

New Deal for Communities

The National Evaluation

Research Reports

New Deal for Communities and Transport

Research Report 27

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is currently sponsoring the 2002-2005 national evaluation of New Deal for Communities. This evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations co-ordinated by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

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Sheffield Hallam University

New Deal for Communities and Transport

Research Report 27

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Executive Summary

1. This report describes research into how NDCs have engaged with transport problems, what projects were implemented, the extent to which exclusion has been reduced and the critical factors in success or failure.
2. A broadly representative sample of six NDCs was selected as detailed case studies from the 29 that reported any involvement with transport projects.
3. The NDCs studied found that transport issues arose from their worklessness and environment themes. NDC areas contain higher than average proportions of people without access to a car or who have some mobility impairment. Major traffic arteries also physically isolate some NDC areas.
4. Public transport services to NDC areas appeared to be reasonable but focussed on city centres. Residents had problems getting to job, retail and leisure opportunities at newer sites on the urban periphery.
5. Even where public transport was available some residents had physical difficulty using it or it was too expensive. In some cases publicity was so poor that residents did not know that a service existed. The general condition of public space was also a deterrent to travel, including vandalism, fear of crime and poor waiting facilities.
6. The most common solutions applied by NDCs were new subsidised bus routes, community minibuses and improvements to the streetscape.
7. The new bus routes funded by NDCs did not already exist because bus operators thought they would not make a profit and the Local Authority (LA) felt unable to subsidise them from their normal budgets for tendered bus services. However, in some cases the LA was able to contribute Urban Bus Challenge funding.
8. Minibuses were funded by NDCs to provide people who had difficulty using mainstream public transport with door-to-door transport. Minibuses were also a popular resource for hire by community groups to support other NDC initiatives.
9. Improvements to streetscapes typically involved better footway lighting, bus shelters and general landscape management such as removal of graffiti and abandoned cars.
10. NDCs solutions to access problems were low-risk, mainstream methods with little innovation. Demand for minibus services tended to exceed supply whereas ridership on subsidised buses ranged from far below to in line with expectations.
11. NDCs have engaged with many of the issues that are current in national transport policy, specifically those concerned with equity or social inclusion. Local plans such as LTPs share these general objectives but do not deal with them at the level of detail that is needed by communities and that NDCs are able to do. Specifically, social inclusion through transport measures requires revenue funding, which NDCs can deliver, whereas LAs are generally revenue-poor and LTPs concentrate on capital schemes.
12. Data collection concentrated on outputs such as detailed cost and usage information, so that it was difficult to identify successful outcomes in terms of improving access.
13. Critical success factors were the NDCs access to revenue funding in contrast with LAs capital-rich/revenue-poor situations. This was used to good effect by employing specialist staff to closely manage projects and develop good relationships with LAs and transport providers. Most cause for concern was the lack of convincing exit strategies for schemes that were unlikely to be self-financing in the long term. In only one case did it appear that commercial viability would be achieved within three years.

1. Introduction and context

1.1. Introduction

This report describes an evaluation study carried out by Sheffield Hallam University and University of North London for NRU of transport-related initiatives in a sample of six NDC areas.

It describes the background to the research, the connection between transport problems and deprivation and social inclusion, how these problems were tackled and the extent of their success in the six examples.

The findings from case studies lead to conclusions and recommendations concerning the efficacy of transport interventions in the context of NDC core themes.

1.2. Context

NDC objectives

The Government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal has highlighted a number of factors contributing to disadvantage in deprived areas. Recent years have seen a growing recognition that transport problems can be a significant barrier to social inclusion. People may be prevented by the need to travel from accessing key local services or activities such as employment, education and training, healthcare or leisure. Travel difficulties vary amongst areas and groups of people, including low income or physical isolation. Other negative effects from transport such as on-street parking and through traffic can create health and safety concerns.

The Government has produced a strategy to address issues of exclusion, having two main pillars that will be built into the new round of Local Transport Plans:

- a new framework for "accessibility planning." This will ensure there is a clear responsibility and accountability for identifying accessibility problems and deciding how to tackle them
- national policy changes to enable improved public transport, better land use planning, safer streets, and improved specialist support to help people get to work, learning, healthcare and food shops

NDCs seem to be ideally placed to address the needs and priorities at a very local level and to tailor solutions to local circumstances. It has been recognised that solutions to exclusion require a range of public service and other organisations to work together over the long term, including those involved in land use planning, crime, education, healthcare and social services. In the transport sector this also includes private sector operators.

Transport planning context and LTPs

The main instrument of local delivery is the 5-year Local Transport Plan (LTP) and associated Annual Progress Reports (APRs). Characteristics required of LTPs are that they should:

- be outcome-driven
- promote transport integration

- have measurable targets and a monitoring regime built in
- be demonstrably community-led

Although LTPs should set out how the proposed capital spending would be supported by revenue expenditure, they attract only capital funding, and have failed to remedy the capital-rich, revenue-poor situation of local authorities. Revenue funding is required for supporting unprofitable bus services, concessionary fares and street maintenance whereas capital funding is typically used for road improvements and rail-based schemes.

In the context of this research, the most important emphasis in the LTP process is on community involvement.

The LTP system promised to be a good match with the basis for the activities of what would become NDCs. Guidance for community involvement in NDCs is similar, since these principles have wider applicability than just transport schemes.

Transport and social inclusion

The Government's transport agenda has become more concerned with people and human needs rather than the mechanics of traffic flow. It now emphasises the concept of accessibility - the relative ease with which needs can be fulfilled (such as work, shopping, health care, leisure) in which the need to be highly mobile can present a barrier to social inclusion.

Transport systems present different barriers to accessibility according to personal circumstances. Murray¹ identifies seven distinct types of barriers that the transport system presents to inclusion:

- "Fiscal" or affordability, e.g. high bus fares
- "Temporal" when public transport services do not run at the times people need
- "Spatial" where public transport services do not go where people need to go
- "Information" where services may exist but marketing communications are poor
- "Personal" in which the individual encounters barriers to movement such as steps, poor footways, difficult crossings, underpasses, difficult vehicle boarding arrangements or unhelpful staff, as well as more subtle 'barriers by omission' such as lack of seating, public toilets or exposure to the weather
- "Societal" in which fear of crime or racial or sexual harassment discourage people from access
- "Institutional" covering the way government, planning and businesses operate which tends to favour motorised travel

Recognition of these barriers moved into more mainstream government thinking when the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) published its report² on Transport and Social Exclusion in 2003. This considered the essentials of accessibility to be that people should:

- have some form of transport that exists at all to where they want to go
- know about the transport
- be able to trust its reliability

¹ Murray, S. (2000), '*Transport, Employment and Social Exclusion*', Transport Bulletin.

², Social Exclusion Unit, (2003) *Making the Connections*

- feel safe using it
- physically access it
- financially afford it
- get to the services and activities within a reasonable time

An important outcome from the SEU report has been the requirement for English LTPs to incorporate formal accessibility planning. One of the causes of social exclusion is that ensuring accessibility has been no single department's responsibility and whilst there have been many initiatives designed to improve accessibility, implementation has been patchy. In proposing accessibility planning, the SEU is seeking a **systematic** treatment of the problem, including commonality of indicators.

In theory, then, current transport thinking appears to offer much commonality of style and purpose with NDCs - a focus on people and outcomes.

In meeting local needs, NDCs should be able to exploit the different transport modes in the same way that a Local Authority LTP would. In general LAs promote the modes that are inherently most inclusive (walking, cycling, buses) whilst attempting to remove the barriers that affect them.

1.3. Research objectives

The research will focus on the extent to which NDCs have engaged with the transport agenda, specifically:

- the extent to which exclusion issues in the case study NDCs are related to, or susceptible to improvement through, transport
- the extent to which NDCs have engaged with national transport policy
- the extent to which Development Plans and the Annual Reports address transport issues
- the extent to which Local Transport Plans and Annual Progress Reports address social exclusion issues
- the extent to which there has been implementation of any related policies and any barriers to their implementation
- the process of project development, main drivers such as access to health care, employment etc., progress made, outputs and outcomes
- the factors which hinder/facilitate the development of transport related projects

1.4. Research approach and limitations of the study

Multiple case studies were used, drawing mainly upon interviews with people involved in the projects, such as NDC project officers, LA staff, community representatives and users, supported by documentary evidence such as plans and bid applications.

All 39 NDCs were approached during August/September 2003 and 29 responses were received. Of these, 10 reported that they had no transport elements.

Responding NDCs gave short descriptions of any transport-related projects, along with start dates. From this, a shortlist of specimen NDCs was selected with the aim of achieving broad national coverage, (including two in London, one within a Passenger Transport Authority area and three unitaries), a range of different types

of transport projects and which had enough work done (not necessarily actual delivery) on them to provide useful learning material.

The final six case studies were chosen in conjunction with the NRU in November 2003. Locations and projects of the case studies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: NDCs Transport Case Studies

Name of NDC	Transport projects	Project outline
Coventry	Bus services and information points	Provision of information boards showing bus routes and times. Development of new bus routes. We have agreements to develop most important new routes without NDC funding some already in place. We have put one route out to tender got one bidder who did not want full route currently renegotiating.
	Traffic calming and car parking	Several small scale projects in advance of completion of masterplan for area which is likely to involve major redevelopment.
	Bus shelters	Provision of new bus shelters to raise bus route to showcase standard we pay for shelters within NDC area CENTRO for other parts of the route.
Derby Derwent	Derwent Link	New bus route run by Arriva linking up the NDC area with Morrisons Supermarket, Pride Park, Wyvern and Meteor Centres.
	Ring and Ride	Part of the Urban Bus Challenge. Three on-call buses with disabled access available to residents to travel within a 25 mile radius for the equivalent bus fare. Criteria for travel are: on benefits, disabled, elderly or in receipt of tax credit. Children travel free and there are 30-40 users per day.
	Sporting Futures	14 seater mini-bus with disabled lift available to hire for sports purposes.
The Bridge NDC (Haringey)	Environmental Audit Scoping Strategic Approach to Environmental Management (including transport and transportation issues)	Environmental Audit and Strategy as a framework for developing our capital programme and environmental management issues. The strategy identifies key issues and challenges for the built and managed environment: including traffic and transportation issues.
	Safer Seven Sisters - Walking routes (Community Safety and improved routes to Seven Sisters Interchange	The project is concerned with drawing investment into the Bridge Neighbourhood. The project took advantage of building effective working partnerships with West Green Learning Neighbourhood (SRB 5), Transport for London (TfL), London Underground, Delivering Rail Improvements for London's Lee Valley (DRILL), Rail Track and WAGON. The shared objective was to building safer communities and

	<p>Traffic Calming Tiverton Estate</p> <p>Design options St John's Road Neighbourhood traffic calming</p> <p>Consultation and delivery of St. John's Road Neighbourhood traffic calming scheme links to Safer routes to schools(crosses with community safety and crime)</p> <p>St. Ann's Pay and Display parking area</p> <p>Safer Roads and pedestrian Crossings Black Boy Lane and St. Ann's & Plevna Crescent</p> <p>Abandoned Vehicles Officer</p>	<p>delivering safer walking routes to Seven Sisters Interchange.</p> <p>Tiverton Area Traffic calming scheme was designed to tackle the underlying causes of poor traffic management within the Bridge NDC.</p> <p>Initial design and consultation for the introduction Traffic calming scheme aimed at tackling kerb crawling and related anti-social behaviour as well as the underlying causes of poor traffic management in the local neighbourhood.</p> <p>Delivery St. John's Road traffic calming scheme.</p> <p>The project will install 30 Pay and Display bays, with clear Waiting Restrictions, and the installation of five Pay and Display machines the project will provide good access to affordable parking for people visiting key local amenities in the Bridge NDC. The project also provides the means to provide enforce parking restrictions against the illegal sale of vehicles on St Ann's Road.</p> <p>Consultation and design of two safer routes across key traffic hot spots.</p> <p>Abandoned vehicles work has linked with other agencies. DVLA, Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive, Police). Our action has been to join up enforcement action, beginning with a 'soft' educational approach and following up with enforcement prosecution.</p>
Braunstone Leicester	Braunstone Bus service	<p>Funded by Urban Bus Challenge - to supply a service within the designated social exclusion area.</p> <p>Aim - to link Braunstone Residents to health and education facilities, employment opportunities and shopping facilities.</p>
Plymouth	Community Transport Minibus	Purchase of three mini-buses (one with disabled access) that are available to the NDC

		community (both individuals and community organisations). People inside NDC get it at lower rate than those outside. Also have a van for removals that can be hired. Income generated by the project is put back into project. In the future they hope it will become self sustaining.
Ocean Tower Hamlets	Community Connect	Community Connect was developed in response to limited suitable transportation available at affordable prices to community organisations in the Ocean area. The provision of a dedicated accessible minibuss and training provision should guarantee increased access to Community Organisations to carry out and extend their services and activities to the residents of the NDC area. There is also an Access Bus Service available to take elderly and disabled residents on an escorted shopping trip once a week. The project is managed and administered by a local community transport organisation, Tower Hamlets Community Transport.

2. Findings

2.1. Introduction

This section covers, within the context of transport and NDC objectives, what the case study areas had experienced in terms of:

- problem identification - how the communities were involved and what issues emerged
- option generation - what type of solutions were preferred
- implementation - what transport schemes were actually delivered, including the problems that the projects encountered
- monitoring - in what terms would projects be judged successful and what arrangements had been made to collect data to track progress

2.2. How and what transport problems were identified

Public involvement

In all cases studies the transport projects could demonstrate their origins in local input.

We found no evidence of schemes encountering local opposition to, or of any preconceived ideas being pressed on the communities from outside.

Typically, transport-related issues arose out of themes such as worklessness, environment, and health; some specialist transport task groups were set up to take things forward. These varied in the extent to which they employed means such as focus groups, public meetings and questionnaires.

Some of the groups reported difficulty in attracting interested residents and the possibility existed of more committed activists becoming dominant.

Issues emerging

Access to job opportunities was a concern reported from most of the cases because of dispersed employment sites. Public transport was not necessarily considered 'poor' in any area but it was often not well-suited to residents' desired destinations and times. The development of sites optimised for car access on ring roads, motorway junctions etc. made life difficult for those seeking work without access to a car or those in low-paid or part-time work where public transport travel costs and journey times are a disproportionate burden.

Although there appeared to be demand for alternative services, in practice there was also some evidence of lack of demand for travel arising from low expectations amongst residents. Typically, those seeking work had very low thresholds for the time/distance they were prepared to travel.

Issues arose from NDCs Health or Environment themes, not necessarily immediately obvious as transport concerns, but more from a streetscape or liveability point of view. People were concerned in some of the areas simply with the ease of moving about in the area and the quality of the experience.

There were some concerns expressed about access to health services but also the need to simply 'get out and about' - including being able to get out of the area, as a matter of health and well-being.

Safety came up both in terms of threats from traffic (speeding, rat-running), and sometimes as the right to move about their area without fear of attack, manifested by concerns about the general state of the community space.

2.3. Types of projects

Bus services

Proposals for conventional bus services were a strong feature in three of the non-London cases; the London areas were already well served. This appears to have been a natural consequence of the nature and location of the communities - originally council estates with low average incomes and relatively low car ownership.

In a couple of cases, employers in the less accessible sites were prompted by difficulties in recruiting to take a positive interest in developing accessibility for residents of NDC areas, including a call centre operator who subsidised fares for employees.

In two of the cases, proposals for innovation (e.g. electric vehicles, demand-responsive services) were thwarted by procurement, legal and administrative barriers. Proposals were adapted to mainstream delivery mechanisms.

Some NDC groups proposed conventional services from their area to the new opportunities from the outset, and no particular need was seen for anything innovative. Some groups strongly expressed the view that they did not want their service to be seen as outside the mainstream, with the stigma associated with 'special needs' transport.

Minibuses

All the case study areas expressed an interest in minibuses. In contrast to some groups' views of minibuses carrying some sort of stigma that 'big buses' did not, the minibus was often seen as important in being clearly community-owned and based.

The main motives for minibuses as solutions were for people who were unable to use or get to mainstream transport and for group hire. Although Community Transport (CT) schemes were active to some extent in all the case study areas, in general, CT operators were seen only as a helpful way of delivering the community's minibus; expanded CT services did not appear to be a preferred solution in their own right.

Demand-responsive transport (DRT)

Some elements of this bus/taxi hybrid - sometimes known as 'Dial-a-ride' - were present in one of the case study minibus schemes, namely a door-to-door service, pre-bookable by an individual for a charge comparable with a bus fare. DRT services are useful where a need has been identified but demand appears too low to justify a full bus service. In none of the case studies did communities appear to consider such a hybrid service.

Taxis

Projects involving existing taxi operators were notable for their absence. The role of taxis as 'emergency' transport that most NDC residents could not afford was advanced as a reason for the adoption of minibus projects. None of the NDCs reported opposition from taxi operators to what would be in effect, subsidised competition from community minibuses, possibly because schemes' use of eligibility criteria for users.

Walking

There were no 'walking' projects as such because, although pedestrian space was seen as important, it was not necessarily regarded as a transport issue. Some responses to concerns about the overall feel of the pedestrian environment included improvements to lighting, replacement of subways with crossings and improvements to bus shelters.

Only two of the NDCs had potential for large-scale redevelopment, but in one of those, plans made specific reference to using urban design to reduce the need to travel.

Cycling

In many of the situations, cycling might have provided exactly the sort of cheap, quick access that people said they needed, but it did not feature strongly in the solutions that residents wanted.

Traffic safety

Requests for speed reduction (e.g. with road humps) or other traffic management measures to reduce rat-running were common amongst the case study areas, as well as improvements to crossing facilities. These were not necessarily perceived or labelled as 'transport' issues but part of the environment or general quality of life in the area.

There were some conflicts between what communities saw as fairly simple requests and the way that local Highways Authorities prioritised their programmes of works. Highway safety works are driven by central government targets to reduce the numbers killed and seriously injured and investing to simply improve the local quality of life scores poorly against this.

Goods transport

Often neglected by planners, vans were specifically requested by a couple of the communities for moving large domestic items.

2.4. Factors facilitating/hindering delivery of transport projects

People

Some of the most significant findings in terms of what worked for NDCs and what did not are not necessarily concerned with transport, but are generic organisational issues, particularly **people** and **procedures**.

Getting things done in NDCs was clearly the result of the right people being in place at the right time. Projects that were driven forwards had enthusiastic champions, but more than this, the individuals either had excellent inter-personal skills and/or shared the right personality 'chemistry' with other stakeholders.

It was beneficial to those NDCs who wanted to procure bus services to appoint someone with experience of the industry. Locally-based people with a hands-on approach to contract management have been able to deliver services to a higher standard than one might normally expect of tendered bus services because most Local Authorities have insufficient resources to make more than cursory checks on contract compliance by bus operators. Dedicated staff for just one or two contracts may

represent a large overhead but the extra expenditure was felt justified by the quality and the demonstration of commitment.

Where operators were able to employ local drivers, the quality of the service benefited.

Procedural

It appears that having all the transport projects in one theme helped, as well as having a single individual to ensure consistency and continuity over three-year projects.

It was important to have good relationships with others in the bus service tendering process. LAs would ultimately act as procurement agents for NDCs and both mainstream and community transport operators gave valuable pre-tender input in terms of indicative costs and feasibility. In the one case where the attempt to introduce new bus services has faltered, the relationship between the main bus operator and the city council had recently been under strain.

All cases reported bureaucratic difficulties; sometimes NDCs could take quick decisions but the Local Authority could not, or vice-versa. Procurement tended to be to LA standards, which worked against 'cheap and quick' solutions like second-hand vehicles. In some instances the level of reporting appeared to be out of proportion to the expenditure, contrasting with the much lower level of detail in outcome measurements. In part this may have stemmed from sensitivities about organisational probity within NDCs.

A strong asset of NDCs was their ability to supply reasonable levels of current account spending, in contrast with LAs who tend to be capital-rich but revenue-poor. NDCs revenue funding was particularly important in being able to appoint people quickly.

External factors

There appeared to be a positive effect on projects where NDCs benefited from the perceived status of other players, and their area's high profile. Specifically in the London cases, the involvement of Transport for London (TfL) with its substantial influence and spending power was helpful in getting others on board, such as Train Operating Companies (TOCs).

The wider strategic context may help or hinder NDCs. Projects can benefit where there is perceived to be 'a lot going on' and the area has a high political profile and interest from several agencies. However, in at least of couple of the cases, delays were attributable to wider transport and other 'masterplans' and consultants' work in progress.

The recruitment difficulties of the transport industry create some obstacles to delivery for NDCs. In common with many LAs, some of the case studies reported a shortage of transport professionals as slowing their delivery of LTPs. Most bus companies are finding reliable drivers to be an increasingly scarce resource, and this may have been partly behind the unaffordable tender prices for bus services experience by one of the NDCs. NDCs were able to integrate their own initiatives on employment for local people with bus operators' need for staff to a limited extent.

The launch and early weeks of at least one of the NDCs new bus services was adversely affected by confusion over ownership and maintenance of bus stops.

2.5. Monitoring

In all cases, measurements of success and progress concentrated on output indicators (e.g. how much service supplied, how many trips made, costs and revenue etc). Some records were kept of trip purposes so that some inferences could be made about the benefits of usage but this excludes the experiences of non-users. This tendency is shared with most LA transport planners, who have been more comfortable with output indicators despite encouragement towards outcomes from government guidance.

It might also be unreasonable to expect much tracking of outcomes, since in many cases, behavioural and cultural changes are being sought, and these can take many years to become apparent. In the meantime, proxies such as number of trips made might stand for success in enabling access to jobs, for instance.

However, there was little evidence of any long-term, co-ordinated thinking about what would be monitored, when and by whom. MORI have been collecting perception and attitudinal data in all NDCs as part of the national evaluation of outcomes at a strategic level. There is a gap between this level and transport outputs, but given the relatively low priority of transport as a problem, diagnostic research on the efficacy of transport projects is unlikely to be cost-effective.

Some NDCs believed that residents were suffering from survey fatigue, because the numbers of people are relatively small, there have been several levels of data collection (e.g. benchmarking, diagnostic, output and outcome) and NDC areas are likely to have had the attention of many different social studies.

3. Policy and Practice Implications for NDC Partnerships, Stakeholders and Policy Makers

3.1. NDC Partnerships

The clearest message from the research is the importance of having the right people in the right place at the right time. In the transport sector, much energy is taken up in debates about different structures, frameworks, procedures etc. as ways of delivering objectives. What the NDCs have achieved underlines that structures deliver nothing; only people do.

The person specification therefore appears to be crucial. Some common factors found in the case studies amongst individuals driving projects forward were that they often spoke of 'getting round' obstacles and it was possible to detect a healthy disdain for bureaucracy, procedures, or a disposition towards rule-bending. Backgrounds in either LA transport or bus operation helped to temper more optimistic expectations of communities, but it was important that officers were not so steeped in either LA or bus company working as to reproduce those supply-side styles.

Sympathetic structures or frameworks can make the work easier or more productive, but many of these are outside the control of NDCs. It was important that NDC had a legal arrangement through which they were able to trade in their own right, as procurement through LAs was not always expeditious.

None of the cases had much to show that might be considered innovative. This was not necessarily a bad thing, especially when competition for transport funding might appear to generate innovation for innovation's sake. Much of what communities wanted in terms of accessibility were basic and NDCs were able to use existing modes and methods.

This might suggest that there is no real need for innovation. However, LA partners tend to be risk-averse, and a focus on 'quick wins' might have suppressed innovation in favour of off-the-shelf solutions. A weakness in conventional transport solutions has been the need for continuing revenue support, and one might have expected more interest in means of reducing this.

Deciding upon the most appropriate type of transport action was the easy part for most NDCs because demands were straightforward and solutions obvious. One or two reflected that they might have benefited from some transport planning consultancy at the outset, but the main use of specialist expertise was to ensure smooth delivery.

The question of what councils should have been doing in the absence of NDC funding appears to have been avoided by all parties as part of the commitment to moving forwards in partnership. NDCs should nevertheless be aware that they may simply be plugging mainstream funding gaps. Councils seek to avoid projects with long-term liabilities (even monitoring) unless NDCs or others can guarantee revenue funding.

Exit strategies gave some cause for concern. Although services were planned to eventually be self-supporting, there were no explicit contingencies should they fall short of this, as appeared likely in the majority of cases.

Communities do not necessarily engage well with transport issues, sometimes failing to make the connection between negative effects of transport and their environment. A risk might be that such problems miss the opportunity for LTP funding, but due to close liaison with LAs, the labelling of problems as 'transport' or otherwise did not appear to affect their resolution.

3.2. Other stakeholders

There were many common factors that emerged from community consultations, but there was also diversity in local problems and the type of solutions that residents wanted. Community involvement is meant to feature strongly in LTPs but by the nature of the plan, responses are aggregated and generalised. LAs need to take care that when it comes to delivery, they recognise the uniqueness of each community at a scheme level and that community desires may not reflect the national policy agenda.

The New Deal's close attention to community needs uncovers unmet demands for access and/or greater mobility. The implication is that similar demands are likely to be found wherever any agency looks closely at a community. For instance, in the case of out-of-town employment/retail/leisure sites, NDC areas will not be the only ones whose access needs are not met but councils will have no rationale for providing one bus service but not another, other than the existence of NDC funding.

Whilst we might caution NDCs that LAs might be unduly attracted by their revenue funding opportunities, LAs also need to resist the temptation to divert resources, even if this seems the obviously co-operative thing to do. In theory, councils will have made their priorities clear through Best Value reviews, and it would seem likely that a 'worst first' approach should fit well with NDC areas. However, there was no evidence of this happening in any of the cases.

The evidence of unmet demand - particularly for minibuses - infers that expectations have been raised but few seem likely to ever be self-funding.

Pump-priming new services helped a locally-based and managed small bus company to become a significant - albeit minor - player in the local bus market.

3.3. Policy makers

The legislative framework for bus services frustrated some of what communities saw as reasonable expectations, for instance that they should have more say on who runs services and to what standard. Although 'deregulated', the bus industry remains subject to many regulations and barriers to integration because of the competition authorities' fear of collusion and anti-competitive practices. Communities will continue to be disappointed if the regulatory changes currently being debated do not reflect what real users perceive as reasonable.

NDCs are using their revenue funds to 'pump-prime' bus services when the efficacy of using public funds to address market failure has not been established. In the absence of interest from bus companies, it has been left to NDCs to do the type of detailed, market-focussed work on what people want that should be characteristic of the private sector. If NDCs succeed in nurturing self-funding services, government will need to consider the extent to which the private sector can be expected to benefit, given the lack of risk-taking or market development.

NDCs demonstrated differences in residents' concerns about public transport between London and elsewhere that are important for government-driven PSA objectives. London NDC residents express difficulties in terms of **access to** public transport because it provides a good proxy for **accessibility of** facilities by being a dense, integrated network. Elsewhere, public transport's focus on town centres and weak orbital links mean that access to it is a very poor proxy for accessibility.

However, current government thinking reflects the London situation and stresses crude indicators based on distance to transport nodes and physical access to vehicles. Such

analyses are not needs-based and are unlikely to promote true accessibility. Although the DfT's proposed shared priority for transport³ of, "*Improving access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need, in ways which are sustainable: improved public transport, reduced problems of congestion, pollution and safety*", is a good fit with the NDCs projects in the case studies, the detailed framework assumes that social inclusion will be a consequence of increasing public transport patronage. However, research into indicators is ongoing and further guidance on good practice and indicators is expected in summer 2004.

³ Department for Transport (2004),. *Shared Priority Delivery Plan*.

Appendix 1 - Case Study Summaries

Braunstone, Leicester

Introduction

Braunstone Community Association (BCA) was established in 1999 as a not-for-profit community development trust. The NDC area lies to the west of the city centre comprising an 'island' between two main radial roads and comprises largely pre-war local authority housing and has a population of circa 13,000. Baseline data showed only 48% of households as having access to a car or motorcycle. Historically local bus services ran mostly along radial routes to the city centre meaning that bus access to edge-of-town employment, retail and health facilities in adjacent corridors is difficult. Most bus services in Leicester are operated by Arriva and First group and there is no integrated timetabling, ticketing or information.

The transport issue and evolution of the Braunstone bus project

Research and consultation highlighted problems of access to work, shops, health and educational facilities, particularly where these involved orbital trips. The NDC Delivery Plan was focused around six 'themes' and several transport projects were included in the 'Making Braunstone United and Confident' theme. Target outcomes included better public transport and safe routes to schools. In 2001 a joint bid with Leicester City Council was made to the DTLR Urban Bus Challenge (UBC) and a grant of £1.13m was awarded. The aim was to set up a community owned minibus service running within 50m of every home: there is no community managed CT operation in Leicester. In parallel BCA applied for NDC funding of £334k and this was approved in January 2002 with funds available 2002-5. UBC money would fund purchase of the bus fleet whereas the NDC money would fund local infrastructure works, production of information and, especially, management of the bus project.

During 2002/3 BCA experienced management problems which involved replacement of the Chief Executive. An updated Delivery Plan has been produced in 2004 and transport projects are now included in the 'Housing and Environment' theme.

Delivery of the bus project

An experienced transport manager was appointed in April 2002. Progress with the bus company became bogged down owing to legal problems and funding barriers and the City Council and GOEM were concerned about long term liabilities. In autumn 2002 BCA approved a change to two tendered bus services. The UBC grant would guarantee a service for three years (expiring in January 2006) and BCA would control the route, timetable, fares, vehicle type (low floor), specify 'Braunstone Bus' branding and promote the employment of local people as drivers. Owing to the time limited nature of the UBC grant it was a requirement to have an exit strategy whereby the services would become commercially viable.

Implementation required co-operation between BCA, the City Council and the County Council as it is the latter which is the tendering authority. The project team includes BCA and Leicester City Council and meets monthly. One service became the 301 with four buses operated by Arriva and the other became the 317 with two buses operated by a small independent, Centrebus: both were introduced in January 2003. The services operate half-hourly from early morning to mid-evening Monday-Saturday and hourly on Sundays. Data shows that the two services carried 8,500 passengers in October, rising to 9,500 in January 2004. Whereas the 301 carries most passengers the average level of subsidy at £0.75 per trip is twice that of the 317. Passenger surveys show that the services are being used to access the sorts of facilities for which they were designed.

In addition to the Braunstone Bus Project, BCA own and operate a minibus which was acquired in September 2001 through a five year NDC grant of £32k. Annual mileage is around 23,000 and demand is such that there is a need for a second vehicle.

Bus project stakeholders

Leicester City Council: use of mainstream tendering removed concerns about the community bus company. The City has a trading agreement with the County Council whereby the latter acts as managing agent for City tendered services. This is unusual but works. The Braunstone tenders were unusual as they were for completely new services with new low floor buses. It was clear that they would require additional management and the role of BCA is seen as critical in ensuring that there is a direct link with the target community. The City Council will not subsidise the services if they do not become commercially viable. The City sees the project as innovative but it is obvious that the services have all the weaknesses of any tendered bus service.

Arriva: The 'hands on' management by BCA has been helpful in the early stages where certain quality issues arose. Arriva feels that most of these were associated with the recruitment of local people to train as drivers, although the company continues to do that where it can. Arriva does not see a need to replicate the BCA model as quality assurance is mainstream within the company. Arriva feels that the 301 route is circuitous. This maximises patronage potential but there is a journey time penalty and exclusion of city centre from the route is a commercial disadvantage. There have not been any major security problems.

Centrebus: the 'hands on' character of the 317 tender is welcomed as it means that any problems can be addressed immediately. The company is happy to carry Braunstone bus branding as this is commercially beneficial. Centrebus considers the route to be well designed as it links Braunstone to the city centre and includes major trip generators: the service could become commercially viable. People use it to get to work as well as the other facilities and there are regular passengers using it to access rail services. All except one of the four drivers originally recruited have operated the service since it started. They are all local people who were pre-qualified as drivers. Security has not been a major issue.

Emerging problems

There is some evidence of a lack of co-ordination between BCA and Leicester City Council with regard to street works in the area and BCA are concerned about a change in the contract for provision of bus shelters in the City whereby Braunstone might lose out. Leicester City Council has also announced restrictions in utilisation of its own community transport capacity brought on by budgetary problems. This means that vehicles will no longer be available for recreational and leisure visits which will increase demand for BCA's own minibus.

The future of the bus project

There is likely to be a need to adjust the pattern of services to make best use of the available funding, although additional sources of funding may be identified which will allow the current services to continue. Ridership continues to grow and there are grounds for cautious optimism with regard to attaining commercial viability.

Conclusions

- there is not an integrated bus service in Leicester. The creation of suburban service centres has created access problems. Reliance on commercial bus services leads to gaps in service provision

- there is a longstanding awareness of access problems in Braunstone which was a significant factor in framing the Delivery Plan which contained several transport projects comprised within a single 'theme'
- the community bus company idea was innovative. Appointment of an experienced project officer created an 'in house' capacity which had a rapid impact on project delivery. It became clear that amongst other problems, the financial management culture of the NDC and worries over long term liabilities mitigated against the bus company idea. A combination of expert knowledge within BCA and co-operative working with the local transport authorities secured rapid deployment of the mainstream bus tendering mechanism
- the role of BCA in the tendering process is innovatory in delivering local scrutiny of the planning and operation of the services. It also ensures that management is focused on developing the services not just delivering the contract, thereby securing commercial viability beyond the life of BCA. Having one staff member dedicated to managing tenders for six buses is resource intensive but effective. At the moment the ridership trends are positive and there are grounds for cautious optimism
- there is evidence that the services overcome access barriers for some Braunstone residents, although there is no rigorous monitoring of the overall access problem in the NDC area. The increasing demand for use of the BCA community minibus shows that there are other transport needs which are not met by the tendered services or other forms of public transport
- whereas the training and employment of local people as bus drivers has proved of limited success, there is evidence that local drivers deliver quality which is above the norm
- whereas originally the involvement of Arriva as a major bus operator was seen as beneficial to the success of the bus services, the involvement of a small independent bus company has been a significant factor in the success of the 317 service
- although not an overt 'integrated transport strategy', BCA is pursuing several projects which should lead to improvement in the walking environment which will also facilitate use of bus services. All these projects are within a single theme which has had the same manager since the inception of BCA, and there is an awareness of the synergies between them
- despite the good relationship with Leicester City Council, budgetary pressures on the latter lead to failure to deal with poor road and footpath surfaces and the bus shelters. This highlights the continuing problems in securing a holistic approach in a situation where mainstream budgets are under pressure

“The Bridge”, London Borough of Haringey

Characteristics of the area

The “Bridge” neighbourhood is similar to many deprived inner city neighbourhoods in most respect, but also contains a relatively high number of refugees. There is a high level of crime and relatively high levels of drug-related activity, prostitution etc, which includes a number of crack cocaine houses. Significant amounts of traffic lead to high levels of pollution and a poor accident record. The neighbourhood is divided by main roads. The principal concern of residents is, however, crime and fear of crime, levels of which are well above average. It includes prostitution, crack houses, etc; there is fear even on residential estates. Many walking routes, particularly those to public transport, have been considered dangerous.

The overall context in which this NDC is operating is significant, as designations within the Mayor’s draft London Plan raise its profile, priority and ultimately funding possibilities. For Tottenham, access to safe and secure transport and safe and secure interchange are

considered important aspects. The area is very well served by public transport; accessing it is the problem.

The access strategy of this NDC area is holistic and so far includes the following projects:

1. *Environmental Audit and Strategy*

This was commissioned to provide a framework for developing the capital programme and environmental management issues. The strategy identifies key issues and proposes movement, access and transportation strategies/projects.

2. *Safer Seven Sisters*

The Seven Sisters NDC area is an excellent transport gateway. Unfortunately much of the travelling environment is poor and routes to the station and its immediate access have been found to be dangerous and/or intimidating.

Two projects relate to its improvement; Safer Seven Sisters and the Wards Corner Development. The first, immediate, part of this, already delivered by the NDC working with TfL, LU, London Buses, WAGN, Network Rail, Metropolitan Police and Haringey Council has significantly improved safety on routes to and from Seven Sisters transport interchange. The variety of sources of partnership funds, and their successful amalgamation by an experienced officer, was key to these improvements. It has involved major changes to lighting, police presence etc. The long-term project is concerned both with access v of, and with drawing investment into the Bridge Neighbourhood and is a fairly major development programme, currently being produced.

3. *Traffic Calming Tiverton Estate*

This was designed to mitigate the effects of rat-running through the estate; it is used as a by-pass to the busy Seven Sisters Road. The project has however not solved the volume problem, which will need much more work.

4. *Design options St John's Road traffic calming*

Initial design and consultation for the introduction of a Traffic calming scheme aimed at tackling kerb crawling and related anti social behaviour as well as the underlying causes of poor traffic management in the local neighbourhood. Delivery St. John's Road traffic calming scheme.

5. *Consultation and delivery of St. John's Road Neighbourhood traffic calming scheme*

This neighbourhood scheme targets improvements to road safety, particularly for children attending Stamford Hill School. The scheme will encourage a reduction in overall speeds of vehicles and make the roads less desirable for use as a through route.

6. *St. Ann's Pay and Display*

The project has installed 30 Pay and Display Bays, with clear Waiting Restrictions, and the installation of five Pay and Display Machines the project will provide good access to affordable parking for people visiting key local amenities in the Bridge NDC. This project has killed several birds with one stone; it has got rid of the illegal sales of cars on the street, thus helping the police, and has facilitated parking for users of the nearby Park, while tidying up the area.

7. *Safer Roads and pedestrian Crossings*

Schemes just being installed as a result of consultation.

8. *Abandoned Vehicles Officer*

Abandoned vehicles work has linked with other agencies. DVLA, Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive, Police).

Good practice

In terms of movement, most of the sub-projects are concerned with making the streets pleasant and safe to move about rather than actually increasing the level of, or possibilities of, movement. The emphasis on cleaning up the streets and its importance in making the streets feel more usable, as well as the massive improvements in street lighting are key in many regeneration areas where pedestrian movement is common. The general emphasis on trying to “clean up” the environment gives residents the feeling that at least something is being done; the project officers distinguish clearly between quick wins and more strategic objectives. This is an example of a number of cases which demonstrate how a relatively small amount of budget and a willingness to try something out can make a disproportionately large difference to ease and safety of movement and access.

A great deal of time is given to fostering partnerships; understanding how funding can be levered in and there is an excellent relationship with the local authority. Indeed, links and apparently good working relationships have been established where they formerly did not exist. Liaison with the police is particularly important.

In an area such as this, particularly with a high transient population, it is difficult to involve the community as much as would be desirable. The project officers are, however, out and about, and are familiar with a good cross-section of the population, and are working on this issue. A number of them are very familiar with the area which is extremely helpful.

Derwent, Derby

Derwent ward, north east of Derby city centre with a population of around 10,000 covers three distinct areas: Roe Farm, St. Marks and Cowsley. All these areas suffer from poor housing stock, high unemployment, and low educational achievement. Many people who are in employment are in low wage or part time jobs.

A-class roads carrying high volumes of traffic delineate the area. Improvements have been made to crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists but the intrinsically large, traffic-friendly junction layouts still present formidable barriers to non-motorised movement.

Around 50% of households in Derwent have no access to a car. Bus services to Derby city centre are frequent and run commercially by Arriva who have recently introduced new low floor vehicles.

Accessibility difficulties were reported by residents through on-street surveys and a ‘Transport Brainstorm’ involving residents, NDC workers and City Council officers. In particular, the major radial roads separate the area from the Meteor Centre (supermarkets, other stores, restaurants and multi-screen cinema), only 1.5 miles away to the north west but with no bus service from Derwent and only a very limited one from the city centre.

Similarly, Pride Park and The Wyvern retail and business centres, with high levels of retail leisure and employment opportunities are only one mile away (although three miles by road)

but on the other side of the busy Nottingham Road with the only bus service from Pride Park to the city centre.

Within the ward, a steep hill (on top of which is the area's only retail store of any size) presents movement problems for the elderly and people with young children.

Solutions involved two main proposals, costing a total £720k over three years. Derwent Link is a new bus service to link the area with job and retail opportunities at the Meteor Centre, Pride Park and the Wyvern. It also provides a new link from the Wyvern to the city centre. The service was tendered through Derby City Council (who also contributed through Urban Bus Challenge funding) and was won by Arriva. The specification is for a half-hourly service running from 0700 to 1900, Monday to Saturday, using low-floor buses.

Derwent Ring and Ride is a demand-responsive minibus service providing a taxi-like service at bus fare prices, 7 days a week from 0700 to 2300. Its users are limited to residents who meet criteria related to their degree of social exclusion and mobility impairment. Destinations are limited to a radius of 25 miles. Fully accessible vehicles and drivers are funded by the NDC and the service is operated by Derby Community Transport.

Initially the Derwent Link suffered from a poor launch - the expected low-floor buses were not delivered in time, and general publicity and timetable information was limited, acquiring the tag 'ghost bus' because it was seen in the area but nobody knew what it was, and consequently tended to run empty. The service has improved considerably following the appointment, with NDC funding, of a former bus company manager who now oversees such issues as publicity and service quality. The new buses are now operating and carry distinctive route branding.

Monitoring data for the Derwent Link is limited to ticket sales/revenue and service reliability. The former is currently below the forecast (which was admittedly a 'guesstimate') although the operator is optimistic about growth. Service quality is good due to the use of regular drivers, a generous schedule and close supervision.

Ring and Ride has proved very popular since it offers very good value for money, including the availability of normal bus fare concessions. Detailed data is collected on usage because users are registered and all origins and destinations are known. Trip purpose is also recorded. Success is thus seen mainly in patronage terms and the implied connection between this and the actual objectives of access to opportunity are tenuous. It can be seen that some people are using the services to get to work but there is no evidential link between this and general success of the jobs and skills theme. Such data is probably better collected at NDC (as with the MORI studies) than project level.

Devonport, Plymouth

Introduction

The Devonport area became a Round Two New Deal for Communities in 2001 due to end in 2011. Funding was approved July 2001. Devonport Regeneration Company (DRC) became the delivery mechanism, initially opting to become a Company Limited by Guarantee but is currently reviewing a range of future options. Devonport consists of three distinct areas - these are the Naval Base, Residential areas (predominantly city council flats) and open spaces (Devonport Park, Brickfields and Mt Wise Enclave).

Historically the area has been dependent on the dockyard as a source of employment but, since it has been downsized, has suffered high unemployment and poor housing and is one of the most deprived areas within Plymouth.

Wider Regeneration Context and the Development of the Minibus Project

The potential release of Ministry of Defence land has led to a new Devonport Development Framework being produced, building upon a previous Devonport Urban Village Framework Plan (DUVFP).

The DUVFP was prepared by Plymouth City Council, South West Regional Development Agency and the Prince's Foundation, with a focus on housing development emerging. The DUVFP has since been absorbed into the City Council's Local Plan.

The purpose of the Devonport Development Framework is to bring together and build on the existing good work on physical regeneration already planned in Devonport.

As part of the consultation exercises informing the original NDC Delivery Plan, concern was expressed about the lack of community transport available in the area as commercial hire charges were prohibitive. As a result community transport provision became a priority.

Delivery of the Minibus Project

In summer 2001, the NDC, together with the Granby Island Community Centre, purchased two minibuses as a "quick win." Strong community feeling dictated that they should not be owned or operated by Plymouth City Council. The minibuses were used to promote the NDC and to try to "get the NDC name out into the community". The buses were purchased by the Granby Island Community Centre with an understanding that they would become the property of the NDC after two years. The NDC became the owners of the buses in summer 2003.

A third disabled access minibus was purchased in summer 2003 as a result of a need to accommodate growing numbers of over 50's users. The donation of a van by a local resident has proved a useful asset and is used frequently for moving larger goods by residents. The NDC are experimenting with bio-diesel fuel which they are hoping to use on a more permanent basis in the future.

The Community Minibus operates from Granby Island Community Centre for ease of operation and availability of parking. After some initial confusion concerning bookings and operation a minibus manager was appointed in November 2002, funded by the NDC for six months, with the responsibility for all bookings and operation of the buses.

There is no formal steering group. The NDC office manager, the dedicated Community Minibus worker and a representative from the Granby Island Community Centre deal with all Community Minibus planning and operations.

Priority is given to users within the Devonport area, but other groups are able to hire the minibuses if available. Hire charges are waived for groups located within the NDC area, but a charge for mileage is levied. Users based outside the NDC area are charged a standard fee plus mileage.

There are a variety of users. Booking priority is given to local schools. Youth groups, nurseries and family centre groups are also regular users. Interviews with users indicated very positive feelings about the minibus. All were able to extend the activities of their groups and felt that the minibus provided an invaluable service that would otherwise not be available to them.

Conclusions

- there was an obvious need for some form of community transport in the Devonport area. Local community groups were experiencing difficulty in finding affordable and available transport for group activities

- the NDC played a key role in facilitating the purchase and operation of the mini buses
- there is evidence that the role of the dedicated worker has greatly assisted the operational effectiveness of the minibus
- the presence of the minibus has enhanced the perception of the NDC within the community
- evidence suggests that the mini bus has overcome some of the transport difficulties of the community groups in the area
- the Devonport Development Framework attaches some significance to transport issues. The second of the Development Principles is "A highly accessible movement framework" which gives clear emphasis on mobility

Ocean Estate, London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Ocean estate is a more or less self contained estate in Tower Hamlets. The majority of its population are Bengali and Somali. There are a number of schools and community groups on the estate. An Access bus service has been provided for some time by Tower Hamlets Community Transport, using their own buses. For various reasons there were problems with the funding of this service and when the NDC initiative started, NDC funds were used to keep the service going in the short term.

The original impetus for the community to have its own dedicated bus came from members of the Board. Originally there were two groups who each thought a bus was justified; one would be for youth and community activities (they wanted to run their own) and the other for the elderly, disabled and isolated. On further investigation it was demonstrated that there was unlikely to be sufficient demand to justify this expenditure both of capital and revenue funding, and the full appraisal, which included an estimate of potential use, bore this out. Initially those on the Board who were keen wanted to operate it themselves but realised that this would be pointless if not impossible. There were various problems to be overcome in making sure that the bus was not used for private "family" style outings but for "genuine" community groups.

The NDC then looked for partners for the scheme, and when they looked into Community Transport, realised that they would be obvious partners, since not only would they look after the bus but they would train drivers, (some at least of whom would be paid) support staff etc. It was decided that a broadening of the Access scheme to include other groups would justify the purchase of a CT vehicle (a Mercedes Benz Sprinter Cdi 16 seat small bus) by the NDC, to be operated by THCT.

A full appraisal was then carried out. The appraisal has to be presented to the Board and the first time it was presented it was rejected, i.e. sent back for further work. This raised certain problems relating to the professional pride of TCHT in relation to the Board's demands; however in the light of the financial losses that the NDC had suffered through irregularities it was not surprising. THCT also found the funding route difficult, largely because they have normally worked on a grants basis. All NDC money is channelled via Tower Hamlets Council and so this can lead to the payment of invoices being delayed while various processes are followed. Again this is not helpful but once known about, can be taken into account in terms of the times when invoices are submitted. A lesson to be learnt, however, is that all these processes and their likely timings should be fully understood by all partners from the outset of any partnership.

The NDC team is determined that the bus shall be used as fully as possible from the outset, and are currently involved in recruiting users. What the outcome will be, in terms of actual users, will not be clear until later in 2004, at which time it should be possible to get a list of the user groups and at least approximate number of users directly from the NDC office.

Wood End, Coventry

This case study covers the Wood End, Henley Green, Manor Farm and Deedmore (WEHM) NDC in the North East of Coventry. It is a large area of council housing which suffers from a poor image and has high rates of unemployment and health problems.

As with the majority of services in Coventry, the area's bus services are mainly provided commercially by Travel West Midlands, a National Express subsidiary. It is relatively well served by radial bus routes but has no public transport access to developing retail and employment sites near the M6 motorway junction and at new sites in the north west of the city.

Transport was one of the NDC's ten original task groups, chaired by a local resident and transport schemes have been part of the NDC's plans from the outset. However, there were felt to be too many task groups and all projects concerned with the physical environment - including transport - were merged into one. Despite being resident-led, it has proved difficult to involve many other residents in transport issues. The area has been the focus of regeneration initiatives in the past that have not tackled the real problems, resulting in disenchantment.

Feedback from residents was that they wanted more frequent services outside the peaks and on routes other than to the city centre such as industrial estates, new business parks and the hospital. They were keen that services would be regular, conventional bus services rather than occasional or demand-responsive.

The NDC has enjoyed a good relationship with the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive (Centro) - the body responsible for buying in tendered bus services in the region. Centro and the NDC were able to persuade the main bus operator to amend one of their Sunday services to better serve the NDC area and a small bus operator to provide a commercial service that covered some of local people's requirements at no cost to the NDC. However, the services operated by the smaller bus company did not prove commercially viable and the operator withdrew after six months, although the Sunday service revisions are still in place.

Subsequent attempts to procure new links to employment sites through Centro have foundered on the lack of interest from bus companies and tender prices that were unaffordable. This has prompted the NDC to seek more innovative solutions such as Community Transport (with additional NRF monies) or possibly exploiting spare time in the Hospital Trust's fleet.

A Community Minibus scheme has been more successful, being well used and popular. There are many 'action groups' in the area (e.g. OAP, disability etc.) who wanted a minibus that could be used by any group (e.g. for trips out), and a vehicle is funded by the NDC and operated by a local charity. Costs are relatively low and it seems possible that the high level of demand could fund it.

Other improvements requested have had mixed results. Bus service information away from bus stops at doctors, chemists etc. have been installed successfully. Proposals for improved bus shelters and traffic calming have been overtaken by plans for wholesale redevelopment of the area, including the road pattern, although it is doubtful whether this would necessarily involve the roads used by buses.

Bus service plans have also been overshadowed by the relationship between the city council and Travel West Midlands. Councillors have been dissatisfied with TWM's quality and level of service in the city and said that they wished to pursue a Quality Contract, in which the council would specify and tender for the whole network, removing the operators' freedom to run commercial services.

In response, TWM have rebranded the city operations as “Travel Coventry”, with more local management. In partnership with Centro, the city has conducted a major review of bus services in the city. This will explore the potential for S106 funding for routes to industrial estates, so the NDC’s need for services might eventually be funded, although it may be 2004/5 before the study is translated into action.

This case study illustrates the risk of measuring achievements at an early stage; initially it appeared that good progress had been made at little cost but later the experience can be characterised as ‘two steps forward and two steps back’. The effects of the wider context - of the bus service market, the political situation and larger plans - can also be seen to limit the NDC’s progress on transport.