

#Better in Bassetlaw



Bassetlaw Integrated Care Partnership

Transport Summit

19th September 2019

Event Report and
Recommendations



1. Introduction

Transport is a frequently raised issue in Bassetlaw for residents and services.

The concerns span availability of public transport, passenger transport for patients, access to services and work, and risks of loneliness and isolation for people living in rural communities.

In July 2018, Bassetlaw partners from the NHS, local government, third sector and beyond collaborated to identify the main priorities and opportunities for the local ICP. Transport was in the top three priorities for improving health and wellbeing in the Bassetlaw place.

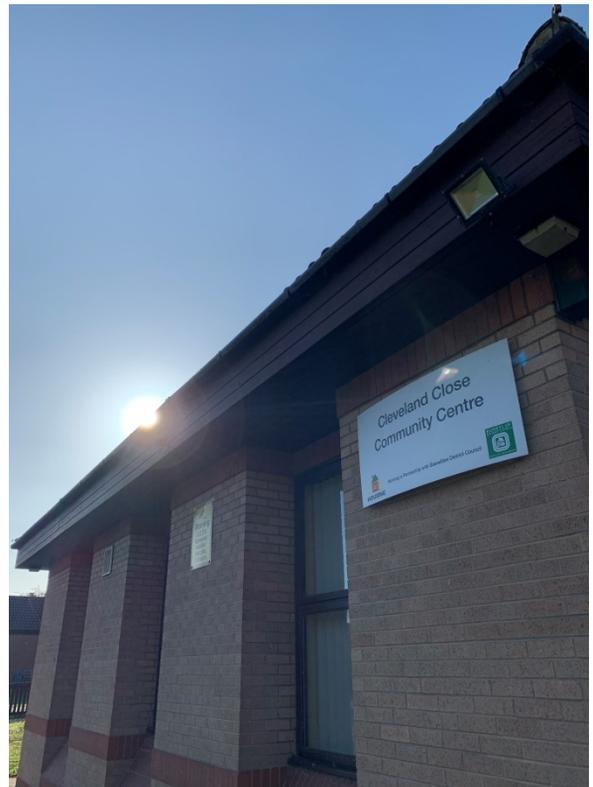
The wider determinants of health lie predominantly outside traditional health services; therefore, a more integrated approach is needed to create the conditions in which the wellbeing of Bassetlaw people can be optimised.

As part of the ongoing work of the transport work stream, this dedicated summit was arranged where a variety of providers from the commercial (rail, bus), statutory (local authority, NHS) and voluntary sectors assembled to meet and discuss priorities for transport in Bassetlaw.

Several parish, district and county councillors were in attendance at the event, which took place at the Cleveland Community Centre in Carlton-in-Lindrick, to listen to what the providers had to offer and to bring concerns from particular constituents about transport availability.

The day offered an opportunity to bring transport stakeholders together to identify opportunities for better integration; and to improve connections of both people and places across Bassetlaw.

Two key aims of the day were to discuss the options for Bassetlaw residents travelling both inside and outside the district's boundaries (namely how services connect – and could be connected – in the future) and also how flexible travel options could be provided to allow people to be more active but also connect with activities that help them to lead healthier lives.



Partners from across Bassetlaw convened at the Cleveland Centre, Carlton-in-Lindrick, to consider how the district could be better connected

2. Statutory, hospital and social care transport

Representing Statutory, Hospital and Social Care Transport at the summit were Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals (DBTH), Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and Firefly, a voluntary sector transport service for Cancer patients in Doncaster. DBTH had two key services operating, which were PTS (Patient Transport Services) and inter-hospital transport between DRI, Montagu and Bassetlaw hospitals.

The CCG-commissioned **patient transport services** resource aims to provide the right transport, for the right person, at the right time. The criteria for patient transport are defined nationally and have been tightened up with regards to non-ambulatory patients. Being able to pay is not a consideration for the availability of this service and there is additional funding available for those on benefits. The CCG funds out of area transports, although there is occasionally pressure on DBTH resources as a result of these journeys. As part of the Home First work stream under the ICP's Bassetlaw Together forum, the issue of transporting patients will be addressed directly as well as investigating the possibility of greater involvement of community transport. NCC does provide some community transport and there was a possibility of looking at how the NCC minibus fleet could be used more flexibly.

Inter-hospital transport between Bassetlaw and Doncaster hospital sites operates between 7am and 7pm and no charge is made to patients, staff or visitors using the bus, so therefore there is no cash subsidy from users.

All costs are absorbed directly by DBTH. This was a decision taken by the Trust as a result of the centralisation of some services. Capacity remains the pressing issue. Patients are generally prioritised due to the small size of the buses but they are often full and not always able to accommodate those who wish to use them. It was identified that a public/private joined-up approach could increase capacity and allow for a mix of service- and internally- operated buses to take the strain. As a result of the summit, conversations began between DBTH, NCC and Stagecoach to look at this issue further.

Firefly transports cancer patients from Doncaster to Weston Park hospital at Sheffield and works with up to 60-80 patients per day. There are some restrictions around disability (due to the set-up of the available vehicles), they cannot take medical responsibility for their passengers and their drivers are all volunteers. Not all patients are collected from their home addresses, although they make exceptions for seriously ill patients. They instead have collection points at pre-arranged times. If they secure an eighth minibus, they would look to expand into Bassetlaw; however, it would initially be the north of the district using collection points.

With cross-party working arrangements, BAC and DaT could transport patients between their home and the collection point, making services more efficient. Capacity, resources, driver numbers and fuel costs are key considerations for the service.

The County Council is responsible for commissioning **local bus services**, the majority of which are delivered by Stagecoach. Whilst, due to deregulation, most buses are run by such commercial operators, the council does have a small budget for maintaining local services. Around 50% of this is invested in Bassetlaw services; the district is the most rural part of Nottinghamshire. Where these services are concerned, the council tries to innovate, “thinking outside the box” in terms of how these can be delivered. The council is also currently working on a new bus strategy for Nottinghamshire.

Funded transport for Post-16s is currently an area of consideration as statutory transport to and from school is not provided for these young people. The expectation is that they are either independently mobile or transported by friends and family. NCC has been working on a discretionary scheme to address inequalities, including more (and better) engagement with young people and the development of a full looked-after children’s package.

To be sustainable there is a need to replace traditional **timetabling for rural services** with a new concept.

Options could include taxi buses or an evolution of dial-a-bus, involving community transport more, or by adopting a system like Lincolnshire, where short-hop buses connect with a main bus route, which runs more frequently and for longer as a result of the reduced diversification of the routes supported.

These short-hop buses might only run on certain days or by demand but the main routes would always run along the lines of a traditional timetable. A mix of the two concepts could be used, with community transport providing the links with the commercial bus routes. Shorter routes (linking with longer distance routes) via smaller, ‘hopper’ buses will allow for more adaptable daily operation and better manoeuvrability around high-traffic-density side-streets and thoroughfares.

Another challenge will be access to graveyards and crematoria as these are increasingly established in more rural settings. Resources could be re-directed to better suit the demands of communities. Linking up **minibus schemes** across all sectors could reduce duplication of services.

Vanessa Cookson, Bassetlaw District Council and Chair of the Transport work stream, opens the summit



Access to work is a key issue for many DWP claimants – there are many new areas where people cannot access work by public transport. Consideration needed to be given to how resources could best support the infrastructure for this. An option is to work closely with employers in promoting employer/employee schemes (such as cycle to work and car shares) and for transport planners and supporting organisations to share intelligence.

The transport implications of planning applications were considered, and planned developments for the next five years are shared when known. NCC are a statutory consultee for any planning changes and signed the section 106 agreements jointly with BDC; an example of existing good partnership working and practice.

Most new developments were in rural areas and, in the context of an ageing population, there is a changing demographic across the district. All new developments are required to include an element of social housing. This may result in a higher demand for health and social care services. Infrastructure (including buses) could be improved through money acquired from new development and adjusting routes as communities changed.



3. Commercial Transport

Representing commercial transport at the summit were LNER and Stagecoach. LNER (London North Eastern Railway) is the main operator of trains on the East Coast Mainline providing services from Bassetlaw to London, Leeds, Lincoln, Harrogate, Edinburgh and beyond. Currently run as an operator of last resort by the government, any future franchise will retain the brand name.

Stagecoach (East Midlands) is the region's largest bus operator, running 460 buses, employing 1,300 people, carrying 44 million passengers each year over 20 million miles of local bus services; all from eight bus depots in Gainsborough, Grimsby, Hull, Lincoln, Mansfield, Scunthorpe, Skegness and Worksop.

connections at Retford and, using imagination and creativity, could **connect the railway more directly with Bassetlaw's resources** and those of the immediate vicinity. This includes attractions such as Welbeck and the Harley gallery, Clumber Park, Mr Straw's House, Rufford Abbey, Sherwood Pines, Creswell Crags, the Chesterfield canal and the district's award-winning parks (The Canch, Worksop and King's Park, Retford). Matching facilities to traveller needs was identified as key and further work would be needed to establish any gaps in services.

For example, LNER could potentially offer through-ticketing on their rail services for local taxi companies, similar to the arrangement for buying tram and underground tickets.

LNER identified the need to have better

LNER is refurbishing **Retford station**, and invited suggestions with regard to further improvements. The isolated nature of platforms 3 and 4 was identified as an issue because, due to services being self-dispatching, there is lower visibility of platform staff. The design of Retford station works against it in terms of an all-round welcome offer on arrival. Further refurbishment work is also planned at **Worksop station** by Northern Rail, in conjunction with the North Lincolnshire Community Rail Partnership.

NLCRP (Bassetlaw group), currently works with local **Active Friends** groups at locations such as Shireoaks. These volunteers provide a visible, reassuring presence to passengers and are often engaged in planting, simple maintenance and other minor chores, and could be developed in Retford, building on the presence of Bassetlaw (North Notts) Railway Society. This had been established as a community partner through Adopt a Station, and operated on certain weekday evenings. In addition, the new lift for access to Platform 3, removing the need for the barrow crossing, will be in place by 2021. This will mean that seven LNER-managed stations will be step-free. There is also a strategy in place along the route to install Changing Places toilets and facilities, with a timescale for completion of 2020-2021. Retford has already been noted for having the cleanest toilets on the East Coast route.

Car parking was identified as an issue at train stations due to cost, capacity and impact on local residents. There were no regular bus services aside from the Sherwood Arrow which ran past Retford station and capacity in the car park veered from overflowing at service peak times to almost deserted during off-peak.

Work to establish further car parking on the west side of the station (with possibly a park and ride shuttle bus providing access to the main station forecourt) had stalled many times. This was identified as a more pressing need with the forthcoming Mayflower celebrations in 2020 resulting in greater numbers of travellers passing through Retford.

Discussions took place about the merits of a more **frequent bus service from the station** to the town centre, in particular for those with disabilities or health conditions. However, parking on both sides of the access road makes it difficult for larger buses to get up to (and past) the station. As this may not be commercially viable, possible voluntary sector alternatives could be explored, due to the variety of needs of the users served.

Train providers are **innovating to support users with additional needs**, such as identifiable sunflower lanyards and “Extra Care” cards. These could be more widely promoted. Developing **independent travel training**, and **inclusivity training for operators** were identified as opportunities.

The importance of **health at work** was identified. LNER’s in-house health and wellbeing team have an official partnership with CALM (Campaign against Living Miserably), the men’s mental health charity, which aims to help with **suicide prevention**. It was agreed that mental health awareness was a key area to focus on as well as food choices, physical activity and management of rostering to reduce isolation. Making bus travel and transport links across Bassetlaw better for those on a low wage was an opportunity to be further explored, and a **cross-operator customer panel** could be established to support this.

4. Community Transport

Representing Community Transport in Bassetlaw were Bassetlaw Action Centre (BAC), Dial a Trip (Tuxford) (DaT) and the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS). For community car schemes, Dial a Trip covers East Bassetlaw (mainly Tuxford and the immediate surrounding villages) and Bassetlaw Action Centre (BAC) the rest of the district, using volunteer drivers to provide trips, charged by distance, for health and social purposes. Previously, CT4TC (based in Ripley, Derbyshire) had provided community transport in Harworth and BAC had agreed not to provide services there. However, since CT4TC decided to withdraw, BAC has been working on an agreement with Harworth and Bircotes Town Council to extend their services into the area.

The community and voluntary sector helps to provide vital transport connections to essential services and destinations, which is particularly important across district boundaries. The complexities of **cross-boundary** destinations affect the whole community sector, with patients not accessing healthcare solely in Bassetlaw. Hospital discharges impact on the organisation of these services, as usually a driver will only wait up to an hour. There is often an acceptance by the providers that if a client books a car for a Sheffield hospital journey that the car is unavailable for the day. Wheelchair transport is managed differently by BAC, where the vehicle is owned directly by them and journeys are done on a 'quote by quote' basis instead. Community car schemes will always try to prioritise hospital journeys over social bookings, with availability dependent on the volunteers (who often prefer not to cover weekends, and can affect availability of transport to 'Flu fairs, for example).

It was identified that existing services could be mapped, and linked to new **interactive information boards** at Bassetlaw Hospital, including links to ongoing bus and rail journeys, with users needing to pre-book car schemes. The role of taxis was considered. In addition to its car scheme, BAC uses its **community minibus** to take people on day trips as part of its social prescribing arrangements with BCVS. When planning future transport, the growth of the community transport sector should be encouraged.

RVS run a **Home from Hospital** service out of Bassetlaw hospital. The volunteers interface with discharge teams and get to know the patients on the wards. Their relationship with the IDT (Integrated Discharge Team) is the primary source of referrals for the service. Funding is restricted and they could only deal with clients located in the Bassetlaw region who are in Bassetlaw hospital, prior to the summit. Further discussion has expanded the offer to include Bassetlaw patients in DRI.

Other key challenges for community car schemes include recruitment and support for volunteers, fuel costs and parking on hospital sites.



5. Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from the event:

a. Commercial transport:

Rail Companies would look to:

- i. Further promote local attractions in Retford and Worksop;
- ii. Explore direct, through-ticketing for taxis as part of the booking process for trains;
- iii. Listen to and act on suggestions regarding refurbishment of Retford Station;
- iv. Introduce lift access for Platform 3, removing the need for passengers to use the barrow crossing;
- v. Install Changing Places toilets;
- vi. Introduce new car parking at Retford station, in line with any planned schemes;
- vii. Link local work on inclusive employment with rail staff.

Bus providers would look to:

- i. Undertake a review of new developments in relation to the existing bus network;
- ii. Investigate the possibility of a Young People's Travel Scheme offering reduced fares, along the lines of a Young Person's rail card;
- iii. Implement closer working between bus providers, Bassetlaw NHS and NCC for better transport links and efficiencies;
- iv. Explore cross-boundary working between local authorities, and opportunities for evening and weekend provision;
- v. Explore the possibilities of Inter-Connect style bus services (with connections to DRT and taxis);
- vi. Review shift patterns at Manton Wood and ensure timetable provision is correct for modal shift;
- vii. Introduce and develop passenger assistance services;
- viii. Clarify the current transport offer to ward residents / constituents;

Transport providers would look to:

- i. Enhance Independent Travel Training;
- ii. Provide additional services/management of additional footfall for the Mayflower 2020 celebrations;
- iii. Include information about community transport schemes on their website(s) for relevant Bassetlaw destinations.
- iv. Ensure that physical activity is a key part of transport providers' Health at Work strategies;
- v. Give consideration to a cross-operator rail/ bus customer panel being established.

b. Health and care transport providers would look to:

- i. Work closely with DBTH staff, the ICP's Home First working group, as part of the Bassetlaw Together Work Stream and explore efficient ways of transporting patients to and from hospital, including the possibility of working more closely with community providers;
- ii. Investigate improved communication about hospital transport options, so that these were clear and understood, particularly for those on limited incomes;
- iii. Explore a joint venture to transport patients to and from hospital sites, allowing for a mix of service- and internally- operated bus services;
- iv. Explore the possibilities for future operations: Firefly to consider operating in Bassetlaw (potentially around Harworth and Misterton) if they are able to secure an eighth minibus, and cross working with community car schemes;
- v. Evolve Nottinghamshire's bus strategy in light of the discussions at the summit, including discretionary schemes for target groups, and new timetabling and route options;
- vi. Investigate, in collaboration with system partners, a change of ownership and responsibility for individual services away from sole custodianship to a more collaborative model, to create a focused, demand-responsive transport service;
- vii. Engage with communities by providing a central email contact point for community ideas and queries, so that ideas for more flexible transport arrangements could be implemented more efficiently and effectively;
- viii. Review core fleet minibuses to improve efficiency;
- ix. Work with local employers to promote employer/ employee schemes aimed at providing transport solutions for staff and businesses;
- x. Link bus planning to housing developments, adjusting routes and communities develop;
- xi. Explore their role in the green agenda and identify their carbon reduction plans.

c. Community transport providers would look to:

- i. Explore the provision of community transport in Harworth following the withdrawal of CT4TC;
- ii. As part of district-wide work on getting patients home from hospital, explore the turnaround for patients at hospital, parking and drop off provision, and inclusion of community transport on transport info-kiosks;
- iii. Highlight the issue of weekend availability of volunteer drivers, so that clients do not miss out on health or social events;
- iv. Work with the local authority to better promote community car schemes through all partners, following the mapping of service availability
- v. Continue to develop journeys via the community car scheme and BAC to continue offering day trips on their minibus as part of the Bassetlaw Social Prescribing scheme;
- vi. Consider the involvement of private hire solutions for some clients, as an on-demand service to help alleviate pressure on pre-booked BAC and DaT community transport schemes but not as direct competition;
- vii. Give consideration, in partnership with other local organisations, to more integrated approaches between commercial, statutory and community transport, where the boundaries between services are less defined, to allow for an improved and less disjointed experience by the service user.

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This report is available at:
www.betterinbassetlaw.co.uk