County Council 0115 977 4608.

Target markets for the services

- 2.72 Residents of Nottinghamshire enjoying a leisure day out in Nottinghamshire's countryside; holidaymakers and visitors from further afield coming to Sherwood Forest and local communities who enjoy a higher quality of Sunday transport as a result of the Forester network.

Numbers of passengers on the three dedicated seasonal Sherwood Forester services in 2007

2.73 5,013 compared with 4,605 in 2006.

Estimated growth of numbers over the last three years

2.74 2006 was around 5% down on 2005, but there was 8.2% growth in 2007, a net gain over the period.

Total cost of the service in 2007

2.75 The special summer Sherwood Forester services cost around £28,545 for 27 days of operation. A further £12,000 was spent on promotion - mainly the booklet and leaflets. Much of the revenue is generated on commercial feeder routes rather than the Forester network itself, so operating the special Forester services benefits the network as a whole.

Future development

2.76 The County Council is looking at improving links between the major attractions with increased frequencies on the core parts of the network. There are hopes to have a further bus in the core Forester network, for example to link car park sites with the proposed new Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre and with cycle carriage on buses, but this will depend on resources available to meet rising costs (in part resulting from EU regulations on journey lengths). If resources are more limited there may have to be a reduction in operating dates rather than loss of frequency, and the links to the Peak District could be more vulnerable. Additional services introduced in 2007 linking the Sherwood Forester network with Robin Hood Airport are likely to remain.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

2.77 In 2007, the Sherwood Forester network celebrated its Silver Jubilee as one of the UK's best promoted leisure networks linking urban towns with rural visitor attractions, as well as the specially protected landscapes of the Forest itself. By marketing the whole Sunday network, commercial and tendered routes alike, as a single leisure network, the viability of the whole is secured and the network is now recognised as a leisure product which is an integral part of the tourism and countryside access provision of Nottinghamshire. The success of the Sherwood Forester network is a tribute to the teamwork and commitment and vision of the County Council, together with the bus operators, using a strong brand and focusing on destination marketing built around the very successful Ranger Day ticket, which is priced at a level where it compares favourably with the marginal cost of a car trip, thereby helping to meet the Council's social inclusion and environmental objectives.

Case Study 6 - The Pendle Witch Hopper

2.78 The Pendle Witch Hopper, Bus service 70/71, is an hourly circular Sunday and Bank Holiday bus service, which operates from Easter until the end of October, from the East Lancashire former cotton towns of Burnley and Nelson (both towns have high social deprivation and low car ownership) to Clitheroe and into the south eastern part of the Forest of Bowland AONB, in particular around the villages on the shoulders of Pendle Hill. As this is an area linked with the history and legends of the 17th century Pendle Witches, the service is loosely themed to the Pendle Witch country it serves.

2.79 The service is popular with walkers and sightseers, but also provides a summer Sunday service to local villages on Pendleside who would otherwise not have any Sunday bus service. There are outstanding walking opportunities around and over Pendle Hill, a local landmark.

2.80 Promotion is by a simple, standard A5 leaflet, but with good bus stop information. In 2007, additional support was provided by the Forest of Bowland AONB through their own web site, with simplified visitor-friendly timetable information and a stylised interactive route map of the AONB, with links to these timetables.

- 2.81 The AONB has also provided an initial downloadable, self-guided walk over the summit of Pendle Hill between the iconic villages of Barley and Downham, so that users can print details of the walk and the relevant local bus timetable with the click of a button.
- 2.82 On Thursday evenings in summer there is a special “evening out” Pendle Witch Hopper bus, which uses the branding to offer local people and visitors a trip out to local pubs and restaurants in the villages, the service being demand responsive in terms of collecting people before or after a meal.
- 2.83 A more limited weekday network, the Pendle Wayfarer, serves some of the villages on the network, but this is due to be incorporated into an expanded weekday Witch Hopper service in 2008 - see below.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.84 Lancashire County Council, Borough Councils of Pendle, Burnley and Ribble Valley, Tyrer Tours Ltd., plus the Forest of Bowland AONB who are taking an increasingly active role in marketing the bus network with their publications and events.

Key Contact

- 2.85 Public Transport Officer, Lancashire County Council 01772 534564.

Target market for the service

- 2.86 Primarily day visitors from the nearby catchment communities, but also local residents of the villages and holidaymakers in the area.

Number of participants in 2007

- 2.87 3,300 passenger journeys.

Estimated growth of numbers over the last three years

- 2.88 Approximately up 41% (from 2,350 passenger journeys in 2005 to 3,300 in 2007).

Total cost of service in 2007 broken down into costs

- 2.89 Difficult to pinpoint exactly the cost of the service as the Sunday service is incorporated into the weekday Pendle Wayfarer Contract, but estimated subsidy to be around £350 per operational day. Promotion of the thorough A5 colour timetable print cost (2007) of £400. Staff time is not included. Monitoring is built into Transport Inspector’s regular checks during the year, with Electronic Ticket Data being made available by the operator, Tyrer Tours Ltd.

Future developments

- 2.90 2008 will see a significant expansion of the Witch Hopper service on weekdays, in effect achieved by incorporating the weekday, more local Pendle Wayfarer into the extended Sunday route (though not serving the villages of Waddington or West Bradford north of the A59). There will be a new hourly Monday to Saturday daytime service between Nelson and Clitheroe covering the majority of the Pendle Witch Hopper route. This new route will also be combined with the former B10 Bowland Transit service between Clitheroe and Slaidburn, thus securing the future of this award-winning service through the heart of the Forest of Bowland AONB. A new promotional leaflet, being produced on behalf of the Forest of Bowland AONB, will focus on sustainable tourism and green travel opportunities, including suggested linear walk routes, on the Witch Hopper and Bowland Transit network, and a programme of mainly linear guided walks is being arranged by the newly established “B10 Club” to promote the network.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

- 2.91 The Pendle Witch Hopper is a good example of a service which is focused very much on the needs of the local community it serves, in this case a traditional market of people without cars,

especially older people, living in the less affluent industrial towns of East Lancashire, to enable them to reach their local countryside at weekends. The Hopper provides a Sunday and Bank Holiday service to fine local countryside including excellent walking country, within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- 2.92 Without the significant use of the service by visitors, the local villages along the route could not sustain a Sunday service. By simple but effective branding, using the Pendle Witch name, and providing well distributed local publicity, including web-site promoted walks, use of the services by visitors from nearby towns has increased to a level that has cut subsidy levels required, to make this one of the best performing rural bus services in Lancashire. The service also has important benefits for the local economy as many people from the two main catchment towns use the service to go out for a meal or drink in cafes and pubs in a choice of villages along the route.

Case Study 7 - The Shropshire Hills Shuttles

- 2.93 The Shropshire Hills Shuttles comprise of three interlinking bus routes (The Long Mynd, Stiperstones and Secret Hills Shuttles) which serve the South Shropshire Hills at weekends and Bank Holiday Mondays between Easter and the end of October. The services originated as a result of identifying the need to find solutions to parking and visitor access problems experienced by the National Trust around the Long Mynd. This led in turn to the development of a network of experimental minibus services to resolve these problems and meet the needs of visitors, including a Shuttle Bus up the Burway and Long Mynd. The network was expanded to include routes over Stiperstones and from Church Stretton to Much Wenlock, and later the Secret Hill route between Craven Arms and Bishop's Castle.
- 2.94 The end of funding from Countryside Agency in 2004 was alleviated by the funding source being transferred to the Defra Rural Enterprise scheme in 2005, with the three most successful services, Long Mynd, Stiperstones and Secret Hills, services continuing.
- 2.95 The Shropshire Hills Shuttles have now become a recognised part of the South Shropshire tourist experience, and receive strong support from partner organisations, users, tourist attractions and businesses in South Shropshire.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.96 In 2007, the Shuttles were funded primarily by Shropshire County Council, and their Fleet Operations Group also operated the service. Matched funding was also given by Natural England and The National Trust. The project was managed and promoted by TESS (Transport for Everyone in South Shropshire) with in-kind support from the Shropshire Hills AONB.

Target markets for the service

- 2.97 The Shropshire Hills Shuttles' main objective has been to offer tourists visiting the South Shropshire Hills area a car free alternative to explore the area. The South Shropshire Hills are an AONB, with the Stiperstones (managed by Natural England) and the Long Mynd (managed by The National Trust) forming the centre. By giving visitors a car free alternative it is hoped that they will explore some of the more remote areas of the AONB, and help the local economy by spending money in pubs, shops and cafes on the route. However, as the Shuttles also serve a number of isolated rural communities that do not have their own bus service, the Shropshire Hills Shuttles have also been used by local residents to access services and market towns, such as Church Stretton and Bishop's Castle. Some local people also use the service for leisure purposes, such as gaining access to walks in the hills. In 2006, the split between visitors and local people using the service was about 60:40.
- 2.98 The services are promoted by a full colour A2 leaflet with maps of the bus routes, timetables and various visitor suggestions, including recommended self-easy guided walks with detailed maps.

Key Contact

2.99 Shropshire Access Partnership Officer, 01743 252534.

Passenger numbers in 2007

2.100 7,867.

Estimated growth over the last three years

- 2.101 Since 2005, passenger numbers have grown from 3,193, an increase of around 145%. The main motivating factor in this growth was the introduction of free travel for local residents aged 60 plus in April 2006. However, the numbers of paying passengers has also increased in this period.
- 2.102 The Shuttles had a reduced operating season in 2005 which makes comparisons with 2006 and 2007 a little difficult. However, the 2006 and 2007 seasons operated for an identical length of time and in this time passenger numbers increased by 28%. It is thought this growth in numbers is down to a number of factors, which are:
- Increased use of the service as a result of introduction of concessionary travel for local residents aged 60+.
 - Shuttle routes and timetables have remained the same for a number of years and passengers are confident the buses will run effectively.
 - In 2006 and 2007 the Shuttles were operated by Shropshire County Councils Bus Fleet, whose drivers provided an excellent customer focused service, with passenger satisfaction levels being some of the highest on any similar service in the UK.
 - Effective leaflets and web based marketing of the service.
 - Strong support and promotion of the service by local tourism providers - hotels, Bed and Breakfasts, Tourist Information Centres and pubs.
 - Strong partnership running the service involving the National Trust, AONB, Natural England, Shropshire County Council and TESS.
 - Increased passenger awareness of the impacts of private car use on the environment (14% of passengers indicated this as a reason for using the Shuttles rather than using private cars).

Total cost of service in 2007

- 2.103 The cost of operating the Shropshire Hills Shuttles in 2007 was just over £35,000. This allowed three routes to be operated for 64 days between Easter and the end of October, using 16 seat, wheelchair accessible minibuses.
- 2.104 Promotion of the service was through a number of sources, primarily a full colour timetable leaflet which was distributed across Shropshire. Some local advertising, promotion of the service at local events and a familiarisation tour for local tourism providers also took place. The total cost of this was approximately £5,000. However, a significant amount of extra publicity was also given "in kind" by partner organisations such as Shropshire County Council, Natural England, AONB and the National Trust.
- 2.105 Monitoring and management of the service cost a further £5000.
- 2.106 The most significant monitoring of the service has been the annual passenger survey. All passengers boarding the bus are given a freepost survey form to complete and return after they have completed their journey. This form gives data about passengers (age, post code, why they use the bus etc), together with views about the service and the driver. Each form includes a driver's number which allows the partnership to monitor which drivers are receiving the most positive feedback from passengers. At the end of each season the best performing drivers receive a prize of a free meal at one of the pubs on the Shuttles route. While this type of monitoring is quite costly and time consuming, it does provide excellent data on the service which we have used to alter and improve the service to our passengers.

Future developments

- 2.107 Since the ending of Countryside Agency Rural Transport funding in 2004, the Shuttles have struggled to find funding on an annual basis. In 2005 and 2006 a grant from Defra's Rural Enterprise Scheme, together with support from the National Trust, allowed the service to continue. Securing funding in 2007 was even more difficult, and only emergency funding from Shropshire County Council allowed the Shuttles service to continue to operate.
- 2.108 The long term future of the Shuttles is under serious doubt. Funding for rural transport projects of this type is difficult to find, and local transport authorities, such as Shropshire County Council, are finding their core transport budgets are under significant pressure due to increasing operating costs and the decline in rural transport funding (a number of bus routes in Shropshire were also funded through the Countryside Agency).
- 2.109 Shropshire County Council is currently looking to see if elements of the Shropshire Hills Shuttles service can be incorporated into their core public transport budget. While there is strong support for the Shuttles by Shropshire County Council, it is possible that the 2008 Shuttles will be greatly reduced both in the length of time they operate and the route they cover, as local authority resources are needed for other aspects of the public transport budget. Therefore, less money may be available to promote and monitor the service.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

- 2.110 The Shropshire Shuttles were initially created to meet specific traffic management problems experienced by the National Trust in popular areas of countryside - parking congestion and the difficulties experienced by drivers walking back to their vehicles. They have evolved to become a network offering wider benefits in terms of sustainable travel outcomes, including meeting the travel needs of those without access to their own transport, locals and visitors alike.
- 2.111 Experience of the Shuttles indicates how the development of a new bus service like the Shropshire Hills Shuttles takes time to develop. The Shuttles have been running in a variety of different forms for around ten years, but it is only really in the last 4-5 years that they have become widely used by a significant number of people. If similar services are to be set up they need to be given time to develop. For this to happen longer term, more secure sources of rural transport funding need to be made available, as previously happened with Countryside Agency funding.
- 2.112 Another important lesson from the Shropshire Hills Shuttles is that visitors using such services also make a significant contribution to the local economy. University of Central Lancashire (UCL) surveys 2004-7 indicate that shuttle passengers spend £15 - £20 per person, during their day out. It is estimated that around £100,000 of spending in the rural economy was therefore generated as a result of the Shuttles.
- 2.113 In partnership with the National Trust, AONB and the UCL, the Shropshire Access Partnership are looking at ways in which other forms of public transport in South Shropshire can be promoted more effectively to tourists, with the long term aim of making the South Shropshire Hills a sustainable tourist destination.

Case Study 8 - Breeze up to the Downs

- 2.114 Breeze up to the Downs is a network of three leisure bus services linking the city of Brighton with some of its most popular countryside destinations on the nearby South Downs. These include the open top bus 77 between Brighton Pier and Devil's Dyke, the 78 between central Brighton and Stanmer Park and the 79 from central Brighton to Ditchling Beacon. Services operate at Sundays and Bank Holidays all year, and daily through the main summer months - the 77 on 121 days, the 78 on 82 days, the 79 on 81 days.

2.115 The three 'Breeze' services have evolved considerably over the years and have been wholeheartedly embraced by the local community and local families. Services are promoted by timetable leaflets, including the local resident's annual bus information newsletter, and through the Brighton and Hove bus and events web-sites. These include linear walks off the service, South Downs On-line, and by word of mouth. Most Brighton residents know of the 77 to Devil's Dyke, and a regular summer visit to Devil's Dyke by open top bus is de rigeur.

2.116 Results from a recent Tourism on Board passenger survey indicate:

- Compared to similar leisure services elsewhere in Britain, Breeze attracts a younger age profile, higher numbers identifying as BME, a higher proportion of women and a higher proportion of people accompanied by children.
- Without the Breeze project, 40% of passengers would have travelled by car.
- 70% of passengers are Brighton and Hove residents - 30% are visitors to the city.
- Breeze is one the most popular of all leisure bus networks in Britain, carrying a significant number of people.
- Passengers score Breeze services highly for comfort and frequency.

Lead Authority and key partners

2.117 Brighton & Hove City Council, with The National Trust and South Downs AONB Conservation Board.

Key contact

2.118 Public Transport Officer, Brighton & Hove Council, 0123 292480.

Target markets for the service

2.119 The prime markets are both local residents and visitors. The service is intended to provide access to popular, but hard to reach locations on the South Downs close to Brighton, the 'Downs on our Doorstep'. The main market is largely people without access to their own car. However, the service also provides an environmentally sustainable alternative to driving to and parking in a number of popular 'honey pot' locations on the Downs where parking is restricted, thus helping to reduce congestion and erosion by reducing car use and the need for parking in areas where parking is a major problem.

Number of participants in 2007

2.120 53,808 (Financial year 2006/07).

Estimated growth/decline of numbers over the last three years

2.121 15% growth.

Total cost of service in 2007

2.122 These can be broken down as follows:

- a) operation £57,280 plus car park supervision £2,720 - most provided by the local authority, but £15,000 is provided on an annual basis by the National Trust;
- b) promotion £6,100; and
- c) monitoring £2,500.

Future developments

2.123 No major changes to the service are currently planned, however, Brighton Council's budgetary position is difficult and there could be some cutbacks to service provision in summer 2008.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

- 2.124 Breeze the Downs initially arose from a need to cope with a specific traffic management problem in a limited part of the South Downs, but soon became a much more ambitious project to make Brighton's immediate countryside much more accessible to a wider audience. This was done through an innovative open top service and excellent marketing which has now enabled the Breeze the Down brand and network of additional leisure services to become a familiar part of Brighton's leisure and tourism infrastructure, important for the local community and visitors to Brighton alike.
- 2.125 This success both reflects and contributes to a strong bus-using culture in Brighton, and the costs of its provision, far from being perceived as marginal to transport provision in the city, must be seen to be a strong re-enforcement of car-free lifestyles which, without the existence of the Breeze the Downs network, would be a less attractive option for younger and older people alike, with consequent impacts both on the usage of the Brighton bus network as a whole and on traffic congestion in the city.

Case study 9 - Access to Minsmere and Dunwich - Coastlink

- 2.126 Coastlink is a flexible, demand responsive minibus service operating in rural East Suffolk which collects passengers at any pre-arranged point within the designated Coastlink Area access zone to visit a variety of locations including several National and local nature reserves within Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB - Minsmere, Leiston, Sizewell, Walberswick, Dunwich Heath, Dunwich Forest and the beach area. It also provides excellent access for walkers on the Suffolk Coast Path and Sandlings Walk.
- 2.127 The Coastlink bus meets trains at Darsham railway station on the East Suffolk (Ipswich-Lowestoft) line and scheduled bus services at Darsham, Blythburgh and Leiston. Services operate seven days a week, all year. Journeys must be pre-booked by 12 noon on the day before travel. A six seater vehicle is used and cycles and wheelchairs are carried, if pre-booked. Standard local bus fares are charged.
- 2.128 Promotion is through an A4 leaflet produced by the 'Widen the Choice' Rural Transport Partnership with support from the Suffolk Coast AONB Sustainable Development Fund.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.129 Suffolk County Council, Natural England, Widen the Choice Rural Transport Partnership, Coastal Accessible Transport Service (bus service operator).

Key Contact

- 2.130 Senior Passenger Transport Officer, Suffolk County Council 01473 265020.

Target market for the service

- 2.131 As anticipated at the outset, the local community has made greatest use of the service for accessing services in Leiston and Saxmundham. Visitors are taken from the train at Darsham to be distributed to places within the catchment area, including such major attractions as Minsmere and Dunwich Heath. Some less significant travel requirements from minor settlement to minor settlement are also catered for. These include many journeys which would not have been possible without Coastlink. Surprisingly, perhaps, considering the number of high profile RSPB Reserves and walking opportunities in the area, the visitor market has been slower to develop than anticipated, perhaps owing to the novelty of the service and the need to pre-book. However, it has also been interesting to note how much use has been made of CoastLink to access local employment, especially by young people.

Number of participants in 2007/8

2.132 Coastlink is currently on course to record nearly 7,000 passenger journeys. The figure to the end of October 2007 was 6,028 and there is very little fade in numbers over the winter period given interest in winter bird watching and a strong local community usage base. Since most passengers make an outward and return trips, this could be seen as 3,500 day “participants”. Many are regular users. 2006 saw 4,712 passenger journeys.

Estimated growth of numbers over the last three years

2.133 The 14 months preceding 2006 had 1,753 journeys recorded compared with just 47 in 2004. So, the second calendar year saw 177% growth and 2007 is estimated to have enjoyed a further 49% increase.

Total cost of service in 2007

2.134 It is difficult to differentiate the project's operation and promotion costs and the monitoring is not differentiated as the County Council has had no need to do so. Operational costs have been approximately £35,000 per annum.

Future developments

2.135 No substantial changes are planned for the immediate future. The sponsoring partnership continually expect that the service has reached its peak usage, but somehow patronage continues to climb.

2.136 Suffolk County Council is pleased with the progress of the service, which is one of the first and best examples in the UK of a service which combines a demand responsive service to meet visitor requirements with one to meet local needs. It was started with minimal support technology for pre-booking, and has coped remarkably well. The operating partnership sense that future development will require greater technological input but this has yet to be engaged in a way which is working smoothly. Suffolk County Council has wanted, from the outset, to reduce booking notice and has directed energy to achieving this. It is hoped that as similar operations develop in other parts of Suffolk and elsewhere there will be opportunities to strengthen the booking procedures with shared know-how.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

2.137 The Suffolk Coastal Link is especially interesting as being probably the UK's first example of a demand responsive service which is primarily designed to meet the needs of leisure users - accessing the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and two National Nature Reserves, as well as other coastal attractions. It is also significant that it feeds to and from both railway services on the East Suffolk line and to and from scheduled bus services in the area. Even though it is primarily designed to meet visitor needs, a very significant proportion of users are local people, and people accessing work, including paid workers and volunteers working in the field of conservation.

2.138 A clear lesson arising from this kind of innovative “demand responsive” service is that it takes considerable time for people to understand and have confidence in the service, so that setting up a network like this is not a question of “quick wins”. Demand responsive services can do much to meet more specialised leisure travel needs in rural areas of medium or low demand or at times outside the main season, in places or at times that cannot be met by conventional bus service. As in rural Suffolk, however, they need to be devised to supplement and not replace conventional rural bus services.

Case Study 10 - Greenway, River Dart, South Devon

- 2.139 The Greenway Estate, on a hillside overlooking the River Dart in South Devon some 4½ miles south of Paignton, is a 300 acre estate consisting of farmland, gardens and historic house (currently undergoing restoration). It was bought by the famous crime writer Agatha Christie in 1938 as her country retreat and given to the National Trust by Dame Agatha's family in 1999. 30 acres of the estate, including the Grade 2* listed gardens, were opened to the public by the National Trust in 2002.
- 2.140 However, because of major concerns about the impact of traffic on the narrow lanes leading to the house, severe planning restrictions were placed on the Trust. This was because of perceived potential problems of visitor traffic on the local community and the environment. The estate currently only has permission to open to the public four days a week for 37 weeks a year. The number of visitors is restricted to 40,000, with a limit of just 12,800 visitors' cars per annum. All visitors arriving by car have to pre-book, otherwise they are turned away.
- 2.141 Most visitors are, therefore, encouraged to arrive by public transport (including boat services from Dartmouth) walking and cycling. The Trust has developed strong local pro-public transport policies. Initially, when the estate was opened, a Hopper Bus service was provided from Paignton (where it is linked with the Dart Valley heritage steam railway) but this has been discontinued, owing to a lack of financial support.
- 2.142 However, the ferry service to Greenway has proved a great success, both with visitors who park and ride at Dartmouth, and those who come the whole way by public transport, using linking bus services to Dartmouth. Greenway Quay and Ferry services provide a ferry service to Greenway from Dartmouth and Dittisham, and also a longer 'cruise/ferry' service from Torquay. They also run "event" cruises for the National Trust to Greenway from Totnes. In all these cases, the boat trip is very much part of the essential experience of a visit to Greenway.
- 2.143 A second local boat company, Riverlink, works closely with Greenway Ferries. Riverlink provide boats if Greenway Quay and Ferry Services need extra vessels, and also sells tickets for them. The ferry services are an excellent example of local operators working together to provide an important service.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.144 The National Trust with the two boat operators, Greenway Quay and Ferry Services, and Riverlink.

Key contact

- 2.145 The Greenway Officer, National Trust (greenway@nationaltrust.org.uk).

Target market for the service

- 2.146 Holidaymakers in the area and day visitors from local towns including Brixham, Torquay, Dartmouth, Dittisham and Totnes.

Number of participants in 2007

- 2.147 32,000 visitors in total came to Greenway in 2007 of which 45% travelled by sustainable means. This includes a significant number who walk to the site, for example along the Greenway Walk from Brixham or the Dart Valley Trail from Kingswear.

Estimated growth/decline of numbers over the last three years

- 2.148 Overall growth in numbers has been around 35%, though figures dipped in 2005.

Total cost of service in 2007

2.149 Nil - all boat services were fully commercial but the Hopper bus service from Paignton did not operate.

Future developments

2.150 In 2008, there will be a direct ferry service from Brixham, and it is also hoped to restore the bus service from Paignton with some kind of "heritage bus".

2.151 In 2005, the National Trust bought the 220 year lease on Greenway Quay - with the lease comes the right to run the Dittisham Ferry and to land passengers heading for Greenway House. This investment cost the Trust £356,000 showing the Trust's commitment to offer alternatives to car use. In essence, the Trust will have the right to land boats in perpetuity, something regarded as essential for future success in managing the site sustainably.

2.152 Capital improvements and repairs to the Quay have been supported by Devon County Council and South Hams AONB. The Trust is presently now engaged with the restoration and conversion of Greenway House - due to open with the family's collections as they had them in the house, a holiday home for Agatha Christie and family, plus a 10 person holiday apartment on the first and second floors. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has offered the Trust £800,000 and Devon Renaissance £195,000 towards the overall cost of £5.4m. The Appeal for Greenway stands at £650,000, with a target of reaching £1m in three years. The site has, therefore, taken on a national significance as recognised by HLF. Green travel is the key to the successful operation of the site as it is proposed to double existing visitor figures without increasing traffic to the estate.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

2.153 The experience of the National Trust, forced to have a rigorous sustainable Visitor Travel Plan in place because of severe planning and physical capacity restraints, illustrates that it is possible to achieve a very high percentage of visitors arriving by other means than the private car, if there is a political will to do so. The trick is to make the sustainable travel part of the overall heritage experience - either on foot or by cycle, on bus or by boat.

2.154 The National Trust has looked at all available opportunities, most notably the ferry operators who have developed the river trip on a purely commercial basis to Greenway as an integral part of the visitor experience, and this proves that by working together everyone can gain. Also significant, and an example of good practice, is the way the site is promoted as part of two popular local walking trails.

2.155 Operation of the Hopper Bus from Paignton remains problematic. By combining the original leisure bus with a local bus service, neither market was served well and it was subsequently withdrawn. Any future shuttle would probably best be focused on serving visitor needs at key times, and could use Community Transport provision or even volunteer drivers with a heritage vehicle to reduce costs.

Case Study 11 - Cairngorms Explorer and Heather Hopper bus service

2.156 Cairngorms Explorer is the name given to the promotion of 'green' travel opportunities to and through the newly established Cairngorm National Park. An attractive full colour 64-page Cairngorm Explorer booklet and web-site pages on the National Park site promote a huge range of 'green' travel opportunities into and within the National Park for walking, cycling and sightseeing. The booklet offers the visitor, and local people, comprehensive bus and train service information, as well as local postbus services and details of the Strathspey Steam Railway, interspersed with National Park and tourist information, with detailed maps with suggestions for local walks accessible by bus and cycle rides.

2.157 Among the services promoted are two innovative seasonal leisure bus services, branded as Heather Hoppers. These include Heather Hopper 501 which operates two journeys a day, seven days a week between Grantown and Ballater and Heather Hopper 502/3 which operates a single journey each day between the end of June to mid August only, from Deeside and Perthshire, from Banochy to Pitlochry or Blairgowrie. Both services connect with each other and with other scheduled bus services in the region.

Lead Authority and key partners

2.158 Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), Highland Council, Aberdeenshire Council. There are two service contracts: one runs from Grantown-on-Spey to Ballater and return (ran in-service from Inverness in 2006) and one from Ballater to Grantown-on-Spey and return.

Key Contact

2.159 Economic Development Officer, Cairngorms National Park 01479 873527.

Target markets for the service

2.160 Setting up and actually operating the Heather Hopper service was the most cost effective means of undertaking reliable market research for the service. The services are targeted both at communities living in isolated Cairngorms villages, to connect them to larger towns for social and shopping travel, and also for National Park visitors who may want to see another part of the Park without using a car, or to undertake a linear walk.

Number of participants in 2007

2.161 The Hopper carried 2,471 passengers in 2007 over 19 weeks, around 18.6 per day. This compares with 1,769 passengers in 2006 over 13 weeks, around 19.4 per day.

Estimated growth of numbers over the last three years

2.162 The Hopper has only been running for two years. The first year had more publicity and ran in service from Inverness, allowing a more widely used direct service from Inverness to Grantown and on to Ballater. The service was widely used by concessionary card holders. Relatively few visitors travelled, but visitor numbers are expected to climb as the service gets established and better known.

Total cost of the service in 2007

2.163 Full details not currently available. CNPA pays for half of each contract cost; the other 50% is paid by the public transport authority. Promotion of the service is done through the Cairngorms Explorer booklet and web-site. In the first year, a small additional sum was spent on a separate A5 leaflet.

Future developments

2.164 'Ring-fencing' of finance has been removed from Council transport budgets in Scotland, so the Hopper service is not confirmed for 2008. The CNPA is trying to establish the Hopper service on the 5 year rolling bus contract programme with local councils in order to secure its future.

2.165 Transport needs long-term funding to establish bus services and routes, and this is not possible at present.

2.166 Establishing cycle carriage on the bus route has been problematic, but this is something the CNPA would wish to see happen, if these operational and financial problems can be overcome.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

2.167 This case study demonstrates how a new National Park Authority can develop a project designed to link existing sustainable travel networks in an innovative way. Initially, relatively low key, but with the potential to build on, the Hopper network provides an important 'green' transport link

across the National Park, a need identified in management plans. Central to the whole enterprise is marketing and the Heather Hopper network is promoted as part of a wide range of 'green' travel opportunities within the new National Park, giving strong messages about the need for sustainable use of the National Park.

- 2.168 The Heather Hopper services are, therefore, a good example of a "flagship" project in action. The existence of the bus, even though at the moment only a small scale service, acts as an indicator of the wider agenda. The benefits may be as much in drawing attention to the rest of the network as use of the bus itself, most of which are existing services providing essential access for Highland communities. This may be a more important outcome than the relatively limited numbers of people using the Heather Hopper network itself.

Case Study 12 - The Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership

- 2.169 The Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership is the largest, and one of the longest established, of the UK's 40 Community Rail Partnerships.
- 2.170 The Partnership's work is based along and around six rural branch lines in Devon and Cornwall, which all feed to and from the Great Western main line between London and Penzance. These are the Exeter-Barnstaple - **Tarka Line**, The Par-Newquay - **Atlantic Coast Line**, the Penzance-St Ives **St Ives Bay Line**, the Truro-Falmouth **Maritime Line**, the Liskeard-Looe **Looe Valley Line**, and the Plymouth-Gunnislake **Tamar Valley Line**.
- 2.171 The Partnership grew directly out of work of the Countryside Commission's Sustainable Transport Advisory service during the late 1980s. This led to a number of marketing innovations on what had been three of the, hitherto, relatively neglected rural branch lines. The Partnership was established to take forward and develop this initial work.
- 2.172 The prime aims of the Partnership are to:
- Promote use of the branch line trains.
 - To work for improvements to branch line services and facilities.
 - To promote places served by the branch lines.
 - To promote two-way communication between the community and the rail industry on the branch lines.

Lead Authority and Key Partners

- 2.173 The Partnership's lead partners include Cornwall and Devon County Councils, rail operators First Great Western, Plymouth City Council and the University of Plymouth, (who provide the Partnership's core costs) plus a host of other partners, including District, Town and Parish Councils, Dartmoor National Park Authority, and numerous voluntary bodies and local businesses who contribute in various ways, in cash and in kind, to particular initiatives on individual branch lines.
- 2.174 For a number of years, the Partnership has been based in the Faculty of Social Science and Business within the School of Geography in the University of Plymouth, and now works closely in partnership with the University's new Centre for Sustainable Transport. Initially, there was a single full time Project Officer. However, over the years, and reflecting the size and geographic spread of the Partnership, this post has expanded to a team of four: the Partnership Manager, the Rural Partnership Officer, a Development Officer and a Clerical Assistant. The Partnership achieved Rural Transport Partnership status in the 1990s which enabled it to draw in a wide range of match-funding from UK and EU sources, including four successful bids to the Strategic Rail Authority's Rail Passenger Partnership Fund for additional train services and station

enhancements. Further Countryside Agency support, through Rural Transport Partnership and Wider Welcome funding, led to more additional Sunday and weekday train services along the branches.

Key Contact

2.175 Partnership Manager 01752 233094.

Target Markets

2.176 Holidaymakers in the Region, day visitors from the main catchment towns and cities in Devon and Cornwall, local communities living within the rail corridors.

Current work

2.177 Each branch has its own Working Party which funds and directs the work of the Partnership on that particular line. Initiatives include preparation of timetables and fare tables twice a year in distinctive styles, which are delivered door to door through key catchment communities in the area. There are regular issues of branch line guides for each of the lines, including the popular 'Summer Days Out by Train' leaflets.

2.178 In addition, the Partnership organises branch line events, such as summer music on the Tarkar and Tamar line trains and walking festivals off the Looe Valley Line, which has a comprehensive pack of walking leaflets and a dedicated web-site.

2.179 The Partnership has also established four 'Real Ale Trails' across the two counties, promoting travel by train to around 50, mainly rural, pubs. Each pub has a hand stamp and free souvenirs available for those collecting stamps from different pubs. Carnets of travel tickets at a discount price are sold through local shops and post offices in the area. A new Bird Watchers' guide 'Spotting Birds by Train' has recently been published and events planned for 2008 include Sunday Jazz trains on the Tamar Valley Line, and celebrations to mark the centenary of the opening of the railway between Bere Alston and Gunnislake, also on the Tamar Valley Line.

2.180 There is a very well used, inter-active web-site 'Great Scenic Railways of Devon and Cornwall' and the Partnership also promotes the whole network in regional tourist brochures and in the annual 'Scenic Britain by Train' booklet.

Number of participants in 2007

2.181 No figures currently available.

Estimated growth over the last three years

2.182 Growth on all the lines has been impressive. Between 1997 and 2004, there was 36% growth of usage on the Maritime Line, whilst between 2001 and 2004 the Looe Valley and Tarka Lines achieved growth of 25% and 20% respectively. Changes to services with the new operator has made direct year by year comparisons since 2005 difficult but growth is continuing.

Total cost of the service in 2007

2.183 Not fully known owing to commercial confidentiality as the lines are now part of the First Great Western franchise.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

2.184 The Devon and Cornwall CRP, one of 40 such Community Rail Partnerships in the UK, now co-ordinated by ACORP (Association of Community Rail Partnerships) demonstrates the huge benefit of this kind of Partnership approach to the development and promotion of rural railways, both on the railway itself and off the route in terms of sustainable tourism and travel objectives. This can include linking buses, cycle and walking routes, guided walks and new station facilities, for example making better use of station premises for local business.

- 2.185 The involvement of voluntary groups and local businesses, as well as Parish and District Councils, with their local railway and with individual local stations through the work of Community Rail Partnerships is a major success story and one which is increasingly recognised by Government. Given the increasingly difficult financial scenarios currently faced by local authorities, future success for CRP may lie both in securing new sources of external funding, but also being closely focused on increasing passenger revenues to secure the future of lines and generate confidence among train operating companies that invest in Partnerships can increase traffic on both rural branch and inter-regional lines.
- 2.186 The existence of a Community Rail Partnership close to, or within, a countryside site or wider protected landscape is an opportunity for managers to develop strong links and active involvement with that Partnership.

Case Study 13 - Pembrokeshire Greenways and Coastal Bus services

- 2.187 'Greenways' was the first project of its kind to be developed in Wales combining sustainable access to the countryside (walking, cycling and public transport) with sustainable tourism; rural economic development and environmental management. The project was established in 1994 as a Countryside Council for Wales pilot project in South Pembrokeshire, under the management of South Pembrokeshire Action for Rural Communities (SPARC) - now operating Pembrokeshire-wide as Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development (PLANED).
- 2.188 PLANED is an independent charity and local development partnership which seeks to use a range of community initiatives to support the local rural economy of Pembrokeshire, whilst achieving environmental objectives. PLANED describes itself as "an engager, facilitator, networker and builder of partnerships".
- 2.189 Following the success of its pilot scheme in South Pembrokeshire, the Greenways Project was extended to cover the whole of Pembrokeshire in 2001, including the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, under the management of the Greenways Partnership which includes both the Pembrokeshire County Council, now a Unitary Authority, and the National Park Authority.
- 2.190 The prime objectives of the Pembrokeshire Greenways are:
- 1) To improve and promote access to the countryside by public transport for recreational and other activities.
 - 2) To develop and promote links between public transport and public rights of way, cycle ways, and other access opportunities.
 - 3) To encourage residents and visitors to use public transport within the County.
 - 4) To publish information on visiting the countryside by train or bus and for walkers or cyclists.
 - 5) To provide and promote access opportunities in close proximity to public transport routes.
 - 6) To stimulate business opportunities linked to access to the countryside.
 - 7) To meet, where appropriate, the access requirements of all sections of the community.
- 2.191 Examples of the projects that Pembrokeshire Greenways have pursued in the last 10 years include:
- **Walking and Cycling:** Research, infrastructure development and promotion of 10 walking routes and four cycle routes in South Pembrokeshire. The development included route planning with local walking and cycling groups, signposting and footpath development, where required, and the creation of walking and cycling leaflets. Work is now underway to repeat this throughout the rest of Pembrokeshire.
 - **Access for All:** In 2000, Greenways commissioned the Fieldfare Trust, through the BT Countryside for All project, to review Greenways promotional material and advise on footpath

development. As a result of this review, Greenways has now up-graded all promotional literature to conform with Fieldfare Trust standards. Leaflets are now in larger print, are easy to use and provide more access information within the text. Greenways have also started to develop accessible trails in conjunction with the local Rights of Way development authorities.

- **Train Links:** Greenways are working with local train operator, Arriva Wales, to promote access to the countryside by train. All railway stations in Pembrokeshire have a walking route from the station.
- **Coastal Bus Services:** In 2000, only one third of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Trail was accessible by public transport. Over the last four years, Pembrokeshire Greenways have introduced five coastal bus routes to improve access to the National Trail, and also tackle the increasing problem of traffic congestion and car usage to the coast and in the countryside. There is now a fully accessible public transport network along the entire Pembrokeshire coastline.

- 2.192 98% of visitors to Pembrokeshire arrive by car and, in the past, were using two cars to walk a linear section of the Coast Path. The introduction of the coastal buses has helped to tackle this problem, with over 60,000 people using the coastal bus services in 2006. Figures this season show a 10-20% increase to date.
- 2.193 The coastal bus services also provide a vital rural transport network for local communities, as well as a valuable leisure transport network for tourists and locals alike.
- 2.194 Each bus service is branded: the Puffin Shuttle, the Strumble Shuttle, the Poppit Rocket, the Celtic Coaster and Coastal Cruiser, are all are branded with a “Puffin in Boots” logo, and promoted, bi-lingually, in an attractive picket timetable, which also gives details of distances along the Coastal Path, parking places, and a cachet of discount vouchers at cafes, shops or accommodation providers.
- 2.195 Key to the success of the project is effective and mutually supportive partnership working between the local authorities and SPARC, later PLANED, which has enabled funds to be drawn down from a variety of UK and EU sources for specific projects, and a more innovative approach taken towards the involvement of voluntary groups and the private sector in project development. The Partnership has evolved over the years since 1994, reflecting changing local Government structures and different circumstances and opportunities, especially funding opportunities.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.196 Pembrokeshire County Council, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, PLANED, Pembrokeshire Local Health Board.

Key Contact

- 2.197 The Greenways Officer, Pembrokeshire County Council 01437 776313.

Target market for the service

- 2.198 Pembrokeshire Greenways is an initiative to encourage local residents and visitors, of all abilities, to access the countryside by sustainable modes of transport through walking, cycling, bus and train travel.

Number of participants using coastal bus services in 2007

- 2.199 2006- 60,000 2007- 67,000.

Estimated growth/decline of numbers over the last three years

- 2.200 Greenways aims for a 5% growth of patronage year on year, but over the last three years growth has been higher than this - over 10% between 2006 and 2007, especially encouraging given the poor summer weather in 2007.

Total cost of bus services in 2007

2.201 Approximately £130,000 a year.

Proposed or likely changes to the services for 2008

2.202 Greenways has submitted a bid to the Rural Development Plan for funding to purchase six new replacement Coastal Bus vehicles, which would run on pure vegetable oil, sourced from local crops, and utilised to run an environmentally friendly service.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

2.203 The success of the Greenways Project is built on the tripartite core partnership developed between an independent charity, SPARC, later PLANED, devoted to social and environmental outputs, which has facilitated easier access to external UK and EU funding streams, together with a supportive local authority and the National Park Authority. The success of the Coastal Bus services also demonstrates how, by creating a carefully thought through network aimed at the specific needs of users of a popular National Trail, wider social and environmental objectives can be met. There is excellent local community use of the same services for shopping and other facilities, proving how, in transport terms, sustainable tourism based around public transport links can be of direct benefit to local communities. In the context of the National Park, there are also significant environmental benefits in terms of reduction of traffic and parking congestion along a popular coastline.

Case Study 14 - The Widen the Choice Rural Transport Partnership

2.204 Widen the Choice was established in 2002 by Britain's two largest conservation charities, the National Trust and RSPB, with support from the Countryside Agency's Wider Welcome programme. Widen the Choice is a unique Travel Partnership in two ways.

2.205 Firstly, the Partnership's focus is primarily is on sustainable tourism and leisure transport, with utilitarian travel opportunity seen as a secondary, if welcome, benefit, and secondly, it operates on a regional-wide basis within the East of England Region. This has the advantage of allowing the partnership to operate over both District and County boundaries, in effect crossing the urban-rural divide that acts as a major barrier to many schemes.

2.206 A key element of the Project has been the appointment of a Partnership Project Officer, Chris Wood, who has held the post since the Partnership's inception. Chris has developed practical knowledge and experience throughout the Region as well as a range of contacts that form the basis of ongoing work and project development with partnership. This continuity has been one of the strengths of the project.

2.207 The original focus of the project was on National Trust and RSPB sites and properties within the East of England Region, but as the project has progressed other partners have been brought into the work. A key early project was to carry out a Green Access Audit of 60 properties across the Region, looking at what opportunities for access were available apart from the private car. This was a concept taken up nationally by the YHA in their "Empty Roads" programme.

2.208 There has been a major upgrading of cycle parking facilities at National Trust and RSPB properties, again with support from Wider Welcome. There has also been a variety of successful local and area based partnership work improving physical access opportunities to leisure sites linked to promotional work. This has been expanded into area-wide and linear audits for parts of the Suffolk Coast, the North Norfolk Coast and Icknield Way, supported by the Suffolk Coast and heaths AONB, Norfolk County Council and Natural England. In some cases these have formed the basis of full visitor travel plans, for example for the new Chilterns Gateway Centre, for Bedfordshire County Council and the National Trust.

- 2.209 A green access promotional campaign has also raised awareness among partners, including local authorities, public transport operators and site managers, of existing and new opportunities to access the countryside by sustainable travel modes.
- 2.210 This has resulted in a step-change in terms of quality and quantity of information provision for 'green' travel within and beyond East Anglia which has, in turn, helped to secure significant improvement in the rural transport network as a whole as passenger numbers increase on key services serving leisure destinations throughout East of England, for example on Norfolk's rural bus network.
- 2.211 Another major success story has been the ability of the Project and its Project Officer to act as a catalyst, offering advice, practical support and help to local authorities, countryside and heritage site managers and transport operators. Thereby influencing decision makers and funding partners to develop 'greener' options. Schemes, such as Suffolk Council County's highly successful Coastlink demand-responsive bus service and the Dedham Valley Hopper, depended heavily on Widen the Choice advisory input in their initial stages. Another example of a success story was the active involvement of local train operator, "One" (now National Express East Anglia), in a variety of projects, for example to stop Sunday trains at certain local stations, such as Lakenheath on the Norwich-Ely line to provide access to the nearby Lakenheath Fen Nature Reserve, and produce such publications as the One/RSPB Guide to Sunday trains in the Yare Valley. The project has also worked closely with the Bittern Line Community Rail Partnership to establish the East of England Region as a centre of excellence in the promotion of innovative green travel opportunities.
- 2.212 A current piece of work is the preparation of a brief guide to the Green Access Audit process which can be applied to any rural leisure destination.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.213 National Trust, RSPB, Natural England East of England Region, plus local authorities and transport operator.

Target markets for Partnership outputs

- 2.214 Visitors to East Anglia, local communities, transport operators, tourism providers, countryside managers.

Key Contact

- 2.215 The Widen the Choice Partnership Officer, RSPB Norwich 01603 697 515.

Future development, 2008-11

- 2.216 The changing funding regime since the demise of the Countryside Agency's Wider Welcome programme together with pressure on partners' budgets have provided challenges, as retaining continuity is a prime requirement to build on previous success. The National Trust has been lead partner from the beginning, but it is hoped to bring in new partners to reflect the wider countryside access focus. The current target is to involve a range of new partners in the Region including Rural Community Councils, protected landscape bodies, Sustrans, CTC, the Ramblers, Community Rail Partnerships, Environment Agency and the Rural Development Agency in an ambitious work programme, as part of what in effect will be a new Widen the Choice project, looking at a range of new innovative opportunities in terms of both service provision and marketing, taking in IT as well as conventional promotional techniques. It is important to stress that though it currently has only a Regional basis, Widen the Choice has national implications in establishing a cost effective methodology to achieve rural modal shift in terms of access to leisure attractions otherwise seen as largely inaccessible without a car.
- 2.217 The cost of this enlarged project is currently estimated to be around £88 - £162,000 per annum to be shared among a number of partners, dependent upon intended outputs and the number of partners.

- 2.218 Among priorities for Widen the Choice being considered for the next three years include more sharing and networking of good practice throughout the East of England Region and elsewhere in the UK, green access auditing and training, and development of a “Sus-Britain” website and green access events.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

- 2.219 Widen The Choice is an excellent example of how Partnership can be used to cross both physical and bureaucratic boundaries to focus on customer needs rather than operator or local government convenience. The initial focus on RSPB and National Trust sites has underlined the need to make the most of existing transport assets by promoting what is there before looking at perhaps expensive new facilities and services. This underlines the need for careful audit and adaptation at an early stage, planning visitor facilities to fit in with existing transport infrastructure (such as operational rail lines and established bus routes) rather than developing attractions in remote locations away from public transport routes which are then difficult and expensive to access by any other means than the private car.
- 2.220 Another major output is the development of the partnership as a catalyst for new projects, the experience and knowledge of a full time officer, in particular providing practical advice and professional support to all members of the Partnership.

Case Study 15 - Hadrian's Wall Bus AD122

- 2.221 Hadrian's Wall Bus is an award-winning dedicated leisure bus service which operates on a daily basis from the beginning of April until the end of October between Newcastle, Hexham and Carlisle and serves a number of key points on Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and also the Hadrian's Wall National Trail.
- 2.222 The service is known as AD122 to reflect the date of the construction of the Wall by Emperor Hadrian. Publicity, including imaginative literature, striking bus liveries and on occasions, even on-board guides dressed as Roman soldiers, brilliantly reflects this theming.
- 2.223 A unique selling point for the bus service is the provision of free guiding service on a number of buses so visitors can get a better understanding of the Roman heritage. In the 2007 season, this was undertaken on behalf of Hadrian's Wall Heritage by a locally based company, Open Book Visitor Guiding.
- 2.224 Promotion is through a timetable leaflet which also includes the Tyne Valley Rail services, the main 681 Newcastle-Carlisle main bus service and the 93 bus service between Carlisle and Bowness. There is also an A4 poster, a leaflet of Roman attractions accessible by the bus. A colouring competition was held for children in 2007 to encourage family visits by bus. Details of the services are also carried on the Hadrian's Wall Country and Northumberland National Park web-sites, as well as in individual bus companies' promotional literature and web sites. A range of Rover and family tickets are available.
- 2.225 Despite high levels of visitor use, this largely rural service has to be heavily subsidised and it is a major challenge to put together an effective long term funding model. The project was, until recently, handled by the local authority-led Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership, but has recently been transferred to Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.226 The lead organisation is now Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd (HWHL), a not-for-profit company established by One North East, the Regional Development Agency. The company was established to manage the World Heritage site. HWHL, therefore, also coordinates the Hadrian's Wall Bus AD122 Partnership. The other key partners are Cumbria County Council, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland National Park Authority, Tynedale District Council, Carlisle City Council, English Heritage, and the National Trust.

- 2.227 Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd.'s ambition is to ensure the long term viability of the bus as part of an integrated access system that serves both the local tourism economy and local transport requirements. HWHL see the service as key to developing sustainable access throughout Hadrian's Wall Country.
- 2.228 The service is run as two separate contracts held by the two County Councils. The Carlisle-based contract is held by Stagecoach, and the Newcastle contract by Classic Coaches. The main change in the last three years has been the decision to not have the service running right through from Wallsend to Bowness-on-Solway. This was done for a number of reasons. Firstly, Tyne and Wear has a very good public transport network and there was no wish to duplicate existing provision. The number of passengers using the Carlisle to Bowness service was very low and Mondays to Saturdays were already covered by the commercial 93 service. More services were offered on the busiest central sections of the route between Hexham and Carlisle. This change was implemented in the 2007 season and will continue in 2008.

Key Contact

- 2.229 Sustainable Access Officer, Hadrian's Wall Heritage 01434 609700.

Target markets for the service

- 2.230 Day visitors from the North East and North West, holidaymakers in the Hadrian's Wall area and elsewhere in Northumberland and Cumbria, and local communities along the route.

Number of participants in 2007

- 2.231 35,362.

Estimated growth of numbers over the last three years

- 2.232 Around 25% growth.

Total cost of service in 2007

- 2.233 Operating costs £107,000; but full costs (promotional work, publicity, monitoring - a survey was undertaken in autumn 2007) plus HWHL staff costs totals a little under £200,000 and this will be reflected in the 2008 budget.

Future developments

- 2.234 The bus service is very much an integral part of HWHL's Sustainable Access Programme for Hadrian's Wall Country. The purpose of the Sustainable Access Programme is to enable an integrated approach to be applied to optimising accessibility to the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site for all users. The partnership is fully supportive of continuing the service in 2008 with the same level of service as the 2007 season. The only differences will be a minor change to a destination along the central section of Hadrian's Wall (based on customer feedback) and a longer operating season. The longer season reflects the fact that Easter falls much earlier in 2008.
- 2.235 Dependent on the availability of funding, the service will operate from Good Friday 21st March 2008 until the end of Autumn half term, Sunday 2nd November 2008.
- 2.236 Key to the 2008 season will a marketing campaign to increase passenger numbers and to raise awareness of the service, especially in the Tyne and Wear conurbation. This will be combined with a more user-friendly timetable with more information on other connections with bus and rail. The Newcastle-upon-Tyne to Carlisle local rail service operated by Northern Rail is to be re-branded as the Hadrian's Wall Country Line. There will also be a number of suggested days out using the bus for the family market.

- 2.237 The coaches used for the service are to have new liveries for the 2008 season as HWHL want a coordinated and recognisable brand for Hadrian's Wall Country. The buses are perhaps the most visible part of the whole package and crucial to its profile and branding.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

- 2.238 Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited is an excellent example of a Partnership that has resolved to become a full, corporate body, focused on the World Heritage Site, but with the Hadrian's Wall National Trail and the Hadrian's Wall Bus as two key projects designed to actively meet World Heritage Site Sustainable Management objectives. Its core lesson is the degree to which the bus service is perceived to be a central part of that Management Strategy, not a marginal service to be cut or curtailed whenever financial resources are restricted. There is also a greater opportunity for the not-for-profit company to draw down external funds for economic development and environmental management not normally available to local transport authorities for rural bus services.
- 2.239 This high level of commitment is the key to the Hadrian's Wall Bus's long term future, despite its inevitable high subsidy level, as a seasonal, rural, largely leisure-based bus network through large areas of thinly populated countryside. There is also a wider benefit of this kind of leisure service to the local community by the additional travel opportunities created, and the fact that other local services, e.g. the Carlisle-Bowness bus, are promoted in the literature as part of the network. Additional revenue is also generated on linking trains and bus routes, such as the Tyne Valley Railway between Newcastle and Carlisle, as well as inter-city and local services to Carlisle and Newcastle.

Case Study 16 - Cravenlink

- 2.240 Cravenlink is the name given to a Sunday and Bank Holiday all-year-round bus service launched by the recently established Dales & Bowland Community Interest Company in the Yorkshire Dales.
- 2.241 In July 2006 the X84 Sunday bus service between Leeds, Ilkley and Skipton, on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales, was truncated in Ilkley following withdrawal of North Yorkshire's Rural Bus Grant funding. This restricted access opportunities to the Dales. Among protesters were the Yorkshire Dales Society, a locally based charity and the Yorkshire Dales Public Transport Users Group, a local consumer group. When letters of objection and even meetings with local Government officers and the main bus operator were unproductive, the objecting groups decided to take the matter into their own hands and operate a replacement bus service themselves.
- 2.242 In January 2007, an independent Community Interest Company (CIC) was established by the two organisations, known as the Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company. A 'Community Interest Company' is a form of not-for-profit Social Enterprise Company designed to harness professional skills and voluntary effort. One of the core objects of the Dales and Bowland CIC was specifically to have the powers (not legally available to the Yorkshire Dales Society):
- "To facilitate the provision and operation of public passenger transport services to benefit local residents and visitors to and within the Yorkshire Dales and the Forest of Bowland:.."*
- 2.243 Through the Yorkshire Dales Society, a grant application was made to the Yorkshire Dales Sustainable Development Fund for a project known as 'Sharing the Dales' which included a programme of events and guided walks targeted at urban communities, using the new bus service rather than a privately-funded coach. This would have the benefit of encouraging participants on the walks and events to enjoy repeat visits, giving them the confidence to use the public transport network independently rather than private transport or specially provided, expensive minibus transport which would not be available when the project terminated.

- 2.244 Discussions with a local bus operator, Jackson's of Silsden, indicated the existence of a suitable 24 seater Solo bus for the service, and a route was devised which not only restored the broken link between the two Yorkshire towns, but several journeys were diverted to go via Bolton Abbey, a popular tourist village with an historic Priory, within the Yorkshire Dales National Park. This dual purpose for the service both increased its market potential and critically its attractiveness for funding packages.
- 2.245 The service was planned to integrate with local electrified rail services at Skipton and Ilkley railway and bus stations, to meet trains off the Settle-Carlisle line and connect with buses to and from Keighley and Leeds. Ticketing was kept as simple as possible with a Cravenlink Rover offering unlimited travel for less than two single fares. An attractive timetable leaflet was widely distributed and details of the services carried on various web sites.
- 2.246 A detailed passenger survey by the University of Central Lancashire revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the service, and this also emphasised the surprisingly wide range of needs being met, including (even on a Sunday) some work journeys, visits to friends and relatives, to church as well as many opportunities taken to visit the Yorkshire Dales National Park, with Bolton Abbey a popular starting point for riverside and moorland walks. Walking was a frequent reason given for using the bus. An interesting feature on the bus is a small mobile Information Point carrying local tourist information and timetables.

Lead Authority and Key Partners

- 2.247 Lead, the Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company. Partners, Yorkshire Dales Society, Yorkshire Dales Public Transport Users Group, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (who managed the Sustainable Development Fund), North Yorkshire County Council, West Yorkshire PTE (Metro), Bolton Abbey Estate (who allowed the use of their car park for turning the bus) and bus operators, Jacksons.

Key Contact

- 2.248 The Dales and Bowland CIC, 01729 825600.

Target Market

- 2.249 Day visitors to the National Park from towns and cities of West and North Yorkshire, holidaymakers in the area, local people making journeys to Ilkley or Skipton, visitors to the Embsay Steam Railway, travellers wishing to make longer onward journeys by train or bus to or from Leeds, Otley, Settle and other points within the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Number of participants in 2007

- 2.250 From April until the beginning of December (36 days of operation) 2,708 passengers were carried. By the end of December 2007, usage of the service had passed 3,000 and the local authorities' own criteria for future permanent revenue support, though no decision to do so has yet been taken by the two local authorities except on an ad hoc basis.

Estimated growth over the last three years

- 2.251 Not applicable for a new service, but steady passenger growth noted towards the end of the year.

Total costs of the Cravenlink service

- 2.252 Operation £8,762; Marketing £2,000, monitoring £500, administration etc (mainly in kind) £3,000. The full survey costs were assisted by a research grant from the University of Central Lancashire to cover labour costs, in value around £4,500.

Future developments

- 2.253 From December 9th 2007, the Cravenlink route was modified to take a longer loop within the National Park to serve Halton Heights, Barden Moor Access Area, The Strid and Bolton Abbey.

This was done at no extra costs or significant change to the timetable or connections. Funding is secured until Easter 2008 thanks to financial support from North Yorkshire and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. It is hoped from Easter 2008 Cravenlink will benefit from a wider Dalesbus financial package and be increasingly perceived as an integral part of the local public transport network. A case of a “citizens' initiative” delivered through social enterprise by creating a new bus service to meet a proven travel need.

- 2.254 This pioneering “Community Interest Company” model is potentially a major step forward in the partnership funding and development of leisure transport in the UK, as the CIC, as a not-for-profit body, can attract funding from a variety of different sources, including funding of projects to meet wider social and environmental objectives that require sustainable and socially inclusive modes of access to be effectively realised. It is also a mechanism to harness voluntary effort, both at a professional and practical level, to agreed common goals.
- 2.255 This potential has been recognised by North Yorkshire County Council and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority who have asked the Dales and Bowland CIC to lead in the management, promotion and sourcing of funding for a number of future Dalesbus services between the catchment conurbations and the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale AONB for summer 2008.

Case Study 17 - Moorsbus

- 2.256 Moorsbus is an integrated network of leisure bus services to, and within, the North York Moors National Park. The network operates on Sundays and Bank Holidays between April and the end of October, and daily in July, August and September, with augmented weekday services in August.
- 2.257 Moorsbus has now operated for almost 30 years, starting in the late 1970s with a modest network of Sunday services which has evolved to the present, comprehensive, fully integrated network of leisure bus services and sustainable tourism opportunities, linked to walking, cycling, staying in local accommodation and enjoying local services and products.
- 2.258 An important feature of Moorsbus is that services operate from the main catchment towns to the National Park. Moorsbus has daily departures from as far afield as Hull, York, Thirsk, Northallerton, Darlington, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Whitby and Scarborough. The buses perform as internal distributors on local services within the National Park before returning to the major population centres in late afternoon. This is supplemented by a network of smaller vehicles more suitable for narrow lanes, which serve key attractions off the main routes, with fully integrated timetables and ticketing. There are through tickets from conurbations and also “inner zone” park and ride tickets valid from the main peripheral car parks priced at a level which is attractive for motorists, as well as combined rail and bus tickets valid on the Esk Valley and North York Moors Railways tickets. Moorsbus tickets are also valid on other local scheduled bus services in the area.
- 2.259 Another major feature is the use of paid, part-time Moorsbus Co-ordinators at the key interchange points at Helmsley and Thornton-le-Dale, and elsewhere on the network. These are knowledgeable people equipped with timetables and mobile radios, on hand at busy times as buses arrive from the conurbations to help boost passenger confidence and ensure the network works smoothly, liaising with bus operators and users, with “back-up” emergency taxi services to re-assure users about return connections.
- 2.260 An interesting seasonal variation of Moorsbus is the Farndale Daffodil bus which, on Sundays in March and early April, takes visitors from a car park on the edge of the area into the narrow Farndale valley, where seasonal traffic restrictions apply in order that visitors can enjoy the displays of wild daffodils.

- 2.261 An informative third A4 pocket timetable booklet features all services and facilities, supported by more localised publications from peripheral towns and local villages within the National Park (to encourage park and ride) together with posters and web site support through the National Park's own web site and appropriate links to local tourism sites. Moorsbus ticket holders are also offered discounts at attractions and catering establishments.
- 2.262 It is featured centrally in the National Park's house magazine, 'Moors and Coast', with the Moorsbus logo used to endorse all visitor and heritage attractions on the network.
- 2.263 Promotion of the network forms a fundamental part of the National Park's sustainable travel strategy, and Moorsbus is marketed vigorously in all National Park publications and events, including a guide to access to the Cleveland Way National Trail. As well as benefits to the local economy which are carefully assessed by surveys of bus user spend, and to passengers themselves (with passenger satisfaction levels currently scoring at above 96%). The Authority also measures the amount of car miles and CO₂ emissions saved by visitors who would have otherwise used their car for the trip. In 2006, it was estimated that 1,352,073 car miles were saved because of the existence of Moorsbus, which in turn reduced CO₂ emissions by 487 tonnes - and these are probably cautious and conservative estimates.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.264 Moorsbus is funded and operated by the North York Moors National Park Authority in close co-operation with North Yorkshire County Council who make a significant financial contribution to the network each year.

Key Contact

- 2.265 Assistant Director, Recreation & Park Management, North York Moors National Park Authority, 01439 770657.

Target markets for the service

- 2.266 The feeder services from the conurbations are aimed at day visitors and any "visiting friends and relatives", whilst the core services within the National Park itself provide for holidaymakers. Moorsbus is also a vital service for local communities, providing the only bus service to 25 villages with no other bus service, offering a full service in the main season to 18 villages which only have a twice a week bus service. It is the only Sunday bus service to 25 villages.

Number of passengers in 2006

- 2.267 60,856 passenger journeys. Full 2007 figures not yet available but it is anticipated this will represent a slight increase on 2006, despite poor summer weather.

Estimated growth/decline of numbers over the last three years

- 2.268 The number of Moorsbus passenger journeys has grown as follows: 2004 - 40,592; 2005 - 49,632; 2006 - 60,856 - a growth of around 50% over this period.

Total cost of service in 2006

- 2.269 Gross cost of operating the service was £290,768, net cost (gross less revenue) £190,000; promotion costs £26,000, staff costs (including Co-ordinators) £35,000, with revenue at £64,391, a total public subsidy of £226,377.
- 2.270 Monitoring is done by staff and therefore the cost is included in these figures.
- 2.271 In 2006, compared with 2002 (a five year period), an increase in revenue of 72% was recorded. This represented a 4.1% reduction in subsidy and therefore a 56.2% reduction in the net cost per passenger in real terms.

Future development

2.272 None, other than minor operation changes to routes/timings are planned for 2008.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

- 2.273 Moorsbus is widely, and correctly, regarded as one of the most imaginative leisure bus networks in any protected landscape within the United Kingdom. A European exemplar of good practice in every facet - detailed service planning, excellent visitor-friendly promotional literature, clear branding on all literature and web sites, and, among participating local businesses, offers of Moorsbus discounts. It is as much aimed at those living in catchment communities without their own cars as visitors who come by car, but who can be persuaded to leave their cars behind at one or more peripheral car parks and/or park and rides to enjoy a fuller experience, or to undertake linear walks.
- 2.274 The Farndale Daffodil bus, albeit seasonal, is one of the few park and ride services linked to traffic management in any UK National Park - the Peak District's Derwent Dams service is another outstanding example.
- 2.275 Excellence in monitoring is a major key to Moorsbus's enduring success. The fact that the Moorsbus team is able to offer funders, including the National Park Authority, clear evidence of benefits, including realistic estimates of visitor spend by Moorsbus users in the local economy, the amount of carbon saved by drivers switching to Moorsbus, and the percentage of people without access to their own car who otherwise would have no access to the National Park - to which they as taxpayers also contribute - present powerful political arguments to support the retention and even expansion of the network, even in periods of difficult financial circumstances. The level of subsidy required, therefore, can be shown to offer good value, meeting as it does core National Park purposes of environmental conservation and facilitating appropriate forms of enjoyment.

Case Study 18 - The Norfolk Coast Hopper Bus Service

- 2.276 The Norfolk Coast AONB is an extensive area of protected landscape along the Norfolk Coast between King's Lynn and Winterton, east of Sheringham. The AONB also includes the North Norfolk Heritage Coast and several major nature reserves and heritage features, including country houses, steam railways, small harbours and magnificent beaches. This is a prime area for cycling and walking and a paradise for ornithologists, with two important RSPB Reserves. The Norfolk Coast Path National Trail, which runs close to the Hopper bus route, provides superb access to much of the coast, and there are several cycle hire centres with easy access to the Norfolk Coast Cycle Way and the Peddars Way National Trail.
- 2.277 For some years, there has been a coastal bus service, but until relatively recently the service was sporadic, with sometimes difficult connections and gaps in provision. However, in 1997 Norfolk County Council made significant efforts to promote the service. The service was branded Coastline and offered a good value Coast Rover Bus ticket. The service was later rebranded as Coast Hopper and operated with smaller, full-liveried low floor vehicles using an especially enthusiastic and committed local operator between Hunstanton (some buses from Kings Lynn) and Sheringham, with certain buses operating through to Cromer with good connections. Services now operate daily, Sundays included, on an hourly frequency, which only drops to two hourly on Sundays in the winter months.
- 2.278 The prime means of promotion for the service is through a Coast Hopper Year Book, an attractive pocket or rucksack-sized handbook which features timetables, fares, and visitor information. Route maps and connections are indicated onto feeder bus services and to and from the nearby Bittern and Wherry Community Partnership railway lines. With its distinctive H for Hopper logo, it

is also well promoted on Norfolk County Council's own and on several other tourism and travel web sites.

- 2.279 Ridership has soared on the service as a result of the upgrading of the service and its effective marketing, to make the service one of the most successful recreational routes in England, with operators Norfolk Green winning the 2007 Bus in the Countryside Bus Industry Award. The service is now enthusiastically promoted on a number of 'green' tourism and web sites as the perfect way to access the coast in a sustainable way.
- 2.280 Spectacular increases in usage of the service are not just down to the free travel passes issued by the District Councils for Norfolk's senior citizens. There are very significant increases in the number of fare paying passengers too. Reliability, good value fares, continuous financial investment in the service, strong commitment to the service from the County Council and the bus operator Norfolk Green, and the excellent local knowledge of the drivers, with good customer care, all contribute to the popularity and increase in patronage.
- 2.281 The County Council has found from feedback that customers are visiting the area year on year, safe in the knowledge that they can use the Coast Hopper bus service when they come again. Some feedback even reflects that people are now choosing the Norfolk Coast as their holiday/short break destination because of the ease and reliability of getting around. Additional narrow low floor vehicles have been introduced on the route to improve accessibility for disabled passengers and those with mobility problems.

Key contact

- 2.282 Public transport team, Norfolk County Council 0844 8004003.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.283 Norfolk County Council. Partners: Norfolk Green (bus operator), Norfolk Coast Partnership and King's Lynn Borough Council.

Target market for the service

- 2.284 Locals and visitors alike. The Hopper service is increased in the Summer months to accommodate the many additional visitors to the area.

Number of participants in 2007

- 2.285 In 2006 (April to March), 135,000 passengers used the Hopper service and by December 2007 the figure was 135,000 with three months of the financial year to go.

Estimated growth/decline of numbers over the last three years

- 2.286 There have been 50,000 more passengers per year using the service since 2003, and this represents more than a three-fold increase in annual total passenger usage since 2001.

Total cost of service in 2007

- 2.287 Operational costs and monitoring £297,000; promotion and marketing £20,000.

Future developments

- 2.288 Only minor changes are proposed for the 2008 timetable with some additional journeys being extended through to King's Lynn.

Lessons for other countryside managers and operators

- 2.289 The Coast Hopper service is an excellent example of a local authority and an operator working closely with each other and with other partners to get the product right and to focus marketing on that product and on the destinations in particular. Promotion is clear and simple, and a key factor in success is continuity, so that local people and visitors alike are trusting the service to be there -

regular, reliable and very much part of the local tourism infrastructure of the Norfolk Coast. This is clearly making a significant contribution to the local economy that more than justifies the levels of financial subsidy, which will decline as passengers numbers rise.

- 2.290 An interesting feature of the promotional brochure is the invitation given to users for their feedback on the quality of the service, which again is valuable not only in terms of assessing priorities for service and product improvements, but also in allowing users to identify with the service and to feel that it is an integral part of experiencing the Norfolk Coast.

Case Study 19 - Gower Explorer

- 2.291 The Gower Peninsula, in south west Wales, very close to the outskirts of the city of Swansea, contains Britain's oldest AONB, an area of exceptionally fine coastal and inland scenery, much of it is Heritage Coast, and much in National Trust ownership and management. The 88 square kilometres of the AONB boasts no less than 25 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, three National Nature Reserves, a Ramsar Site, a Special Protection Area and five Candidate Special Areas for Conservation, all notable for their rich variety of wildlife.
- 2.292 Gower is also noted for its beaches, popular with holidaymakers, including one of Britain's finest surfing beaches, with a series of small, but popular resorts, stretching from the busy Victorian resort of Mumbles in the east to Rhossili and the spectacular Worms Head rock in the west.
- 2.293 The popularity of the South Gower coast means that there is heavy traffic congestion in the summer months, especially along some of the narrow lanes leading down to small but popular resorts such as Oxwich and Port Eynon.
- 2.294 Gower also has a population of around 10,000, mostly living in small settlements around the peninsula, many of whom travel into Swansea for employment and access to services. However, there is also some flow into Gower for tourism related jobs.
- 2.295 Until 2004, Gower had no more than 6-8 buses per day on the core route from Swansea to Rhossili and in the summer months only a limited circular service of leisure buses around the peninsula. The bus network required high levels of subsidy for relatively low passenger numbers and had a low profile.
- 2.296 In 2004, the City and County of Swansea Council made a successful bid to the Welsh Assembly's Rural Transport Fund, to receive sufficient funding for the purchase of a fleet of seven vehicles, five standard low floor VDL buses and two slimline Optare Solos. The promotional specialist company Best Impressions were hired to create a new brand and livery. The vehicles were all given a distinctive, two-tone liveried green with a striking Gower Explorer branding, and with a distinctive wild anemone logo and slogans on the bus to emphasise the value of green travel. The network was then put out to tender for a five year period (2004-9). The successful tenderer, Pullman, (now Veolia) have successfully operated the service since its inception.
- 2.297 A new timetable was devised which provided a "step-change" in quality of service, with a 50% increase on the main routes and a series of complex interchanges developed between the small buses shuttling along the narrow lanes to meet the "main road" services operating directly to and from central Swansea. There is now an all the year round, more comprehensive Sunday service. A bargain Gower Explorer ticket, costing just £3.75, provides unlimited travel over the network on the Veolia buses, but this ticket is not valid on the First Cymru network who have their own Rover tickets. Significantly, around 45% of users of the more local small bus network interchange onto the main line services to and from Swansea.
- 2.298 Within weeks, the now high profile bus network was attracting dramatic increases in passengers numbers from among local people and visitors with the interchanges being used extremely effectively, and by the end of 2004 ridership had shot up to around 300,000 per annum.

- 2.299 However, in 2005 Swansea Council, which includes the AONB, took a further major step forward in funding a new marketing campaign, part funded by the Countryside Council for Wales, which was to look at every aspect of the product, in terms of bus stop information, simplified visitor-friendly timetables, local village timetables, a “Green Guide” to Gower based on simplified route maps showing local visitor heritage attracts accessible by bus, visitor facilities and recommended walks and local accommodation. Much of this material is also carried on Swansea’s own and on the national Countrygoer web site. The marketing was extended to cover the commercial network, operated by First Cymru to the west of the AONB. This led to the setting up of a Sustainable Visitor Travel Partnership, chaired by the Gower AONB, for not just the Gower area, but the whole of Swansea Bay with, in 2006, the neighbouring borough of Neath Port Talbot now as core partners in what has been branded Baytrans, who now employ a part time Project Officer with management support from Transport for Leisure Ltd. The Partnership has also brought in the private-sector led, Tourism Swansea Bay, as well as the local authority tourism officers, the Gower Society and Ramblers’ Association, the YHA and National Trust. An-email newsletter is now produced keeping Partnership members and a wide range of local contacts aware of developments which are helping to change what was formerly a car-dominant culture into one which perceives the bus network as an integral part of Gower’s ‘green’ tourism product.
- 2.300 Since the marketing campaign has started, passenger growth on the network has been spectacular, with total ridership now close to 400,000 passenger journeys per annum, a percentage growth of almost 35%. Detailed monitoring work by Swansea Council has indicated a remarkable spread of usage from among the local community and visitors to the area, including overseas visitors.
- 2.301 The Gower Explorer network has won a number of national awards (Wales and the UK) for best rural bus, best leisure bus and best UK transport service among others.

Lead Authorities and partners

- 2.302 City and County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Borough Councils; partners include Countryside Council for Wales, Swansea Bay Tourism, Veolia Transport, First Cymru, First Great Western, Arriva Trains Wales, Ramblers’ Association, Gower Society, the National Trust.

Key contact

- 2.303 The Partnership Officer, Baytrans Partnership 01792 205071.

Target Markets for the service

- 2.304 The target markets for the service are primarily local residents and visitors without their own transport which, as passenger surveys indicate, are predictably the majority of users, especially including younger and many older people, including those now attracted by the all-Wales free concessionary travel facility. But equally, the network is aimed at persuading people living in the area who have access to a car to use the local bus network. Evidence suggests that both local people and visitors with a car available are now prepared to use the bus to travel into Swansea to avoid congestion and paying parking charges. It is also intended to promote both Gower and the wider Swansea Bay area as an excellent “car free” destination, especially from London and, to a lesser extent, to Manchester, with direct rail services to Swansea and Neath. Walkers are also targeted as a key market, given the ability of the Explorer network to facilitate linear coastal and cross country walks. An estimated 30,000 walkers per annum are using the network, and a new target is a further 35% increase in the numbers of walkers using the bus network, with a consequent reduction in carbon emissions.

Number of participants in 2007

- 2.305 400,000.

Estimated growth over the last three years

- 2.306 35%.

Total costs of the service in 2007

- 2.307 It is difficult to provide an accurate estimate of the cost of the service owing to commercial and operator confidentiality, but there is a consensus that at least the main line routes in the summer months are now at or close to covering their daytime operational costs. It is the aspiration of the current operator, Veolia, to see all or most of the Gower Explorer network as fully commercial by 2009.
- 2.308 Marketing costs are shared between in-kind contributions by both Swansea Council and the two operators, (including monitoring costs) and the additional “added value” work undertaken on behalf by the Baytrans Partnership, which is now covering a similar network of potential recreational routes in the Neath Port Talbot area. Total Project costs, covering the Project Officer and management costs, design, print, website, advertising, public relations and development work, amount to £28,000 per annum, currently being met by contributions from the two local authorities, from the Countryside Council for Wales, and from the two main bus operators.

Future developments

- 2.309 In 2008, Baytrans will be developing similar marketing initiatives to Gower in the “post-industrial” landscapes of Neath Port Talbot, rich in mountain biking and walking opportunities, through what are now heavily forested former mining areas. Already being planned are interactive web-site walks based on the bus network for both Neath Port Talbot valleys with a similar project for Gower. Other proposals include a Swansea Bay ticket valid on all operators services, a new Sunday bus link across South Gower between Mumbles and Rhossili, and further co-operation with rail operators to develop Swansea Bay into a major green tourism destination easily accessed without a car.

Lessons for other countryside managers and transport operators

- 2.310 The success of Gower Explorer reflects the vision of one local authority in particular, Swansea City and County, both to prepare their initial bids to the Welsh Assembly and to use the funds obtained with such flair and success. As this is a fully integrated network, passenger interchange between buses has been important and it has proved highly successful thanks to enthusiastic driver co-operation with each other. A further lesson has been how important investment is in creative, imaginative marketing and in giving the network a strong identity and local ownership. To people in Gower it is “their” bus network and if a service is right for the local community it is also right for visitors. A perfect example of a tourist network which gives local people many more travel opportunities, including for leisure and recreation - local people also use the bus services for local walks. The value of having a local unitary authority, such as the City and County of Swansea which is both rural and urban in nature, is also emphasised, as this has removed the barriers to effective travel between town and countryside which can be a serious handicap in many other areas with a rural/urban divide, where different funding and support regimes differ each side of local authority boundaries.
- 2.311 This is also an outstanding example of the value of partnership and finding the resources for a dedicated enthusiastic officer who has not only made a major difference to Gower, but is now in the process of rolling out the benefits to a much wider area, helping to bring both new recreational opportunities and tourism-related jobs to an area that urgently needs the kind of economic boost and social benefits a well promoted green travel network can bring.

Case Study 20 - Stagecoach in Cumbria Lakeland Explorer Network

- 2.312 Lakeland Explorer is a network of over 30 bus routes to and through the Lake District National Park in Cumbria operated by Stagecoach in Cumbria and Stagecoach Northwest. The greater part of the network is commercial, and operates all year, with some additional local feeder routes provided by Cumbria County Council and two by the Friends of the Lake District. Cumbria County

Council also supports some evening services. However, the majority of the daytime network is self supporting. Together with good rail services to the Gateway towns of Windermere, and Penrith, and more local services around the Cumbria Coast, this makes the Lake District one of the best served UK National Parks in terms of all-year round quality public transport access.

- 2.313 Several of the Lakeland bus services are branded, including the spine Lancaster-Keswick Lakes-Link 555 service, the popular open-top Lakeland Experience, and more local Coniston, Langdale and Borrowdale Rambler buses.
- 2.314 The 52 page Summer Lakeland Explorer brochure provides more than just timetable information on the Stagecoach in Cumbria bus services throughout the Lakes, including details of boat services, rail links, the special National Trust Tarn Hows free shuttle bus, as well several detailed visitor attractions and suggested linear walks using the bus service. Good connections are made with the rail network at Windermere and Penrith, and through rail and bus tickets are available, including the Lakes Day Ranger, valid on all trains and bus services between Lancaster, Morecambe, Oxenholme, Windermere, Workington, Keswick and Penrith. There are also "Ride 'n' Walk" suggestions for self guided walks linked to the bus network.
- 2.315 For those just travelling by bus, Explorer tickets covering the whole of the Lake District for a day are available, and there are also four day and seven day versions, so that a visitor can enjoy pre-paid travel throughout the Lakes for as little as £4 per day. However, individual single journeys are relatively expensive.
- 2.316 A significant proportion of the Lake District's public transport-using visitors come from overseas and one reason for the attractiveness of the Lake District is the quality of its public transport links.
- 2.317 Marketing is a model of its kind and the summer Explorer brochure has, in 2007, been extended through the winter months. Cumbria County Council use it to carry all their winter bus time information in a brochure branded as 'The Cumbria Rider'.

Lead Authority and key partners

- 2.318 Stagecoach Northwest/Stagecoach in Cumbria, with Cumbria County Council, Lake District National Park Authority, boat operators, the National Trust, Friends of the Lake District, rail companies and individual attractions.

Number of participants in 2007

- 2.319 The Lakeland Explorer network carries well over a million passengers per year - around 500,000 of these use the popular 555 Lake Link service which feeds into the linking routes to Langdale, Coniston, Borrowdale and other locations.

Estimated growth over the last three years

- 2.320 Growth on the network is steady, despite the recent set-backs of foot and mouth, and is currently averaging around 4% per year.

Total cost of the service in 2007

- 2.321 Most of the network is commercial, but some services tendered by Cumbria County Council. Cost of the 125,000 copies of the 52 page summer brochure are produced, of which costs are shared on a 80:20 basis with Cumbria County Council, Stagecoach paying the lion's share, but the 72 page winter version of the brochure with its focus on many more local services - including West Cumbria urban routes - is financed in an inverse ratio - 20% by Stagecoach, 80% by Cumbria.

Future Developments

- 2.322 In summer 2008, the popular 555 Lakes-Link service will operate half hourly over its "core" Kendal-Keswick link, and lower floor "easy access" vehicles are being introduced over the route.

It is also hoped to give similar treatment to the 599 Bowness-Ambleside Lakeland Experience open-top bus service.

Lessons for Countryside Managers

- 2.323 The Stagecoach Lakeland Experience bus network is a major success story, partly reflecting the size of the available market in one of Britain's most heavily visited National Park in terms of large numbers of UK and international sightseers and walkers in particular, but also the entrepreneurial approach of the company in terms of offering a quality product, a comprehensive network, tailored to visitor needs. Because it is not dependent on local authority subsidy, this has enabled Stagecoach to retain and even expand a remarkably stable network which in turn has built up customer confidence so that people can return to the Lake District knowing that there will be a good bus network available. This has also been of real benefit for the local community who enjoy a far higher frequency of services on many routes because of the income generated by visitors. Cumbria County Council and the Lake District National Park Authority have also worked closely with the bus operator to help maximise the benefits to local community and visitors alike.
- 2.324 A disadvantage in some respects is the relatively high short distance single fares, but this is something older people will be increasingly able to avoid with the new All-England senior concessions - and which could pose some problems of capacity for the operator at the busiest times of year. On the other hand, the high fares have generated the economic stability and even growth of the network which has benefited the majority of users.
- 2.325 Though there is ample anecdotal evidence that the quality of the network encourages many visitors with access to a car to either leave their car at home or at their overnight accommodation and travel by bus, this has not, by itself, made a significant difference to traffic problems in the Lake District. This underlines the point that even a good, well promoted bus network does not reduce the need for effective, sensitive traffic management in popular rural tourist areas.

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