



North South  
Rural Voice Ltd.

# BUSSING IT ACROSS BORDERS

## CROSS BORDER COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

*Together, with a joined effort at all levels we can make  
cross border community transport a reality.*

Funded by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Border Action under the EU Peace II Programme and part-financed by the UK & Irish Governments



On the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2006 North South Rural Voice hosted a cross border community transport conference; 'Bussing it across Borders'.

Those attending included community transport service providers, community representatives, policymakers and politicians; all of whom had an interest in exploring the possibilities of increasing transport services within the border region and across the border. 'Bussing it across Borders' provided the opportunity for those attending to work together to suggest viable solutions to some of the barriers to developing cross border transport and to develop a plan for the way forward.

The event served to highlight the importance and necessity of addressing the issues associated with developing a cross border community transport service and as such a presentation from Graham Lightfoot of the Cross border Community Transport Advice & Information Service set the scene excellently for those attending. Graham's presentation included information on some of the issues associated with operating a community transport service on a cross border basis and also the need for a service advising community transport operators who wish to develop services on a cross border basis, to help them to deal with and overcome some of these issues.

Those attending were given the chance to have their input into the event through time for discussion and workshops and the table on the following page lists the main issues and where possible solutions, which were proposed by the groups.

This report will be disseminated to all those who attended the event as well as politicians and policymakers in the border region and at national level, ensuring that cross border community transport is kept to the fore.

North South Rural Voice are delighted to be working with community transport providers in the border region and the Cross border Community Transport Advice & Information Service to ensure that a viable cross border community transport service is a reality for the future of rural border areas.

For further information on North South Rural Voice please visit our website on [www.nsrv.info](http://www.nsrv.info) or contact us by emailing [info@nsrv.info](mailto:info@nsrv.info) or telephoning 00353 (0)42 9690806.

Information on the Cross border Community Transport Advice & Information Service can be found at [www.communitytransport.ie](http://www.communitytransport.ie), by contacting [advice@communitytransport.ie](mailto:advice@communitytransport.ie) or Community Transport Advice & Information Service Stradone Community Centre, Stradone, Co. Cavan. Tel/fax: 049 432 3849

## Cross Border Community Transport Across The Border

| Barriers to / Issues .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Possible Solutions .....                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| <p>Route licensing<br/>                     Operator licensing<br/>                     Driver licensing<br/>                     Concessionary travel eligibility<br/>                     Digital tachographs<br/>                     Speed limiters on vehicles</p> | <p>These issues arise due to the presence of the border and the reality that community transport providers, whilst working back to back are working in different jurisdictions and as such international rules in relation to licensing apply when transport services are extended across the border. This means that international travel paperwork has to be completed and makes working in co-operation across the border legislatively difficult.</p> <p>Groups can apply for funding to train drivers to gain their international driving licence, allowing them to drive across the border.</p> <p>It was suggested that these issues may need to be addressed at European rather than National level. Bursaries available from the Community Transport Association UK for the Rural Community Transport Partnerships (RCTP's) in NI could possibly be used to enable 2/3 of the RCTP's managers to go on a study visit to a border region within the EU to learn from the experience there of implementing local cross border services, provided that such services actually exist. A larger group, including national and local government officials might go on such a study tour.</p> <p>In the short term in order to enable local cross border public passenger transport services to be implemented, discussions would have to be held with the Department of Transport (RoI) and the Department of Regional Development (NI) to find ways of allowing such services to be</p> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>introduced. This could involve the designation of some sort of cross border experimental services area, which would allow for exemptions for a limited period from certain licensing regulations provided that the vehicles and the drivers meet the required standards for each jurisdiction and that the organisations managing them have the capability of doing so.</p> <p>It was suggested that this issue should be raised with the cross border institutions where appropriate and also where co-operation across the border is taking place. It was clarified that transport is an area where cross border co-operation between policy makers is currently taking place and as such this report will be disseminated to those involved with such co-operation.</p> |
| <p>Funding – whilst it is extremely positive that community transport providers receive funding to provide a service in their area. They can only carry passengers from their side of the border. This means that someone living in a rural area, but possibly across the border, which it was highlighted may only be a ditch in some areas,</p> | <p>It was suggested that perhaps funders could come to an agreement in partnership with their counterparts on the opposite side of the border, that a portion of those availing of the service in rural border areas could be from the opposite side of the border. It was suggested that if this proportion was even as much as 5% it would make a</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| <p>cannot access a much needed service.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>huge difference to service providers and those living in rural border areas and in need of transport services.</p> <p>It was also suggested that should a current application for funding by the Community Transport Advice &amp; Information Service be successful. This cross border project could be used as a template for future cross border operations, following evaluation of the project and the learning associated with its delivery.</p>                                                                    |
| <p>Some vehicles owned by voluntary organisations are currently underused. However, it was noted that many of these vehicles do not meet the Construction, Use &amp; Equipment Regulations currently in force in RoI.</p>                                                                         | <p>These regulations need to be harmonised to ensure that all vehicles meet the same standards and so can easily be put to use through a brokerage scheme or an agreement between their owners and local rural transport groups. Such harmonisation already exists in the UK so this model could possibly be replicated in the RoI.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>Adequate driver training, whilst not essential is beneficial to ensure a quality service is provided to users e.g. drivers trained to assist passengers rather than driving the bus in isolation to other passenger needs.</p>                                                                 | <p>Training for drivers seems to be more readily available in NI than in RoI. However, the successful completion of the Easilift/RANT and Rural LIFT driver training programmes has ensured that there are a number of drivers on both sides of the border trained to drive vehicles that can be operated for the provision of public services. The Community Transport Advice &amp; Information Service will be organising a similar programme for drivers along other parts of the border during the next few months.</p> |
| <p>Clarity is needed as to how the Rural Transport Fund in NI will be administered as a result of devolving responsibility for it from the DRDNI to the new local councils and the way in which the mainstreaming of the Rural Transport Initiative in RoI will be implemented from 1/1/2007.</p> | <p>Both these developments hold great opportunities, but also threats and as such community transport providers on both sides of the border need to ensure that policymakers are aware of the importance of and need for the services they provide to ensure continuity of support and provision of adequate</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|                                                                                                                                        | resources.                                                                                                                                              |
| It can be difficult for community groups to apply for funding to address community transport needs especially on a cross border basis. | This issue highlights the need for the Community Transport Advice & Information Service, which can help groups overcome the difficulties they may face. |

In relation to the current delivery of the community transport schemes in RoI and RCTP programmes in NI, the feedback from those attending was very positive for the delivery of such by the Department of Transport (RoI) and the Department of Regional Development (NI).

At the event discussions also focussed on the success of Truagh Development Association's application for funding under the Peace II Task Force for a local transport scheme in North Monaghan. This project, called Travelnet, will receive €180,000 funding over two years and includes an element of cross border services. This discussion raised a number of issues, which will need to be addressed by Travelnet and also by any other organisation trying to implement local cross border public passenger transport services. The Community Transport Advice & Information Service is delighted to offer its support to this project and we look forward to hearing of their successes in the future.