

**Rural Transport Audit
in County Limerick**

Clients

Limerick County Development Board

Prepared by

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1 OVERVIEW

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1.1 Introduction

This report has been prepared by Taylor Lightfoot Transport Consultants and Goodbody Economic Consultants for Limerick County Development Board as part of a national audit of transport needs and provision in rural areas. It is based on the results of the following:

- a survey of a sample of 2000 rural residents about their travel patterns and needs
- a consultative workshop with members of key interest groups
- a telephone survey of private bus operators
- desk research on existing transport provision

The results have then been put into the context of local, national and international developments and trends in the provision of rural transport services in order to prepare proposals for a rural transport strategy, which Limerick County Development Board can include in its Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development for the 10 year period, 2002-2011.

1.1.2 Key Findings

Scheduled bus transport services are concentrated on Limerick City as the origin/destination for direct interurban services between the main cities in the country and main towns in the County. Scheduled train services are similarly concentrated, though with very few destinations having direct services. This is also reflected by the very high percentage (39%) of people who travel from the rural areas to work in Limerick City. This compares with 34% travelling to the County Town/Main Town for work as the average for the four counties of Clare, Cork, North Tipperary and Limerick.

The settlements located on the main national routes benefit from these interurban services, but very few of these services are accessible to people with reduced mobility, especially wheelchair users, or to people living away from the main routes.

The number of weekly trips made per head range from 20 for “people who always/often have a car available” down to only 7 for “people in households with no car”. For certain key target groups the number of weekly trips made is lower for older people (15/6) and people on low income (14/7), but higher for disabled people (26/11). The unmet demand for trips amongst these target groups varies from just over one third for people on low income to two thirds for disabled people being unable to make trips due to the lack of suitable transport. Over half of Free Travel Passholders are unable to make trips due to the lack of suitable transport. An estimated 10,338 people aged 18 and over have an unmet demand for trips defined as the existence of trips that could not be made due to a lack of suitable transport.

The preferred mode of transport for people using new services is for services, which do not require any pre-booking, stop nearby and take them directly to their destination or which are pre-booked and take them door to door directly. These types of service would relate closely to traditional bus and taxi services in areas where both are available.

The key issue for people in the rural areas of Co. Limerick is the way in which transport services are provided and organised. This relates to lack of responsibility at a local level for the planning, purchasing and licensing of rural transport services and the restricted availability of the Free Travel Pass.

1.1.3 Goals, Objectives & Actions

The specific Goals for rural transport services as part of the CDB's overall strategy should be that they are integrated into the public transport policy, planning and implementation framework for the County and that an appropriate structure is put in place to ensure that integration can take place.

The specific Objectives for rural transport services should be as follows:

- Co-ordination of the purchasing of transport services by publicly funded agencies
- Local co-ordination at the operational level of new and existing vehicles
- Development and implementation of a phased programme of action
- To ensure that, in order to meet the Goal of integration, successful initiatives be mainstreamed at the earliest opportunity
- To develop a robust method of predicting levels of usage of rural transport services at an operational level
- To develop an agreed minimum service level for all communities

The specific Actions for rural transport services are set out below.

Provide support to the County Limerick/North Cork Transport Group to:

- Develop an Action Plan and implement pilot transport schemes under the Rural Transport Initiative
- Identify and commission suitable organisations to undertake further research into predicting usage
- Establish a co-ordinated budget for the support of local transport services, involving all the agencies purchasing local passenger transport services
- Mainstreaming of rural transport services under the new budget to:
 1. Develop, implement and promote new local services, which cater for the needs of agencies involved in the provision of
 - day care facilities for older people
 - support for disabled people
 - childcare facilities
 - cultural and educational facilities
 - services for younger people
 2. Develop, implement and promote new local services which link with existing and planned bus and rail services
 3. Develop, implement and promote new local services, which serve rural areas and also connect the villages and towns of the County with each other
 4. Update local transport needs and the information on transport provision

1.2 TOPOGRAPHY

County Limerick is 2,756 km². Except for hilly and mountainous areas in the West, the south-east and the north-east, the County is relatively flat. Only a small portion of the surface of the County is over 500 feet. The most important mountainous area is in the south-east of the County, where Galteemore peak at 3,018 feet is just inside the County border. A number of other Limerick peaks in the Galtee range exceed the 2,000 foot mark. Peaks in the nearby Ballyhouras reach to 1,703 and 1,697 feet respectively and in the Mullagharierk mountains in the south-west and in the Sliabh Felim in the north-east, there are a number of peaks over 1,000 feet.

The greater part of County Limerick is drained by the Shannon and its tributaries, the Mulcair, the Maigue and the Deel. The Maigue is tidal for the last seven miles of its course, up to Adare and the Deel is tidal for three miles, up to Askeaton. The Feale, which drains the south-west of the County enters the sea south of Ballybunnion in Co. Kerry.

1.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Co. Limerick had a population of just over 113,000 in 1996. Its population increased by 2.8 per cent since 1991, and the county accounts for 3.1 per cent of the total national population. The county is predominantly rural with only two towns with a population over 1,500 in 1996. 27% of the population lives in the environs of Limerick City and 57% live in settlements of less than 200 people. Population density is 41.00 persons per km², well below the national average with rural population density (23.49 persons per km²) just above the average for rural areas nationally.

Table 1.1: Socio-Economic Profile of Co. Limerick, 1996 (Source: CSO)

Socio-economic Indicator	County Limerick	Rural Limerick	State
Population (1996)	113,003	84,149	3,629,860
Population Density (per km ²)	41.23	-	51.65
Rural Population Density (per km ²)	-	30.77	21.81
Proportion of Population over 65 (%)	10.8	12.3	11.4
- Proportion Male (%)	43.8	44.7	42.8
- Proportion Female (%)	56.2	55.3	57.2
Proportion population 14 and under (%)	24.1	24.57	23.7
Proportion in socio-economic groups A&B (%)	8.59	11.46	11.6
Proportion in socio-economic group G (%)	7.43	9.84	5.8
Proportion in socio-economic groups I & J (%)	16.32	21.95	8.2
Proportion of population with 3 rd level education (%)	12.1		12.7
Proportion of population with access to a car (1991)	75.4	75.6	66.0

Note: The socio-economic groups are defined as follows: A = Employers and Managers; B = Higher Professionals; G = unskilled; I = Farmers; j = Agricultural Workers.

The proportion of young people in the county (14 or under) is similar to the national average (24 per cent). Just under 11 per cent of the county's population, and just over 12 per cent of the rural population, is aged 65 or over (Map 1.2). This is very similar to the figure of 11.4 per cent nationally. The older population in Limerick has a similar male-female breakdown as does the State as a whole.

Rural-based activities are not as large an element of the county's economic profile as for other counties. However, the percentage of the population engaged in farming

and agricultural activities is still twice the national average (16.32 per cent compared to 8.2 per cent). In rural areas the proportion engaged in farming is high (21.95 per cent), but below that for Cork and Clare, for example. The percentage of unskilled people (7.43 per cent) is also higher than average (5.8 per cent), while the population with third level education is close to the national average. Map 1.3 illustrates the distribution of the proportion of the population in each DED who are unemployed.

The proportion of the population in the Employers, Managers and Higher Professional socio-economic groups (8.59 per cent) is much lower than the national average (11.6 per cent), although the figure for the rural area (11.46 per cent) is similar to the national average.

1.4 SPATIAL STRUCTURE

The greatest concentration of population in the County is in the environs of Limerick City, which incorporates the suburbs of the City, which contained nearly 24,000 people in 1996. The main town in the County is Newcastle West with a population of 3,618 including its environs. Only seven other towns had a population in 1996 of over 1,000 inhabitants; Rathkeale (1,546), Abbeyfeale (1,486), Castleconnell (1,414), Kilmallock (1,231), Adare (1,042), Patrickswell (1,022) and Croom (1,009). A further ten towns had a population in 1996 of between 500 and 999 inhabitants with the remaining 19 having a population in 1996 of between 170 and 499 inhabitants. Category A in Table 1.2 below is usually used to denote the County Town, however County Limerick is unique in that its main urban areas are the suburbs of Limerick City and its next largest urban area is below 5,000 people; i.e. a Category C settlement.

Table 1.2: Hierarchy of Settlements in Co. Limerick				
A	B (> 5,000)	C (1,500-4,999)	D (< 1,500)	
None	Suburbs of Limerick City	Newcastle West Rathkeale	Abbeyfeale Adare Annacotty Ardagh Askeaton Athea Ballingarry Ballyagran Ballylanders Broadford Bruff Bruree Caherconlish Cappamore Castleconnell Coonagh Croom Doon	Drumcollogher Foynes Galbally Glin Hospital Kilfinane Kilmallock Knocklong Moroe Mountcollins Mungret O'Briensbridge Oola Pallasgreen Pallaskenry Patrickswell Shanagolden

1.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL TRANSPORT

The large number of small towns and villages and the road infrastructure of the County create specific problems for the operation of rural transport services. The Expressway network is designed to provide good and speedy connections between the major centres of population in the State and as more small towns and villages are by-passed, their inhabitants lose the ability to connect directly to the Expressway services. This means that local services will either have to be developed to replace the Expressway services on certain routes operating to a certain extent in parallel or to provide linking services, which will interchange at key points on the network. This in turn will require certain infrastructure, such as bus shelters and lay-bys, to be put in place at the key points.

In addition to these connecting services it will also be necessary to establish local services connecting rural areas to small towns and the small towns with each other in order to meet the unmet demand for journeys, which have been identified in the local surveys. The emphasis for such new services should be on integration. In order to reinforce their viability it will be important to develop a more co-ordinated approach to the provision of local services to meet the demand from the general public as well as the needs of specific target groups, some of whom may already be served directly by community and voluntary organisations with their own vehicles or by private operators on their behalf.

1.6 TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW

Car ownership in the County at 38 cars per 100 residents is just above the national average of 35. There are 43,317 private cars in the County and 66,834 people (59% of the total population) hold driving licenses.

Six National Primary Routes and one National Secondary Route traverse the County. There are 136 km of the former and 58 km of the latter in the County. There are 463 km of regional roads and 2,925 km of local roads.

Taking the County and the City together there are 702 public service vehicles in operation with just over 120 vehicles operating a total of 195 licensed school transport routes carrying just over 6,600 school children for the Department of Education.

2 AUDIT OF EXISTING SERVICES

2.1 SCHEDULED SERVICES

2.1.1 *Bus and rail services*

There are 29 Bus Éireann routes in operation in County Limerick. These include 10 Bus Éireann expressway and 19 local scheduled routes. On a national scale Limerick is a major travel attractor linking the east of the county to the west. The most frequent services extend to Dublin, Cork and Galway. For example, there are 33 daily expressway services operating through Limerick to and from Dublin with destinations of Kilorglin, West Clare and Ennis. There is an additional 48 daily expressway services connecting Limerick to Cork and Galway. The expressway service also operates through Limerick from Tralee and Athlone on a less frequent basis.

There is also an extensive local bus service, which serves most of the towns located on the national primary roads. The most frequent local service is from Limerick to Charleville with 19 daily services. Towns such as Patrickswell, Croom and Bruree on this route are served, though less well than previously as a result of Expressway services staying on the new National Route system to the South West of Limerick City, which bypasses these communities. There are also 10 daily services operating from Limerick to Tipperary serving Dromkeen, Pallasgreen and Oola. Other frequent local daily services to Limerick originate from Kilfinane, Dundrum, Ardnacrusha and Tralee. Less frequent services operate to destinations in Clare such as Kilkee and Scariff.

Limerick City is well served by the national train network. For example, there are 13 daily services from Limerick City to Dublin, 2 of which provide a daily service from Castleconnell to Dublin. There are 9 services to Cork, 2 to Ennis, 5 to Tralee and 1 to Rosslare Europort, which also serves Tipperary Town, Clonmel and Waterford City. Charleville, which is an important stop for people living in the south of the County, has 4 daily services to Dublin.

There are 16 private bus routes operating in County Limerick. Many of the private routes in Limerick are of short distances. For example, from Creeves and Kilcolman to Newcastle West or Effin to Charleville. The non local routes originate in Limerick and terminate in Dublin Airport, Roscrea and Carlow.

All Bus Éireann, Iarnród Éireann services and 7 of the private bus operators accept free travel passes. Overall, 28,000 people in Limerick (County & City) are recipients

of free travel passes. This represents 17 per cent of the entire population in the County and City. This is higher than the national figure but lower than that of Tipperary. In addition, a higher proportion of recipients of free travel passes in Limerick (County & City) qualify through receipt of invalidity benefit in comparison to counties Clare, Cork and Tipperary.

Table 2.1 Free Travel Pass Holders (Source: DSC&FA)

	Limerick (Co.& City)	State
Number of free travel pass holders	28,173	586,363
Number of free travel pass holders (per 100 residents)	17.07	16.15
Number of free travel pass holders qualifying through receipt of invalidity (% of total)	8127 (28.8)	124,845 (21.3)

2.1.2 Access to public transport services in comparison to other Counties

Limerick City is the main transport hub in the east of the County. The Expressway services are concentrated along the N7, N21 and N20, while the local routes are mainly located along the N69 and N24 and to the east of the County.

Eighty per cent of the rural population in County Limerick have access to some form of transport, which is slightly more than County Cork, but less than North Tipperary and County Clare (Map 2.1). However, in a comparison of the four counties, a higher proportion of the rural population in County Limerick, Co. Cork and Co. Clare have access to transport to facilitate work or training (Map 2.2). This is a reflection the role Limerick City plays as a transport hub in the west of the State and Cork City in the South. Access is defined as living in DEDs where transport services stop.

Table 2.2: % of Rural Population in DEDs with Public Transport Services

	Limerick	Cork	Clare	N. Tipperary
Any scheduled service	80	75	86	82
Daily working service	65	53	65	44

Service accessibility is of particular concern to the key target groups, such as young people, older people and unemployed people. Maps 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 portray the distribution of the numbers of people in each target group living in DEDs without a service to education/training facilities, a daytime service and services to large towns respectively.

2.2 SCHOOL, PRIVATE AND NON-SCHEDULED SERVICES

69 Transport Operators from both the City and the County are contained in the database assembled, including some hackneys with over 4 seats. Details of 11 voluntary organisations are listed in the database, but most of their vehicles are based in Limerick City.

Information on **34 operators** has been compiled, a response rate of 50% and forms the basis of the information contained in the tables below. Table 2.3 below summarises the fleet of vehicles in Co. Limerick operated by private bus and taxi/hackney operators, their location is contained in Appendix A.

Table 2.3: Number of each type of vehicle

Vehicle Type	Total Limerick	Total vehicles suitable for Wheelchair users
Large Bus (35 seats +)	53	0
Small Bus (17-34 seats)	55	10
Minibus (9-16 seats)	36	4
Car or MPV (4-8)	8	0
Taxis/Hackneys	267	Not available

Table 2.4 below summarises the number of routes operated by private operators as a public bus service (not necessarily licensed) and as a school service. The details of the services operated are contained in Appendix B.

Table 2.4: Number of bus routes operated by private operators

Routes	Total
Public Bus Services	13
School services	34
Total	47

National voluntary organisations, such as Enable Ireland, the Irish Wheelchair Association, the Daughters of Charity and the Brothers of Charity operate minibuses and MPVs and provide a service to enable their members to access the services and facilities which they provide in a number of locations in the County. These services include day care, workshop and training centres. In addition a number of local groups provide similar services and some have received funding from the Health Board to provide transport in connection with day care facilities and centres. Table 2.5 below contains a summary of the vehicles operated by voluntary organisations.

Table 2.5: Number of each type of vehicle

Vehicle Type	Total Limerick	Total vehicles suitable for Wheelchair users
Minibus (9-16 seats)	25	23
Car or MPV (4-8)	11	1

3 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The response rate and the weighting of the responses to the questionnaire are set out below:

Total number of Questionnaires (see Appendix G) mailed out: 2,000

Total returned Questionnaires: 379

% of Response to Questionnaire: 19.5%

Total Rural Population (on the Electoral Register): 60,944

% of Rural Population: 0.64%

Response Profile and Comparison to Rural Profile											
Age	Survey Male No	Survey Male %	Rural Male %	Weighting	Survey Female No	Survey Female %	Rural Female %	Weighting	Survey Total No	Survey Total %	Rural Total %
18-20	8	2.1			8	2.1			16		
21-24	10	2.6	9	1.83	19	5.0	7	1.05	29	11.9	16.16
25-44	58	15.3	19	1.27	73	19.3	18	0.94	131	34.6	37.63
45-64	58	15.3	15	0.99	69	18.2	14	0.75	127	33.5	28.81
65+	32	8.4	8	0.92	44	11.6	10	0.83	76	20.1	17.39
Total	166	43.8	51		213	56.2	49		379	100	100

Source: Local Transport Survey & 1996 Census Data

The sample of 2,000 was taken from the electoral register for the County on a pro rata basis related to the number of people in each DED avoiding sending two Questionnaires to the same household where possible. The responses were adjusted to remove any age or gender bias and to produce a weighted dataset similar in profile to rural County Limerick.

3.1 PRIVATE CAR ACCESSIBILITY

3.1.1 Cars in Household

One of the first indicators of transport availability is household car ownership. In the survey of rural residents, 8 per cent live in households with no car, whilst 42 per cent live in households with two or more vehicles. The percentage living in households with one car is higher than the average including the other three counties, Cork, Clare and North Tipperary, though the percentage living in households with 2 or more cars compares less favourably.

	Limerick		Average 4 counties	
	Number	%	Number	%
0	32	8%	29	7%
1	187	50%	167	40%
2	111	30%	160	38%
3+	45	12%	63	15%
Total	376	100%	419	100%

Source: Local Transport Survey

The population living in households without a car is consistent across most age groups.

There are a number of target groups where the proportion living in non-car households is higher. These include:

- Older people, where 36% live in households with no car
- People with illnesses and people with disabilities, where 43% live in households with no car
- Lower income groups (using medical card holders as a proxy), where 32% live in households with no car

Table 3.2: Proportion of Sub-groups in Limerick living in Households with no Car				
	Limerick		Average 4 counties	
	Number	%	Number	%
Age Group				
18-24	0	0%	0	0%
25-44	4	3%	4	3%
45-64	6	5%	5	4%
65+	22	36%	20	27%
Gender				
Male	13	7%	10	5%
Female	19	10%	19	10%
Disability				
Able bodied	27	7%	26	6%
People with illness or disability	5	43%	3	34%
Free Travel Pass?				
Yes	26	34%	22	27%
No	6	2%	7	2%
Medical Card				
Yes	29	32%	26	25%
No	3	1%	3	1%
Average	32	8%	29	7%
Source: Local Transport Survey				

3.1.2 Car Availability

Car ownership can mask the real determinant of the need to use alternative, non-private means of transport, i.e. actual car availability. In many households where there is one car, for example, it might be used by the principal income earner for the work journey and is therefore unavailable to other members of the household during the main part of the day. Around 13% of the rural population report that they “rarely” or “never” have a car available for their personal use. This is slightly higher than the average for the four counties.

Table 3.3: Availability of a Car for Use as Driver or Passenger Co. Limerick				
	Limerick		Average 4 counties	
	Number	%	Number	%
Always	261	76%	300	77%
Often	37	11%	45	12%
Rarely	25	7%	27	7%
Never	20	6%	18	5%
Total	342	100	390	100
Source: Local Transport Survey				

Car availability is significantly lower for younger people (18-24) with 41% having little or no access to household car transport. Women have the same level of car availability to men.

People with illness or with a disability (21%) are less likely to have a car available than are able-bodied people.

Table 3.4: Proportion of Sub-groups in Co. Limerick who Never/Rarely have a Car available				
	Limerick		Average 4 counties	
	Number	%	Number	%
Age Group				
18-24	25	41%	19	30%
25-44	11	8%	11	8%
45-64	3	2%	8	6%
65+	5	8%	8	9%
Gender				
Male	22	13%	22	11%
Female	22	13%	22	12%
Disability				
Able-bodied	42	13%	42	11%
People with Illness or disability	2	21%	3	27%
Free Travel Pass?				
Yes	9	12%	10	12%
No	35	13%	35	12%
Medical Card?				
Yes	13	15%	14	13%
No	31	12%	31	11%
Average	44	12%	45	11%

Source: Local Transport Survey

Note:

This does not include households with no car at all, and some figures are therefore not as high as could be expected. Both tables need to be considered together. For example, only 21% of disabled/ill people rarely or never have access to a car, but taken in conjunction with the figures for no cars in household, it becomes apparent that this figure is relatively low because 43% have no car in the household. The conclusion is that 64% of disabled/ill people have extremely limited mobility as far as these two aspects are concerned.

3.2 OVERALL TRAVEL PATTERNS

People with higher levels of access to household cars make more journeys than those with lower levels of access. People who rarely/never have a car available make about 16 trips per week, compared to 20 trips for people who always/often have one available and people living in households with no car make only 7 trips per week.

Table 3.5: Weekly Trips made per Head in Co. Limerick		
	Limerick	Average 4 counties
All respondents	19	18
Car available always/often	20	20
Car available rarely/never	16	15
No Car in Household	7	5

Source: Local Transport Survey

The size of the gap in trip making differs by sub-group. Young people and people with illness or disability seem to adapt to not having access to a car better than other target groups, as the size of the trip-making gap is smaller (22 trips v.17 trips and 26 trips v.20 trips respectively). For older people, lack of access to a car means that individuals are able to

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make just over half (people aged 65+) the number of trips that those with access to a car are making.

Table 3.6: Impact of Car Availability on Key Target Groups in Co. Limerick						
Target Group	Weekly Trips made per Head					
	Limerick			Average 4 counties		
	Always/ Often	Rarely/ Never	No Car	Always/ Often	Rarely/ Never	No Car
Age 18-24	22	17	N/A	21	17	N/A
Age 65+	15	8	6	13	5	6
People with illness or disability	26	20	11	13	9	8
Medical Card Holders	14	16	7	15	10	6
Free Travel Pass Holders	14	13	9	13	9	6

Source: Local Transport Survey

3.3 TYPES OF JOURNEY

Work and education/training journeys are the most important trips for younger people, followed by food shopping, visiting friends and relatives and social activities. For older people, people with illness or with a disability, and lower income groups, shopping trips are highly important, as is going to church, personal business and visiting friends/relatives

Table 3.7: Relative Importance of Journey Purposes for Key Target groups in Co. Limerick												
Journey Purpose	Young (18-24)		Older People (65+)		People with illness / disability		Medical Card Holders		Free Travel Pass Holders		Total	
	LK	4C*	LK	4C	LK	4C	LK	4C	LK	4C	LK	4C
Work	24%	28%	6%	7%	0%	0%	7%	9%	4%	6%	23%	23%
Training/Education	14%	13%	1%	1%	7%	4%	5%	3%	3%	2%	5%	4%
Food Shopping	12%	9%	27%	25%	34%	30%	27%	24%	29%	25%	16%	16%
Non-Food Shopping	7%	6%	8%	9%	10%	13%	7%	7%	8%	9%	6%	7%
Personal Business	7%	5%	9%	8%	12%	7%	8%	8%	9%	8%	6%	6%
Doctor's Appointment	1%	1%	6%	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	5%	1%	1%
Hospital Appointment	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Attending Day Care Centre	0%	0%	1%	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Children to Creche/School	0%	1%	4%	3%	0%	7%	6%	9%	3%	4%	12%	13%
Visiting in Hospital	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Visiting friends/relative	12%	11%	9%	10%	14%	14%	9%	10%	10%	11%	8%	9%
Social activities	10%	11%	6%	6%	1%	4%	6%	6%	5%	5%	8%	7%
Sport and recreation	7%	8%	2%	3%	0%	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%	6%	7%
Church	5%	6%	17%	19%	10%	12%	14%	14%	17%	18%	7%	7%
Other	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Local Transport Survey

* 4C is the percentage for all four counties, Clare, Cork, Limerick and North Tipperary

Limerick City, followed closely by small towns and villages, is the most important destination for journeys to work. Small towns and villages are the most important destinations for all other journeys, though Limerick City is also important for sports activities.

Table 3.8: Destination for Different Journey Types in Co. Limerick

RURAL TRANSPORT AUDIT – COUNTY LIMERICK

Journey Purpose	Settlement Type									
	Limerick City		Large Town		Medium Town		Small Town		Other	
	LK	4C	LK	4C	LK	4C	LK	4C	LK	4C
Work	39%	34%	11%	23%	18%	20%	33%	24%	0%	0%
Food Shopping	29%	26%	0%	14%	20%	19%	50%	41%	0%	0%
Non-Food Shopping	42%	27%	1%	18%	13%	20%	45%	36%	0%	0%
Shopping not specified	34%	29%	1%	17%	22%	20%	44%	35%	0%	0%
Leisure	25%	32%	0%	15%	15%	15%	59%	38%	0%	0%
Visiting friends/relative	20%	27%	3%	20%	13%	12%	64%	41%	0%	1%
Sport	42%	36%	1%	18%	11%	11%	47%	36%	0%	0%
Education/training	21%	19%	1%	15%	19%	13%	60%	53%	0%	0%
Hospital	21%	22%	1%	16%	1%	9%	77%	54%	0%	0%
Going to Church	4%	11%	0%	8%	26%	17%	70%	65%	0%	0%

Source: Local Transport Survey

3.4 TRAVEL NEEDS AND ATTITUDES

There is a wide range amongst the key target groups who have identified the existence of trips that they would like to make but are currently unable to due to lack of suitable transport. This varies from 34% of 18-24 year olds (higher than the average) to 42% of people aged 65 and over, which is consistent with the average and 66% of people with illness/disability (considerably higher than the average of the four counties).

Target Group	Incidence of Unmet Demand for Trips			
	Limerick		Average 4 counties	
	Number	%	Number	%
18-24	21	34%	15	22%
65+	28	42%	35	44%
People with Illness/disability	7	66%	5	45%
Medical Card Holders	33	38%	36	34%
Free Travel Pass Holders	41	54%	41	48%

Note: Unmet demand for trips defined as the existence of trips that could not be made due to a lack of suitable transport.

Source: Local Transport Survey

The most strongly favoured types of transport service are direct services, which are either stopping nearby or provide a door-to-door service.

Service Description	Stating they would “very likely” use new service			
	Limerick		Average 4 counties	
	Number	%	Number	%
A. Pre-booked/door-to-door/direct	93	24%	103	24%
B. Pre-booked/nearby stop/direct	48	12%	49	12%
C. No pre-booking/nearby stop/direct	88	23%	105	25%
D. No pre-booking/nearby stop/change	54	14%	62	15%

Source: Local Transport Survey

For 30% of the rural population, the cost of a new service would greatly affect their willingness to use it. There are marked differences in attitudes to cost between the target groups. Far fewer people with illness or disability are sensitive to cost.

Table 3.11: Price Sensitivity

RURAL TRANSPORT AUDIT – COUNTY LIMERICK

Target Group	Extent to which Fares would determine Willingness to use a New Service			
	Limerick		Average 4 counties	
	No	%	No	%
Age 18-24	13	21%	13	20%
Age 65+	20	31%	25	31%
People with illness or disability	1	9%	3	24%
Medical Card Holders	23	26%	26	24%
Free Travel Pass Holders	26	35%	27	32%
Average	113	30%	113	27%
Source: Local Transport Survey				

3.5 RURAL TRANSPORT WORKSHOP

A workshop attended by 28 people was held in Rathkeale, with those attended representing a range of organisations, including Limerick County Council, State agencies, local and national community and voluntary organisations, local development agencies, private transport operators and CIE. During the workshop a number of issues were addressed and these are listed below:

3.5.1 *Topic 1: Current situation*

1. What are the main issues?
2. Which services are considered to be essential, and why?
3. Who is most seriously affected?
4. Among the people affected, how many people are likely to be involved (what's the scale of the problem?)
5. Who are the main providers of local passenger transport services at present and what services do they provide? (Covered in Section 2)
6. What are the specific problems and/or difficulties with the existing transport services?

3.5.2 *Topic 2: Ways Forward*

1. What are the most important features of a good rural passenger transport service?
2. What types of services are needed in the future?
3. Which organisations and what role should they play in the provision of local transport services?
4. What is the reasonable minimum level of local transport service to which people should have access.
5. What is your attitude to the cost of new rural passenger transport services and the fares to be charged?
6. Are the problems getting worse? If so, why and in what way?

The results of the discussion on Topic 1 are contained below. The results of the discussion on Topic 2 are contained in Section 4.3.

3.5.3 *Main Issues*

The following issues were highlighted:

- Identifying the needs
- Reduction of traffic congestion in small towns
- Access to Services and facilities: Education, Employment, Shopping, Leisure & Health
- To develop an implementation Strategy & to Manage Change
- Availability and cost
- Who is responsible for deciding on the level of service, providing it and paying for it?

- Issue of delivering goods to small rural towns.
- Payment of VAT with regard to purchase of local community minibuses
- The Bus system should be de-regulated to allow private operators to provide additional services; private operators experience difficulty in obtaining route licenses.
- A review of the Free Travel Scheme is needed.

3.5.4 Essential services

The following services are regarded as being essential for people to access:

- Employment
- Education - Primary, Secondary, Tertiary & Lifelong learning
- Shopping
- Social Welfare
- Health Centres
- Banking & Post Office
- Leisure/Recreation

3.5.5 People affected

The following table indicates the types of people affected by lack of access to essential services.

- Older people
- Disabled people
- Younger people
- Children
- Women in the home
- People without a car
- One car household (e.g. where people have off farm employment taking the car to work)
- Rural to urban commuter

3.5.6 Problems with existing transport.

The following list highlights the problems people are having with existing transport services.

- Frequency
- Lack of Transport in many areas
- Timing
- Access to existing bus routes and rail services
- Vehicle & Rail Carriage Design causing access problems
- Size of bus (not able to get down certain roads)

4 DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

4.1 LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

This Section is based on the review of relevant reports, including the CDB's Strategy, on the results of the discussion on Topic 2 in the Consultative Workshop and the successful application made under the Rural Transport Initiative (RTI). Supporting information on experience elsewhere in Ireland, Europe and the USA; on strategies and programmes contained in a report on rural transport produced as part of the VIRGIL Project, a contract for the European Commission which investigated good practice in multi-function rural transport services, has also informed the content of this Section. The detailed information on examples of rural transport services is contained in Appendix C and the results of the VIRGIL Project are contained in Appendix D. Appendix E contains a Bibliography listing the reports reviewed.

4.1.1 National context

The National Development Plan 2000-2006 has attributed £3.5 m for the development of rural public transport initiatives. The aim of which is to 'encourage local or community based initiatives to provide bus services in rural areas'. The RTI arises from the Government's commitment regarding rural transport services. One of the key requirements for funding under the RTI is the identification of a demand for a transport service at local level. The RTI advocates innovative approaches to provide this demand, which is based on community and local involvement and where possible extends from existing public transport services. The Strategy for Rural Development Report also promotes local solutions and community based responses to address the inadequate transport services. In addition the School Transport Review Report encourages the involvement of the community in conjunction with scheduled Bus Eireann services to address the issue of 'double tripping' on certain school runs. This report also recommends co-operation with the Health Boards and existing services in providing transport for children with disabilities.

The use of local pilot transport initiatives is encouraged in the RTI. The School Transport Review Report also advocates pilot schemes to address the issue of wheelchair accessible transport. There is also commitment within the National Development Plan 2000-2006 to improve the accessibility of public transport services. More specifically, all new and up-grades rail and bus railcars and stations financed under the plan will be accessible by people with disabilities. An additional £10 million will also be allocated to finance the increase of accessibility of existing transport services.

'A New Institutional and Regulatory Framework for Public Transport' does not focus on regulatory reform on a rural level. However, some of the proposed new arrangements may have an impact on rural transport services. In particular, the negotiation of public service

contracts and the award of franchises for the provision of public transport services may increase services in rural areas.

The National Spatial Strategy has arisen from the government's commitment under the National Development Plan 2000-2006 to provide a framework for future balanced regional development. The Spatial Planning unit has recently published a consultation paper on the National Spatial Strategy 'Indication for the Way Ahead'. This paper provides a blueprint for further consultations on the topic. The National Spatial Strategy will be finalised by the end of the year. The thinking underlying this document is the further development of the major urban centres that already function as gateways¹ and to develop a corresponding role for other centres to act as gateways and promote development within these regions.

The National Spatial Strategy recognises that within the zones surrounding the existing and potential gateways there is a need for medium-sized towns to act as hubs for economic growth supporting, in turn, the development of other smaller urban and rural areas. These towns would have the potential to attract investment and to develop indigenous industry and services, both in their own right and with linkages to industry located in the gateways. Investment in these towns is seen as a key factor in balanced regional development. The provision of an adequate public and private transport service is seen as a key determinant in promoting the development of these towns especially a service linking the urban and the rural hinterland. There is an especial need for measures to provide access for older people and people with reduced mobility.

The national study on rural transport from a community perspective published by ADM in 2000 made a series of recommendations regarding the way forward nationally as well as locally. These recommendations included the following, which impact directly at the local level:

- Provide appropriate resources for rural transport: to Bus Éireann, communities and other piloting new initiatives and methodologies, for mainstreaming lessons from successful initiatives, for disability infrastructure, for national, regional and local co-ordination and networking of co-ordinators, for factoring transport into accessibility of all public services and programmes, for research to address deficiencies in the current situation
- Better co-ordination mechanisms are needed to maximise resource use
- Pilot new service delivery approaches, transport and other services; transport proof all public services; successful pilot transport initiatives should be mainstreamed; the use of telematics in demand-responsive transport solutions should be explored
- More flexible approaches are needed towards meeting the diverse transport demands on the ground taking account of disability, special needs, remoteness, youth, the elderly, the

¹ In addition to Dublin, the National Development Plan identifies Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford as gateways.

excluded – socially, economically, culturally; new models, resource uses, partnerships and co-ordination mechanisms should be explored

- Co-ordination is very important; national resources are needed to put local level co-ordinators in place to facilitate community transport initiatives; networking of co-ordinators should be encouraged; fora for matching supply and demand sides are needed

The Report of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Rural Transport, which was published in 2001 following the pilot rural transport audits undertaken in Kerry, Laois, Mayo and Westmeath, identified two distinct dimensions to the rural transport issue:

- The “social inclusion” issue of access to essential services and activities primarily for people in rural areas who do not have use of, or access to, private cars, e.g. services such as shopping, training, pension collection.
- The “sustainability” issue surrounding very heavy reliance on private cars in rural Ireland – issues of increased commuting, of environmental impact and of spatial planning generally.

The Report contains discussion on the identification of target groups (older people, disabled people, people on low incomes and young people), their reasonable transport needs in terms of travel purposes, destination types, frequency and the types of transport services required to meet their needs and the cost considerations of trying to meet reasonable transport needs in two broad scenarios defined by different levels of car availability.

The Report also considered approaches to service delivery and recognises that there is no single delivery solution and that a mix of different types (scheduled bus services, feeder services, dedicated services, community services, taxis and hackneys, demand responsive door to door services). County Councils are promoted as having an important role at local level and in conjunction with neighbouring councils at a regional level. This role can be summarised as one of identifying needs, establishing goals and targets, planning and monitoring transport services, being a conduit for financial support to operators, to license services, to co-ordinate consultative fora in conjunction with the CDB and to address appropriate service standards, including vehicle accessibility and training for local transport operators.

An important issue raised in the report is to link any future rural transport proposals with existing schemes and the Report considered the services provided by Bus Éireann, the school transport scheme, the Free Travel Scheme, health board transport, the RTI, community transport and specifically transport for disabled people. The Report concluded that the rural transport issue should be considered in the wider context of public transport, spatial planning, location of services, such as post offices and social inclusion, in particular in relation to disabled people.

Personal mobility is now seen as a key component in the quality of life for people in rural areas. In many European countries this is achieved through the ownership and use of the private car. However, access to a private car is not available to a considerable proportion of the population in rural areas. Recent research in Ireland illustrates the typical problems faced by older people in rural areas. Table 4.1 below compares the situation of people over 65 in rural and urban areas with regard to access to a car and to public transport.

Table 4.1: Access to transport by elderly people

Access to transport	% in rural areas	% in urban areas
No car in household	44	57
No access to public transport	48	1
Neither car nor access to pt	22	Less than 1

Recent research in Britain and local studies in Ireland have also illustrated the problems experienced by young people in rural areas being unable to access leisure facilities, training and employment opportunities as readily as their counterparts in urban areas.

4.1.2 International context

Recent research in Britain, by TraC at the University of North London for the Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions, on the relationship between social exclusion and the provision and availability of public transport reinforces the findings of research referred to above. This research set out four attributes of “adequate” public transport:

- Affordability; availability; accessibility and acceptability

Conclusions included the need to recognise and take action on all four attributes.

Despite the lack of access to a private car by rural dwellers, they have been developing an expectation that their personal mobility should be similar to that experienced by car owners. In other words that public transport should be able to give them a similar level of mobility to that enjoyed by car owners. This has impacted upon the nature of public transport in rural areas throughout the EU, which has been exhibited by an increase in the use and availability of taxis in rural areas. It has also impacted upon the policies associated with social inclusion and local development in rural areas.

It has long been recognised that the availability of some form of collective transport underpins the viability of many of the activities offered by public, private and voluntary organisations in rural areas. The steady reduction in traditional forms of public transport in rural areas over the past 40 years has resulted in the need for public agencies and voluntary organisations to introduce or develop further specific services for schoolchildren, non-emergency patient transport and their own members, in particular elderly people and disabled people. Specific services are also operated taking people to work and to shopping centres. Where no public transport has been available for this, employers and shopping centre companies have contracted with operators to provide such services, often free of charge to the passengers.

It has also been recognised that the isolation of rural dwellers caused by lack of transport impacts upon their health, which in turn impacts on the budgets of public agencies concerned with health and social care. Policies related to social inclusion and local development in rural areas have therefore to take a more holistic overview and include reference to issues of accessibility to services and facilities as well as to their provision and delivery. This view has been reinforced by research on travel poverty and cross sector benefits.

Research into rural travel and transport services carried out by the UK University of Oxford's Environmental Change Unit identified indices of travel poverty, which relate to factors produced by a consultation exercise and "their relevance to people's desires and abilities to participate in 'normal' social life through travel". The report argues that travel poverty "is based on three aspects of access and choice, each of which can help or hinder travel: (i) perceptions; (ii) resources and (iii) skills".

The authors of the report, Rural Travel and Transport Corridors, published by the University of Oxford, identify travel poverty as "a lack of choice over travel and transport systems that diminishes quality of life". An example highlighted was that of one third of participants in the survey not applying for jobs because they could not get to them. In addition, fewer people in the 16-29 age group had a choice about which mode of transport to use than in the 30-59 age group.

Cross sector benefit is another concept, which has relevance for the topic under consideration, and on which several research projects have reported. This concept promotes the view that expenditure on transport now and ongoing results in benefits and savings elsewhere, now and in the future.

During the past fifteen years there has been considerable discussion regarding the potential of benefits accruing to non transport activities as a result of the provision of accessible passenger transport services. Although most of this work has concentrated on the impact upon services for elderly people, disabled people and other people with mobility difficulties, the concept is also applicable to people experiencing social exclusion. For example, the costs associated with services for people, who are experiencing the negative aspects of isolation in rural areas, compared to the benefits of providing appropriate transport services.

The European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) has had an ad hoc working group on transport for disabled people since February 1985. The issue of cross sector benefits was considered by this working group and their deliberations on this topic were included in a report published in 1987, Transport for Disabled People -International Co-ordination and Standardisation of Measures and Policies to Promote Mobility.

This report suggested that there might be considerable savings on health and social services expenditure as a result of expenditure in the transport sector. However, it was stated that such savings are rarely quantified.

The report set out the cross sector benefits as being likely to include the following:

- saving transport costs in one sector by providing transport more economically through another sector, for example by replacing ambulance service provision for out-patients with taxis or dial-a-ride service provision;
- saving costs of professional carers through the provision of transport services, which would enable people to undertake certain activities outside their home;
- benefits from a better use of statutory resources, for example by enabling patients to visit their doctor's surgery rather than having a home visit;
- saving the cost of institutional care, as a result of people being able to remain in their homes longer, through the provision of suitable transport services;
- improving the health of disabled people as a result of their being able to "get out and about";
- keeping disabled people in employment, thereby saving on unemployment benefit and day care services.

The report also outlined some cost comparisons in the case of replacing special transport services with accessible public passenger transport services and between special transport services and a range of domestic arrangements, from someone's own home through various types of residential institution. Subsequent research in the UK has indicated that there are indeed benefits accruing to non transport activities as a result of the provision of accessible transport services.

4.1.3 Local context

The comments from the discussions of Topic 2 during the consultative workshop coupled with the proposals contained in the RTI applications give a clear indication of what the goals, objectives and targets that the strategy should cover.

The important features of future rural transport services, which came out of the workshop, include the following:

- Demand Responsive
- Affordable (Subsidised) - cost effective and Free Travel Pass to be usable
- Reliable - instils confidence on the part of the users
- Accessible – vehicle design and route/service planning
- Connections – Links to other, longer distance services
- Bus Shelters

The types of services to be considered include the following, though the selection of types needs to be subject to further local studies:

- Improved Rail Services – Accessible
- Door to door pre booked service
- Travel Club – Groups coming together to organise transport to a particular location
- Accessible vehicles to enable an integrated service
- Better use of School buses (Can adults travel with children on their way to school?)
- Mix of Hackneys & Small Vehicles
- Flexibly routed services
- Feeder services to Link to Rail and Expressway
- Formal lift giving.

Potential responsibilities and roles were also identified and are set out below:

Local Authorities	CDB should undertake research to estimate the costs of providing free travel on all passenger transport services Provide good roads Provide Bus Shelters Have Accessible buses Decide level of service in each area, paying for and licensing new local services
Local Development Groups	Help set up services. Work with operators and groups. Do Surveys Identifying drivers Provide Information/advice
Bus Éireann	Accessible transport. Clear Policy on the role of the Express Bus Service; Proper Service to meet rural needs. 2 types of service; a direct one and one serving the villages

Iarnród Éireann	Buses into towns Accessible trains Review reopening closed lines Provide subsidised service Stop taking up the train tracks.
Private Operators	Operate subsidised contracts for a set period.
Taxi/Hackney	Discos Dial a ride Accept Free Pass More Accessible Taxis.
Community Groups/ Voluntary Organisations	Provide info on local areas. Organise trips Operate Community Bus. Liaise with private operators Identify the needs Set up travel clubs
Developers	Contribute financial support for rural transport services as part of new housing and retail developments

The workshop also considered the issue of minimum service levels and the following suggestions were made:

- To be able to get to the basics e.g. Doctors, Bank, shops
- Each townland should have a service at least once per day.
- Each cluster of population should have a service twice daily to a nearby town. In the morning, out and in at lunch, out in the evening.
- For Older people: Return services on 2 days per week
- For School children: Return services on 5 days per week

The proposals made in the only application under the Rural Transport Initiative from a group in County Limerick covers the whole of the County Council area as well as part of North County Cork. These proposals, which are now being further developed as part of an operational plan, can be summarised as putting in place a co-ordinated approach to service delivery, which will attempt to utilise spare capacity available from local operators (public, private and voluntary) to provide accessible flexibly routed and demand responsive services.

4.2 KEY FINDINGS

Scheduled bus transport services are concentrated on Limerick City as the origin/destination for direct interurban services between the main cities in the country and main towns in the County. Scheduled train services are similarly concentrated, though with very few destinations having direct services. This is also reflected by the very high percentage (39%) of people who travel from the rural areas to work in Limerick City.

The settlements located on the main national routes benefit from these interurban services, but very few of these services are accessible to people with reduced mobility, especially wheelchair users, or to people living away from the main routes.

The number of weekly trips made per head range from 20 for people who “always/often have a car available” down to only 7 for people in “households with no car”. For certain key target groups the number of weekly trips made is lower for older people (15/6) and people on low income (14/7), but higher for disabled people (26/11). The unmet demand for trips amongst these target groups varies from just over one third for people on low income to two thirds for disabled people being unable to make trips due to the lack of suitable transport. Over half of Free Travel Passholders are unable to make trips due to the lack of suitable transport

The preferred mode of transport for people using new services is for services, which do not require any pre-booking, stop nearby and take them directly to their destination or which are pre-booked and take them door to door directly. These types of service would relate closely to traditional bus and taxi services in areas where both are available.

The key issue for people in the rural areas of Co. Limerick is the way in which transport services are provided and organised. This relates to lack of responsibility at a local level for the planning, purchasing and licensing of rural transport services and the restricted availability of the Free Travel Pass.

4.3 UNMET NEEDS IN THE COUNTY

Table 4.2 below gives an estimate of the number of people in rural County Limerick who have unmet transport needs. The methodology used and the rationale in order to arrive at these estimates is set out below:

4.3.1 Methodology:

1. Estimate the total number in each target group that has been identified as having lower car availability and making less journeys than the average. Estimate is made using the 1996 Census Figures and the % responses of the survey.
2. Determine the total number of people with unmet needs in each target group, according to the responses in Q15 of the survey.
3. Remove double - counting using survey results as a guideline.

4.3.2 Rationale:

The unmet transport needs were based on the responses to Q15 from the identified target groups. This response in itself is a very clear indicator of unmet transport needs and it was therefore considered unnecessary to use those persons with car availability rarely/never as a proxy.

In addition, availability of some public transport does not, in our opinion, invalidate identified unmet needs. The transport available may not go to the locations desired, not be available at suitable times, or have suitable frequencies.

4.3.3 Comment:

Overall unmet transport needs are likely to be much higher and this should be taken into account when considering potential demand for services, as Table 4.2 only shows results from approximately 40% of the rural population over 18 and excludes anyone aged under 18.

Table 4.2: Target Groups with unmet needs in Co. Limerick			
Target Group	Incidence of Unmet Demand for Trips		
	Population	Unmet Needs %	People with Unmet Needs
18-24	9814	34%	3312
65+	10561	42%	4446
People with Illness/disability	1692	66%	1123
Medical Card Holders	14120	38%	5296
Free Travel Pass Holders	12007	54%	6543
Double-counting removed	25333	41%	10338
Total rural population over 18	60944*	17%	* From Electoral Register
Note: Unmet demand for trips defined as the existence of trips that could not be made due to a lack of suitable transport.			
Source: Local Transport Survey and Census Data 1996			

4.4 A RURAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Strategy to be adopted by the CDB should complement the other aspects of its Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development for the 10 year period, 2002-2011.

4.4.1 Goals and Objectives

The specific Goals for rural transport services as part of the CDB's overall strategy should be that they are integrated into the public transport policy, planning and implementation framework for the County and that an appropriate structure is put in place to ensure that integration can take place.

The County Development Board's Strategy includes the following broad Goals and Objectives, which have implications for a rural transport strategy:

<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To develop the four main towns in the County to ensure that they become strong bases for residential, industrial and commercial development ▪ To provide and facilitate access to the services and facilities associated with a contemporary urban area. ▪ To develop the potential of the Shannon Estuary ▪ To enhance towns as commercial and residential centres and to protect and sustain villages and rural areas ▪ To develop an educational system that affords every individual access to a high quality integrated service of lifelong learning ▪ To provide access to a high quality health service ▪ To promote participation in voluntary activities ▪ To create a more equitable society ▪ To provide support to families to enable full participation in economic, social and cultural life
<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To strengthen Newcastle West as a viable industrial location for industry and also as an attractive place to live ▪ To reinvigorate the town of Rathkeale ▪ To consolidate the existing strong economic and social base in Abbeyfeale ▪ To develop the economy of Kilmallock and protect and enhance the medieval character of the town ▪ To cater for the needs of the increasing population in relation to infrastructure, housing, social services and recreational needs ▪ To manage the development of towns in the area of urban influence ▪ To maximise the economic, recreational and social contribution of the Shannon Estuary ▪ To improve the physical, social and economic infrastructure of smaller towns ▪ To address the decline in villages and rural areas ▪ To develop County Limerick as a tourist destination ▪ To enhance collaboration and integration of lifelong learning opportunities ▪ To improve access to quality health services ▪ To promote a co-ordinated approach by agencies to community development ▪ To improve the quality of life for people who are disadvantaged and marginalized ▪ Enhance supports for children ▪ To enable older people to live in dignity and independence at home ▪ To create an integrated public transport network that links the major settlements of the region with each other and that links the region with the rest of the country

The specific Objectives for rural transport services should be as follows:

- Co-ordination of the purchasing of transport services by publicly funded agencies
- Local co-ordination at the operational level of new and existing vehicles
- Development and implementation of a phased programme of action
- To ensure that, in order to meet the Goal of integration, successful initiatives be mainstreamed at the earliest opportunity
- To develop a robust method of predicting levels of usage of rural transport services at an operational level
- To develop an agreed minimum service level for all communities

4.4.2 Options and key actions

The County Development Board's Strategy also outlines a series of actions related to the Goals and Objectives outlined in the table above, which are set out below and which form a framework for actions on rural transport.

Action	Lead Agency/Support	Timescale		
		2002-2004	2005-2007	2008-2011
Build a multi-purpose extension to the health centre in Abbeyfeale	MWHB	√		
Support the Desmond Ability Resource Complex in Newcastle West	CDB/Lim. Co. Co. MWHB/FAS/ WLR/ Local Community	√	√	√
Support the further development of high quality childcare facilities	Limerick County Childcare Committee	√	√	
Improve the non-national road infrastructure to link with the N20 (Cork/Limerick)	Lim. Co. Co./ DoE&LG	√	√	
Seek to influence the NRA in the location of the new N20 route	CDB/	√		
Increase the broadband e-communications infrastructure	SFADCo/Lim. Co.Co./ Local Authorities	√	√	
Implement the Housing Strategy to ensure a better mix of housing	Lim. Co. Co./	√	√	
Pilot cheaper rates/fees which promote access to leisure facilities by low income families at off peak times	Limerick Chamber of Commerce/ D/SCFA	√		
Avail of funding opportunities including the planning contribution scheme to provide for recreation areas and sports facilities	Lim. Co. Co./CDB/	√	√	√
Provide multi-purpose health centres in Dooradoyle and Croom	MWHB		√	
Improve the N69 road	Lim. Co. Co./ DoE&LG	√	√	
Promote agreed areas as locations for commercial activity	SFADCo/ CEB/Local Development Co.s	√	√	
Develop further education and back-to-education initiatives in Cappamore, Hospital and Dromcollogher	VEC/School Interests	√	√	
Develop further education and back-to-education initiatives in Cappamore, Hospital and Dromcollogher	VEC/School Interests	√	√	
Development of an action plan from the Audit of Rural Transport 2002	Rural Transport Group	√	√	

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Identify innovative ways of retaining services in villages	Local Development Co./ Lim. Co. Co./ Community Groups	√	√	
Seek to enhance villages through the village renewal schemes	Lim. Co. Co. /Tidy Towns Groups	√	√	√
Seek to enhance villages through the village renewal schemes	Lim. Co. Co. /Tidy Towns Groups	√	√	√

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Action	Lead Agency/Support	Timescale		
		2002-2004	2005-2007	2008-2011
Establish a Tourism Sub-board including consideration of the following in its terms of reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currachase as a flagship tourism project • Growing and clustering of existing projects • Co-ordinating the development and marketing of tourism including links with Limerick City • Special interest tourism • Produce a tourism action plan 	CDB/ SFADCo/ Lim. Co. Co./ Loc. Dev. Cos./ Limerick Tourism Trade Association /C&V Forum	√	√	√
Utilise an Adult Learning Board and include for consideration in its terms of reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of schools within community life • FAS Net College Initiative • The role of schools as lifelong learning centres • Third Level Programmes • Accreditation of prior learning concept • Training and apprenticeship courses linked to the economy's needs • Back to Education Initiatives (BTEI) • Enhancement of accreditation framework for lifelong learning opportunities • IT and Distance Learning Initiatives 	VEC/FAS/ UL/ LIT/ Teagasc / CDB/ D/SCFA/ Loc. Dev. Cos./ DoES/Schools/ Colleges/	√	√	√
Further develop adult learner support centres	VEC, Learner Support Service	√	√	
Establish a Local Sports Partnership to include in its terms of reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Lifestyle Community sports facilities Training for volunteers Participation rates in various sports Action Plan Co-operation with Limerick City 	CDB/ VEC/ FAS/ GARDAI/MWHB/ SFADCo/ Limerick Youth Service/ Tipperary Youth Service/Local Dev. Cos/ Limerick City Development Board	√	√	√
To facilitate the Community and Voluntary Fora in identifying the needs of the voluntary sector and include the following in their terms of reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteerism • Evaluation and review of structures and activities of groups • Identification of training and support needs • Safe communities 	Community & Voluntary Forum / CDB/GARDAI	√	√	

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Action	Lead Agency/Support	Timescale		
		2002-2004	2005-2007	2008-2011
To establish a sub-board to co-ordinate the community development activities of various agencies: Social economy and community employment programmes Social Capital The Community Development Programme of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs; To investigate the needs of the East Limerick Area Strengthening of partnership within communities Community Banking	CDB/Local Dev. Cos./ D/SCFA/ MWHB/ VEC/GARDAI/FAS/ C & V Forum/	√	√	√
Develop a local anti-poverty Strategy	Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Group	√	√	√
Co-ordinate and enhance services to children, implement the National Children's Strategy and the County Limerick's Childcare Strategy	Limerick County Childcare Committee	√	√	
Co-ordinate the activities of the various agencies working with young people and include the following in their terms of reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of youth services • Alcohol free social amenities • Age identity cards • Drugs awareness • Teenage pregnancy • Positive mental health • Young people at risk 	Youth Affairs Sub-Committee (VEC)	√	√	√
Examine the following in the terms of reference of the SIM Group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Care and services • Residential care • Respite Care • Co-ordination of housing aid for the elderly 	SIM Group	√	√	√
Liase with the other agencies in considering the recommendations of the PLUTS Study including road, rail, and bus transport	Local Authorities / Mid West Regional Authority/Iarnrod & Bus Eireann	√	√	√

The specific actions for rural transport services are set out in the table below.

Action	Lead Agency/Support	Timescale		
		2002-2004	2005-2007	2008-2011
<p>Provide support to the County Limerick/North Cork Transport Group to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop an Action Plan and implement pilot transport schemes under the Rural Transport Initiative ▪ Identify and commission suitable organisations to undertake further research into predicting usage ▪ Establish a co-ordinated budget for the support of local transport services, involving all the agencies purchasing local passenger transport services ▪ Mainstreaming of rural transport services under the new budget to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Develop, implement and promote new local services, which cater for the needs of agencies involved in the provision of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • day care facilities for older people • support for disabled people • childcare facilities • cultural and educational facilities • services for younger people b) Develop, implement and promote new local services which link with existing and planned bus and rail services c) Develop, implement and promote new local services, which serve rural areas and also connect the villages and towns of the County with each other d) Update local transport needs and the information on transport provision 	Limerick County Council Mid Western Health Board FÁS VEC Bus Éireann Iarnród Éireann Private bus and hackney operators	√	√	√

Indicators by 2007

- Increase in the number of people with access to public transport
- Increase in the availability of scheduled rural transport services, especially those linking with mainline interurban bus and rail services
- Increase in the number of accessible vehicles and services in the County, so that all new vehicles and services operated are barrier-free for people with reduced mobility including wheelchair users
- Ensure that all settlements have at least two return services per week to the nearest town

4.4.3 *Conclusions*

The Rural Transport Strategy complements the other aspects of the Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development for the 10 year period, 2002-2011, which has been adopted by Limerick County Development Board.

There will be support for ensuring that all people without cars or with limited access to cars as a passenger, including people with reduced mobility, are able to access the full range of employment, retail, cultural and leisure facilities. This will require improvements to the coverage of local transport services throughout the County as such facilities are unevenly distributed throughout the County.

There is concern that certain major road developments, such as the N20 and N21 to the southwest of Limerick City have taken main line bus services out of the settlements now by-passed or adjoining the new roads and therefore reducing the accessibility of such services. The CDB will work to ensure that such communities receive an appropriate public transport service and that the level of service to the settlements being served directly and which are planned to be by-passed in the future, is maintained.

Where the mainline bus services are not capable of providing such access, then more flexible local services will be developed in a co-ordinated approach to the provision of information and implementation of appropriate services.

The importance of experimental local rural transport services in other countries has been that their flexibility has been used to encourage the more intensive use of public transport by rural residents. They develop use of such services in new ways, which might not show up in traditional methods of estimating demand. Flexible demand responsive services have been used to uncover the level and nature of suppressed and hidden demand. This in turn can identify new routes and patterns.

The CDB will provide an environment in which initiatives, such as that being explored by the County Limerick/North Cork Transport Group, can be implemented successfully. This will need to encourage the latter to ensure that they set up a liaison structure to involve the participation of the relevant agencies. Their support will be required for the planning, implementation and promotion of new local transport services.

Such a liaison structure will require the co-operation of all sectors, i.e. the State, private and community organisations, in order to focus on the effective implementation of integrated and co-ordinated transport services, which are the basis for efficient local transport services in rural areas.

County Limerick is a predominantly rural county and is therefore more dependent on rural services in its key settlements and it is essential that people can access the services located in those settlements to maintain their viability and to ensure their sustainability. Transport has a key role to play in the implementation of the economic, social and cultural development of County Limerick as set out in the CDB's Strategy for 2002-2011.

5 APPENDIX A: LOCATION OF PRIVATE BUS OPERATORS VEHICLES AND TAXIS/HACKNEYS

Location	Vehicle Type	Total per location	Total vehicles suitable for Wheelchair users
Abbeyfeale	Large Bus 35 seats +	4	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	3	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	6	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	9	N/A
	Not surveyed but in area	2 operators	
Adare	Large Bus 35 seats +	0	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	0	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	2	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	13	N/A
Ardagh	Large Bus 35 seats +	0	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	3	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	1	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	4	N/A
Athea	Large Bus 35 seats +	1	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	2	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	0	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	5	N/A
	Not surveyed but in area	2 operators	
Ballingarry	Large Bus 35 seats +	1	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	1	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	0	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	1	N/A
	Not surveyed but in area	1 operator	
Caherdavin	Large Bus 35 seats +	0	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	1	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	0	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	7	N/A
Cappamore	Large Bus 35 seats +	1	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	3	1
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	1	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	2	N/A
	Not surveyed but in area	1 operator	
Castletroy	Large Bus 35 seats +	0	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	2	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	0	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	11	N/A

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Clarina	Large Bus 35 seats +	6	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	12	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	4	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	3	N/A
Croom	Large Bus 35 seats +	5	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	0	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	4	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	1	N/A
Dromcollogher	Large Bus 35 seats +	0	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	5	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	0	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	2	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	0	0
Fedamore	Large Bus 35 seats +	0	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	3	3
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	2	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	17	N/A
Foynes	Large Bus 35 seats +	0	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	0	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	1	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	3	N/A
Galbally	Large Bus 35 seats +	0	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	0	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	1	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	2	N/A
Hospital	Large Bus 35 seats +	6	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	0	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	0	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	6	N/A
Kilmallock	Large Bus 35 seats +	1	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	4	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	1	1
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	9	N/A
	Not surveyed but in area	2 operators	
Limerick City	Large Bus 35 seats +	23	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	10	1
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	4	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	47	N/A
	Not surveyed but in area	2 operators	
Mountcollins	Large Bus 35 seats +	0	0

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	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	0	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	1	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	0	0
Newcastle West	Large Bus 35 seats +	1	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	6	5
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	5	3
	Car or MPV (4-8)	6	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	12	N/A
	Not surveyed but in area	2 operators	
Rathkeale	Large Bus 35 seats +	3	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	0	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	2	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	0	0
Tournafulla	Large Bus 35 seats +	0	0
	Small Bus (17-34 seats)	0	0
	Minibus (9-16 seats)	1	0
	Car or MPV (4-8)	0	0
	Taxis/Hackneys	0	0

Additional Operators not surveyed:

Location	Number
Ballagh	1
Bruff	1
Castlemahon	1
Doon	2
Kilfinane	1
Pallasgreen	1

Additional Taxis & Hackneys:

Other Locations	Number
Ardnacrusha	1
Askeaton	6
Ballyclough	1
Ballyhahill	1
Ballykeefe	1
Ballylanders	1
Ballynanty Beg	1
Ballyneety	4
Ballysheedy	1
Ballysimon	5
Bruff	2
Bruree	3
Caherconlish	5
Castleconnell	6
Castlemahon	1
Coonagh	3
Corbally	3
Crecora	2
Dooradoyle	10
Drombanna	1

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Glin	4
Grange	4
Herbertstown	6
Kildimo	2
Killeely	1
Knocklong	1
Lisnagry	3
Lisnalty	1
Loughanlea	1
Murroe	4
Pallasgreen	4
Patrickswell	13
Prospect	1
Rathkeale	3
Shanagolden	6
Templeglantine	2
Westbury	1

6 APPENDIX B: ROUTES OPERATED AS A PUBLIC BUS AND SCHOOL SERVICES BY PRIVATE BUS OPERATORS

Operator Location	From	To	Via	Type of Trip	Frequency weekdays
Abbeyfeale	Ballough	Abbeyfeale		School	2x weekdays 2x weekend
	Abbeyfeale	Abbeyfeale		School	2x weekdays
	Cork	Listowel	Abbeyfeale	Public	1x Friday
	Listowel	Cork	Abbeyfeale	Public	1x Sunday
	Abbeyfeale	Duagh		School	
	Mountcollins	Abbeyfeale		Public	2x Friday
	Limerick	Limerick		School	2x weekdays
Ardagh	Foynes	Newcastlewest		Public	1x Wednesday
	Kilcolman	Newcastlewest		Public	1x Thursday
	Cloncagh	Newcastlewest	Knockaderry	Public	1x Friday
	Creeves	Newcastlewest	Shanagolden	Public	1x Thursday
	Askeaton	Shanagolden	Pallaskerry	School	1x weekdays
	Ardagh	Askeaton	Kildimo	School	1x weekdays
	Ardagh	Kilcolman		School	2x weekdays
Athea	Athea	Tarbert		School	2x weekdays
	Athea	Tarbert		School	1x weekdays
Ballingarry	Ballingarry	Shanagolden		School	1x weekdays
Castletroy	Castletroy	Few miles outside Limerick		School	1x weekdays
Croom	Croom	Charleville		School	2x weekdays
	Croom	Limerick		School	2x weekdays
Drumcollogher	Newcastle	Drumcollogher		School	1x weekdays
	Drumcollogher	Newcastle		School	1x weekdays
	Broadford	Newcastle		School	1x weekdays
	Ashford	Drumcollogher		School	1x weekdays
	Freemont	Drumcollogher		School	1x weekdays
	Broadford	Drumcollogher		School	1x weekdays
Fedamore	Limerick	schools in Co.Limerick		School	1x weekdays
Galbally	Limerick	Limerick		School	2x weekdays
Hospital	Doon	Doon		School	2x weekdays
	Hospital	Hospital		School	2x weekdays
Kilmallock	Ardpatrick	Kilfinane		School	1x weekdays except Thu
	Ardpatrick	Kilmallock		School	1x weekdays
	Ardpatrick	Newtown		School	1x weekdays
	Ardpatrick	Charleville		School	1x weekdays
	Ballyagran	Croom	Charleville	School	1x weekdays
Limerick City	Dooradoyle	Castletroy		School	2x weekdays
	Limerick	Limerick		School	2x weekdays
	Clare	Limerick		School	1x weekdays except Thu
Newcastle West	Newcastle West	Limerick		School	1x weekdays
	Newcastle West	Drumcollogher	Rahena	School	1x weekdays
	Ballingarry		Limerick	School	1x weekdays
Tournafulla	Tournafulla	Abbeyfeale		Public	1x Tuesday

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Co. Cork	Athlacca	Kilmallock		Public	
	Ballyorgan	Mitchelstown		Public	
	Effin	Charleville		Public	
	Granagh	Charleville		Public	
	Kilfinnane	Mitchelstown		Public	

7 APPENDIX C: EXAMPLES OF RURAL TRANSPORT SERVICES

7.1 Rural LIFT, Co. Cavan

7.1.1 Introduction

Rural LIFT, which is part of a local community development group, Community Connections, was set up following a number of years of research into the needs of local people and community groups in West Cavan, North Leitrim and SW Fermanagh. A proposal for a Local Transport Co-ordination Project was developed during 1997 and 1998. This formed the basis for a successful application for 2 years funding under the EU Special Programme for Peace & Reconciliation for the project covering West Cavan and North Leitrim.

A recent development has seen the establishment of a separate organisation for SW Fermanagh, whose operations are managed by Rural LIFT. This project has received funding from a number of sources, principally the Rural Transport Fund of the Northern Ireland Department of Regional Development.

7.1.2 Main features of the service

Rural LIFT works with local private operators and community groups to develop a network of services in West Cavan and North Leitrim. The services are timetabled but it is also possible to book in advance for deviations from the routes. A network of six routes has been developed to date.

Since the beginning of August 2000, Rural LIFT has funding for only one staff member, who is responsible for developing new services and co-ordinating requests for travel. Previously these functions were split between two staff members. The new routes developed by Rural LIFT followed a detailed user needs analysis and action plan. Marketing of the services includes the distribution of a brochure containing details of the Rural LIFT services as well as those operated by private companies, Bus Éireann and UlsterBus.

7.1.3 Legal Basis

Rural LIFT administered the application process to obtain the standard route licenses from the Department of Public Enterprise. Contracts have been made with local private operators to provide the services. Agreement has also been reached with the Department of Social, Community & Family Affairs for the reimbursement of 70% of the revenue foregone by accepting Free Travel Passes.

7.1.4 Operational Information

The six routes are operated on different days of the week bringing people from isolated areas into their local village and offering services that connect small communities in the area with the main towns in the region, such as Sligo, Manorhamilton and Carrick-on-Shannon as well as enabling connections to longer distance interurban services.

Rural LIFT uses some of its funding to provide revenue support for certain routes. None of the vehicles operated at present are accessible to wheelchair users.

7.1.5 Use of technology

Bookings are made with the Rural LIFT office by telephone and communications with the drivers can be made by mobile phone.

7.1.6 Local impact

In most cases the communities served had some level of public transport service, most keeping to the main roads in the area. Rural LIFT routes were designed to travel on roads not served by current public transport, therefore providing communities with access to transport along their roadways. In the case where public transport has been limited to main roads, the new demand responsive element of these routes has made a great impact on ridership. People in communities exposed to public transport have responded quickly to the new routes and services implemented by Rural LIFT. However, in a couple of cases, where no public transport existed previously, people had built their lives on the assumption that public transport simply did not exist, so take up was initially slower.

Being based in the communities served, the private operators are familiar with the people using their services and are able to attend to individual needs effectively.

7.1.7 Summary

6 routes operated

Timetabled but flexible services with pre-booking facility

Co-ordination by Rural LIFT with services under contract to local private operators

Funded under the Special Programme for Peace & Reconciliation, with additional financial support from Cavan and Leitrim Partnerships.

Passenger trips: Average monthly total of 300.

7.2 The Metro Parcel Bus scheme, West Yorkshire, England

7.2.1 Introduction

The Metro Parcel Bus scheme operates on six separate routes in rural West Yorkshire. It provides both passenger and light goods transport in areas with little pre-existing public transport service.

West Yorkshire has a significant rural area, with villages and small towns in the valley bottoms and smaller settlements on the open moorland above where high numbers of elderly residents live. Most public transport services connect the larger villages and towns. The Parcel Bus services are a response to concerns that residents without access to cars were experiencing real hardship. The services were designed in consultation with user groups and local councils. The first service started on 1 March 1999.

7.2.2 Main features of the service

The services are run by a number of different private operators, under contract to Metro (West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, the executive arm of the transport authority). All services use wheelchair accessible minibuses staffed by a single driver.

The most frequent service (Route 934) operates for 19 hours daily, the least frequent (Route 937) for 6½ hours daily. Most services operate six days a week, although 934 has a limited service on Sundays, and two others only run on three days a week.

Some services run to fixed schedules, some are hail-and-ride, and some are demand responsive. In the country, they stop anywhere that it is safe and convenient to do so. Four routes operate off route (within a mile) to pick up and/or set down pre-booked passengers especially disabled persons.

One also operates via Huddersfield Royal Infirmary for pre-booked passengers. Bookings are made directly with the driver via a hands-free mobile phone, thus eliminating scheduling costs. Users also telephone drivers directly to check estimated arrival times, and the availability of space.

At present, only small scale passenger and freight integration takes place, through delivery of parcels, messages (shopping), and prescriptions. Metro is currently investigating the carriage of other community goods such as newspapers. Bookings for the collection and delivery of parcels are made in the same way as those for passengers. All parcels are charged at 50p per delivery, and must be handed to and collected from the driver in person. Published guidelines for parcel carriage cover issues such as wrapping, contents and non-delivery.

Separate timetables produced for each route contain direct phone numbers for the drivers, and for Metro's Rural Transport Team to encourage a "hands on" approach. Where appropriate, information about connecting services, including rail times, is included. Service information is on the Metro website and will be available on the new national Public Transport Information system. Metro distributed a regular newsletter to community outlets such as libraries. Some service launches have had linked promotions, such as reduced admission to tourist venues.

7.2.3 Legal Basis

All routes are registered local bus services, requiring any successful tenderer to have an Operator's licence and drivers to possess a PCV driver's licence. The operation of wheelchair accessible vehicles is subject to national guidance.

7.2.4 Operational information

The initial contracts were for one year, but all will continue until at least the end of the financial year 2000. The service is still in its early stages but is regularly used by a significant number of people - between 35 and 65 passengers per day on the more established routes. The parcel service is currently under-used, but this is regarded as marketing, not a demand issue and appropriate measures are being taken.

Fares generally follow local commercial scales. The maximum fare for journeys of 20 kilometres and over, for any route is UK£1.50. The standard Metro concessionary fares and travel pass schemes are valid on all routes. Suitably zoned Metro travel passes can be used on buses and trains to provide through ticketing. Talks are in hand for through bus-rail ticketing for a number of the services.

The additional cost to Metro of running these six services is UK£282k per annum; all these costs are met by the UK central government through the Rural Bus Service Grant, and/or the Rural Bus Challenge fund.

7.2.5 Use of technology

All buses / drivers have a hands-free mobile phone. An integrated vehicle tracking, communications and real time information system is planned for service 934. Traffic planning and management systems are to be developed experimentally with services 934 and 935. Ticket machines vary between Almex hand operated and Wayfarer MK3.

7.2.6 Local impact

The services provide new links along routes that were previously poorly served by conventional public transport, so have had little impact on existing operators, including,

surprisingly, local taxi operators. Apart from providing better links, these services allow improved access to local facilities (shops etc.) by communities who were previously forced to travel to the larger urban areas.

7.2.7 Summary

Six wheelchair-accessible minibuses operating six different routes linking small rural settlements

Transport of passengers, and of small parcels

All bookings handled by the vehicles' drivers using hands-free mobile phones

Pilot project heavily subsidised by central government

Frequencies: Routes vary: 6 to 33 per day.

Passenger Trips: 33 to 64 per day on more established routes

Maximum Fare: 2.42 Euros

Costs: 455,000 Euros/year net of revenue

7.3 Regiotaxi Achterhoek, The Netherlands

7.3.1 Introduction

Regiotaxi Achterhoek is a demand responsive service using easily accessible minibuses. It is open to the general public, and is completely flexible regarding routes, stops and timetables.

Regiotaxi Achterhoek operates in the region of Achterhoek, a rural area in the eastern part of the province of Gelderland in the Netherlands, located near the border with Germany.

Regiotaxi Achterhoek became available to the public in March 1998, having operated as a system for disabled people since October 1997. Previously, some places in Achterhoek were served by so-called "line taxis", which had a fixed itinerary and timetable. In contrast to regular bus services, line taxis only travel when actually requested.

In other places, minibuses driven by volunteers provided additional rural bus services and there were some special transport experiments for disabled people.

7.3.2 Main features of the service

Reservations are made by telephoning the Travel Dispatch Centre (in Dutch: Regionaal Vervoers Centrum, RVC), an organisation of regional taxi companies. This uses software that automatically creates clusters of individual bookings and allocates these to vehicles. The system is very flexible, but known regular rides are booked and clustered in advance.

The service is provided using twelve wheelchair accessible eight-seat minibuses. It provided 17½ hours coverage each day. Connections to other bus and train services are guaranteed when reservations are made at least two hours in advance.

A leaflet providing detailed information about using the service is distributed to all households in the service area. Regiotaxi Achterhoek is also included in the nationwide "OV Reisadvies", a telephone travel information service covering all public transport modes.

7.3.3 Legal Basis

Regiotaxi Achterhoek operates under the taxi licence scheme administered by the central government. The contract was awarded to RVC after competitive bidding administered by the local and national authorities. Vehicles must meet standard safety regulations.

7.3.4 Operational information

Although it is open to all members of the public, the service is used almost exclusively (93%) by people with some degree of physical disability. This is a much higher figure than anticipated. Most people use Regiotaxi Achterhoek to visit family and friends (48%). Other

travel purposes include visiting medical institutions (16%), public facilities (6%), shopping (5%) and sport (5%).

Annual fare revenues of 273,000 Euros cover about 9% of the 3,000,000 Euros costs. Every municipality in the region supports the project with about 11 Euros per inhabitant. For each passenger trip the Dutch government pays an amount to the province of Gelderland for allocation to the project.

7.3.5 Use of technology

PlanVision software is used to assist the scheduling process and calculation of fares. Onboard computers communicate with the PlanVision software. All vehicles are equipped with the navigational system, Carin (a speaking computer), to calculate the shortest or fastest route. Mapping is integrated with Carin in the on board computer.

7.3.6 Local impact

Thanks to Regiotaxi Achterhoek all inhabitants of Achterhoek have access to public transport (bus and train). Besides that, disabled people can travel through the whole region. Recently it has been evaluated and the authorities are now deciding whether to take it on as a regular transport service rather than an experiment. It is clear that most passengers welcome the ability to travel independently, without help from neighbours or family.

Some time prior to Regiotaxi Achterhoek, national legislation was amended so that elderly people identified as having physical disabilities may use facilities created for disabled people. A lot of elderly people have difficulty using regular public transport systems. With Regiotaxi Achterhoek they can travel independently at times they choose themselves. This fact may have created an image of Regiotaxi Achterhoek as a service exclusively for disabled people. Extra effort is now being made to emphasize that Regiotaxi Achterhoek is available to the public at large. The view is that Regiotaxi Achterhoek must become more attractive to the general public. Talks between RVC and public transport providers in the region have begun, and a specific enhancement to the service in September 1999, means that 'public' passengers can travel longer distances than before.

7.3.7 Summary

A very flexible on-demand transport operation; All vehicles wheelchair accessible

Open to all, but used almost exclusively by disabled people initially

Passenger Trips: 1,000 per day

Costs: 8.20 Euros/ passenger trip, 3m Euros/year

Revenues: 0.75 Euros/ passenger trip, 273,000 Euros/year

7.4 Siilinjärvi Service Line, Finland

7.4.1 Introduction

A single accessible minibus, reserved for day-centre use for four hours per day, and used as a dial-a-ride service for members of the public. The dial-a-ride serves different areas on different days of the week. Three of the areas are served by minibus and two areas with minor demand are served by taxis.

The scheme serves the municipality of Siilinjärvi in the Pohjois-Savo Region in eastern Finland, an area of over 500 sq km, with a population density of 38 per sq km. It started in February 1999 - the idea was the brainchild of a local transport engineer. Previously, four of the areas were served by dial-a-ride taxis three times a week during summer holidays only. One of the areas has never before been covered by this kind of service.

7.4.2 Main features of the service

A key feature is the provision of transport for two day-centres: a work centre for disabled people and a day-centre for elderly people. The bus is reserved for the use of these centres from 07:00 to 09:00 and from 14:00 to 16:00. Because of the variation in timetable and routes of the trips to day centres, it is difficult to offer the service to the members of the public during this time.

Between 09:00 and 14:00, and again from 16:00 to 17:00, the vehicle operates a semi-scheduled dial-a-ride service. In the early morning (06:00 to 07:00) and at the end of the day (17:00 to 18:00), the bus operates a scheduled route service in one local area. This also feeds into other public transport services at the bus station. The only fixed stop during the dial-a-ride operation is the bus station, which is visited once an hour. Different parts of the municipality are served on different weekdays.

Bookings are made by telephoning the Travel Dispatch Centre (TDC), operated by the city of Kuopio. The TDC amalgamates bookings to produce routes and timetables, and informs the vehicle's driver via a vehicle data terminal, provided by a mobile phone connected to a small computer terminal. Three reservation staff work in the TDC, but they also take bookings for four other schemes in the region.

The bus is owned by a private bus company, which provides the drivers. The vehicle has sixteen seats plus accommodation for two wheelchairs. There is also one extra wheelchair in the bus e.g. for moving elderly or physically disabled people who have difficulty walking, for example on icy ground. The taxis used have four to eight seats.

The scheme has been publicised in local newspapers, and by leaflets distributed to households. Agencies working with disabled people have sent letters to their clients.

7.4.3 Legal Basis

The scheme operates under normal bus and taxi licences issued by the provincial state authority. Any licensed operator may bid for work, with contracts awarded for one year.

7.4.4 Operational information

The greatest users of the scheme are elderly people and disabled people – 75% are over 70 and 22% use some kind of mobility aid. Research shows the following reasons for using the service:

- shopping - 57%
- banks, pharmacy and offices - 29%
- medical - 7%
- recreation - 4%
- day care centres - 3%.

All normal bus tickets are valid, with some additional concessions (e.g. half price for passengers over 65 years, wheelchairs free, assistants free, children under 4 years free and strollers with companion free). The normal national smart card system and regional card systems are valid on the bus.

The total gross operating cost is 77,366 Euros p.a.. Siilinjärvi's share of the TDC's costs was about 16,000 Euros in 1999. Fare revenue covers about 30% of costs. The remainder is met in equal share by the municipality and the provincial government, except that central government contributes to the TDC's costs.

7.4.5 Use of technology

Telephone bookings are entered by TDC staff into special Finnish software, which schedules the trips and organises routes. Details are then passed electronically to a vehicle data terminal device. Requests for taxis are first faxed to the taxi centre, which transmits them to local taxi drivers via taxi data terminals. National smart cards can be used on the bus. There is no real-time information system.

7.4.6 Local impact

The scheme's introduction has resulted in a considerable increase in the level of public transport service. In two areas, the service has expanded from a 3 month period to a round-the-year service and one part of the municipality has never been covered by this kind of service before. This has only resulted in a 10% increase in the municipality's transport costs.

About half of the passengers say that their mobility has increased since the scheme's introduction. The bus is often full and this is why there is pressure to increase the number of vehicles deployed. It is highly probable that a second bus will be taken on in forthcoming years. This would enable better integration of school trips into the main scheduled bus service.

7.4.7 Summary

A single accessible minibus, reserved for day-centre use for four hours per day, and used as a dial-a-ride and a scheduled service for the remainder

Serves different areas on different days of the week

The service is supplemented by dial-a-ride taxi in certain areas with lower demand

Users are predominantly elderly people

Vehicle kilometres: Bus: 300-330 per day, Taxis: 70 per day.

Passenger Trips: 130 per day and growing

Average Fare: 1.36 Euros

Costs: 2.50 Euros/ passenger trip, 0.88 Euros/km, 77,366 Euros/year

Revenues: ca. 30% of costs

7.5 Rural Community Transport Partnerships in N. Ireland

The Department of Regional Development in Northern Ireland has established the Rural Transport Fund, which provides financial support to UlsterBus to provide new rural services and to a network of 16 Rural Community Transport Partnerships, which cover all rural areas of N. Ireland with a population under 10,000 inhabitants.

These RCTP have each drawn up an Action Plan and are now into the third year of operation. The Board of each RCTP will typically include representatives of local community and voluntary organisations, Health Trusts, UlsterBus local manager, District Council elected members and officers, District Partnerships. The type of services provided vary from one RCTP to another but the example of DART – Down Armagh Rural Transport shows the range of typical activities. The DART Partnership operates a fleet of 6 fully accessible vehicles and manages 2 additional vehicles owned by member groups. DART delivers a range of programmes, which include transport training, community transport services and transport development. It caters for the needs of local community and voluntary groups as well as individuals in rural communities in its area of benefit. Most of the vehicles have come from existing voluntary organisations in the area as well as from UlsterBus under a leasing contract established under the auspices of the Rural Transport Fund, which financed the purchase of a number of accessible minibuses specifically for leasing to the various RCTP.

8 APPENDIX D: RESULTS FROM THE VIRGIL PROJECT

TRENDS IN POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

8.1 Current policies, strategies and programmes

8.1.1 Rural transport policies

In most countries rural transport policies are based on national policies, with regional variations occurring where regional or local governments have the competence to purchase passenger transport services.

An important factor to note is the move from a state operated public transport system to a more mixed economy, with the state, be it at regional or local level as well as at national level, being involved in the purchasing of transport services from operators, many of which have become privatised. Although most countries have adopted a more commercial approach, none have gone as far as the British situation of a completely privatised and deregulated environment with “on road” competition. The element of competition has tended to be under a tendering regime for routes and networks.

The principal policies, which have been identified, include:

- Enhancement of the attractiveness of public transport in relation to the private car, including better public information and integrated ticketing.
- Delegation of responsibilities for planning and purchasing to the regional and local levels.
- Highly regulated framework, such as that in Ireland, where the State is the licensing authority and it operates to a system whereby in considering applications for passenger licences, it is obliged to have regard to existing authorised bus services operating on or in the neighbourhood of the route in question. In general, only one operator is licensed to provide a particular type of bus service over a specific route. A recent development has been the granting of route licenses to transport operators in respect of services in rural areas sponsored by local community groups.
- Commercial tendering for local services.
- Setting minimum standards of service for different population levels, guaranteeing basic mobility. One example of this is from The Netherlands - The province of Zeeland has developed a policy specifically for rural areas, whereby every village with more than 3,000 inhabitants should be connected with a regional service. Villages with less than 3,000 people should be able to use local transport services to larger centres where people can transfer to regional services.
- A highly structured school transport system, with clearly laid down policies regarding eligibility for state funded transport based on age, distance and numbers within a given catchment area.
- Ensuring that there is regional equality and equality of service to all citizens.

8.1.2 *Rural transport strategies and programmes*

The principal strategies and programmes, which have been identified, include:

- Regular inter-urban fixed route scheduled services still provide the bulk of transport services in rural areas throughout Europe.
- Integrated systems, combining a range of local services to provide transport for school children, social welfare clients and the general public simultaneously.
- “Service routes” providing transport on a regular route for people with reduced mobility.
- Demand responsive door-to-door services for people with reduced mobility.
- The maturing of demand responsive systems into the more traditional fixed route scheduled services as well as the reverse, in particular on urban fringes or in the evening and at weekends.
- The use of taxis in demand responsive operations, especially associated with travel dispatch centres, which co-ordinate a range of local services for both the general public and people with reduced mobility or special needs.
- Regional development agencies providing financial support to local enterprises operating freight services for supported businesses in rural areas as part of their employment support programmes.
- Financial support for services connecting off shore islands to their mainland, as in the example of the Irish regional authority, Údarás Na Gaeltachta.
- The establishment of “quality bus corridors” in rural areas, with improved bus stop infrastructure (accessibility for wheelchair users for example), enhanced passenger information and modern low-floor buses.
- Specific programmes for certain sectors of the population (older people, disabled people unemployed people), sometimes associated with specific activities, such as day care or lunch clubs and which are based on specific regulations for the specific sectors and/or activities. This approach typifies the provision of rural transport in the USA operated mainly by community-based non profit agencies, which have been set up originally to provide services to meet the needs of specific sectors of the population in connection with certain activities and which recently have progressed to establishing integrated and co-ordinated services as a more effective and cost-efficient approach.

8.2 Proposals for new policies, strategies and programmes

8.2.1 *Rural transport policies*

As with the existing rural transport policies, any new ones are being formulated in the context of national developments, which are tending towards increased competition, decreasing regulation and moving responsibility for planning and purchasing from central government to the regional and local levels.

New rural transport policies include:

- The provision of “basic mobility” through a set of minimum standards for rural areas.
- The establishment of a system of public service contracts with the main transport providers.
- Market segmentation, which identifies a *social function* for transport with respect to people without access to a private car and a *strategic function* for transport, whose aim is to improve the modal split in favour of public transport.
- More integration and co-ordination at both the purchasing and the operational levels.
- New approaches to the delivery of school transport services through changes to the eligibility criteria and especially for children with special needs.
- Maintaining regular fixed route scheduled services rather than introducing demand responsive services as users have expressed a preference for the former. This was identified in the Madrid region of Spain, though it is contrary to trends elsewhere in Europe.

8.2.2 *Rural transport strategies and programmes*

New strategies and programmes include:

- Multi-annual contracts, which will specify the quantity and quality of services to be provided by the company concerned and the payment to be made by the State in return.
- The establishment of specific funds for innovative rural transport services proposed by rural communities and community based organisations.
- Involving the local community directly in the operation of services through volunteer driven minibuses, such as the Community Buses in Britain and the Buurtbus in The Netherlands.
- Major vehicle fleet replacement and upgrading programmes, with related improvements in transport infrastructure (bus stations, bus stops).
- Integration of all rural services at the local level, including the combination of demand responsive services for people with reduced mobility and those for the general public. This also includes the integration of school transport services with “service routes” and to open the latter to the general public, as well as better co-ordination of taxis for special needs transport.
- Improved co-ordination systems for travel dispatch of demand responsive services.
- Improved passenger information systems, including the use of ICT, for example real time information at bus stops.
- Recasting of local networks to focus on providing access to very local facilities rather than in nearby large towns and cities. Improving and extending demand responsive services on the urban fringes.

9 APPENDIX E: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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10 APPENDIX F: MAPS

- 1.1 Persons aged 15-24 years by DED
- 1.2 Persons aged 65 years and over by DED
- 1.3 Persons aged 15 and over unemployed by DED

- 2.1 Scheduled services and their frequencies
- 2.2 Daily early morning and evening services
- 2.3 Number of people in DEDs aged 15-24 years without a service to education/training facilities
- 2.4 Number of people in DEDs aged 65 years and over without a daytime service
- 2.5 Number of unemployed people in DEDs without a service to a large town

11 APPENDIX G: QUESTIONNAIRE

COVERING LETTER FOR HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

1 November 2001

RE / LOCAL TRANSPORT SURVEY

A Chara,

The Government has asked the County Development Board to carry out an audit of the transport needs of rural residents and of the passenger transport provision in the rural areas of the County as part of its preparation of the County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development for the 10 year period, 2002-2011.

In order to do this we are carrying out research into the existing travel habits and difficulties of a sample of rural residents and you have been selected as part of a sample of 2,000 homes in the County. The enclosed form asks questions about how often you travel, for what purposes and what types of transport you use. It should take only a few minutes to complete and there is a prepaid envelope enclosed so it will not cost you anything to send in your response. The information you provide will be held by consultants employed by the County Council to analyse the responses and will be used in a confidential way.

Whether you use mainly car, mainly public transport or do not travel much we would like to hear from you. As your response is very important to us, each survey form completed and returned within 5 days will be entered into a free prize draw for the chance to win £100. In any case we would appreciate receipt of your response by **12 November** at the latest.

If you have any questions regarding the survey please contact
Anthony Coleman on 061 – 21 44 54

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Gerry Behan,
Director of Community & Enterprise.