Transport and Health notes (Second meeting)

Principles

* Provide services at a local level as much as possible to minimise transport required
* Working with local communities to develop local solutions will maximise use of available assets and strengths
* Plan needs to be flexible to adapt to changing needs and opportunities

Access to services

* Access to primary care sometimes more difficult than secondary care as funding not available.
* Healthcare travel cost scheme is a nightmare – complicated, difficult to navigate and unfair
* Consider how Anchor Organisations can support shared travel - Good example of business and community working together is Riverford Farm providing their own mini bus service to transport field workers from neighbouring rural communities
* Transport often given as the reason for “Do Not Attends” so creating waste in the system.
* Recognise that transport isn’t only needed for individuals but also for their carers.

Working with communities

* There is a huge amount of support available in local communities and a small amount of resource/guidance can be instrumental in leveraging this – for examples
  + providing advice to a local vicar on converting local minibus for wheelchair access
  + providing subsidised maintenance of vehicles
  + utilising school minibuses outside school hours
* Innovative approaches such as Co-cars could be supported at relatively little cost.
* Promote microvolunteering – small, locally led services make best use of community assets and strengths
* Need to remove, as far as possible (and safe), bureaucratic barriers such as paperwork, registration, health and safety restrictions
* VCSE and community groups can be very entrepreneurial - providing higher profile/visibility/marketing can make such services viable
* Need to think outside the box (and organisational boundaries) to make best use of resources - ?opportunities for pooled budgets
* Transport is one of the top topics of conversation in communities – there is no shortage of willingness to find local solutions

Rural

* All plans and proposals need to be rural-proofed
* Need to re-consider how we balance the needs of large numbers of people living closely together (cities) with smaller groups of people living in rural communities. Population size is not always best indicator of need
* Limited access to high quality broadband impacts on access to digitally based services (we need to address digital inclusion)
* Village halls are a massively under-utilised asset which could provide services to limit travel requirements

Inequalities

* Deprivation is one of the biggest barriers to healthcare. Need to ensure equitable access from deprived areas to Health, Education and Employment.
* Areas of low paid/seasonal/poor quality work need to have particularly good access to public transport

Public Transport

* Not fit for purpose in rural areas – limited availability and unhelpful schedules - for example Buckfastleigh can take 2.5 hrs to get to Exeter – not acceptable for going to work or college.
* Think about number of bus stops on existing routes – Park and Ride stopping at every stop means that the journey takes too long to be viable
* Improved train services could be a good alternative for city travel
* Concessionary bus passes not useful if no/limited routes available
* Determining bus schedules by financially driven criteria is not acceptable
* Bus services could be run by local co-operatives
* Transport Poverty - Costs of transport for people with low incomes needs to be considered – (sometimes a question of transport or heating/eating)
* £2 bus fares being raised is a big issue for some people. Even if money can be reclaimed it is not always possible to pay upfront.

Engagement with Communities

* Engagement with public and community groups needs to be ongoing not just when there is a plan/strategy to be written
* Experts By Experience need to be able to feedback their experiences of using transport when issues arise not when convenient for service planners
* Move from consultation to co-production/co-design
* Need to recognise the input and resources from people involved in co-design and remunerate appropriately
* Face to face discussions are usually appreciated.
* People need to get feedback so that they can see that their inputs are acted upon.
* How about resourcing a VCSE community engagement programme working with communities to participate in  local transport solutions visioning events?
* In Devon many thousands of rural households are given the opportunity to respond to Local Housing Needs Surveys every year. Why can't we have a similar system for Transport Needs Surveys?...

Safety

* Pavements are required in rural areas to facilitate safe walking (encourage active travel)
* Access to green spaces for active travel can be limited even in very rural areas such as Dartmoor due to access restrictions/land ownership issues
* Public footpaths need to be maintained
* Need to consider how we join sections of footpaths/cyclepaths to create a coherent whole – prioritising routes like the Willingcott to Knowle off-road cycle route that will connect deprived areas to their local economic centre and reduce risk on very busy roads
* Cycle routes around Newton Abbot tip you on and off pavements into traffic randomly. Cyclists making a journey avoid them and just keep on the road.
* Could we give developers the mandate to ensure connections between separate parts of the transport system and local communities?
* Poorest housing is nearest the worst/busiest roads
* **6 times as many 5 to 9-year-old pedestrians are killed or seriously injured in deprived areas than in the least deprived areas -** Public Health England, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, Child Accident Prevention Trust. Reducing unintentional injuries on the roads among children and young people under 25 years.
* In urban areas street lighting audits and investing in parks and public space visibility for pedestrians at dusk / night

Vulnerable groups

* Also need to add as vulnerable groups for particular consideration
  + Mental Health
  + Learning Disabilities
  + Dementia
  + Carers
  + Women
  + Citizens in waiting (asylum seekers and refugees) and travelling communities
* Women are a large component of the health and social care workforce- most at risk from unsafe transport
* Unreliable buses/not turning up can leave people in a dangerous situation (may be digital solutions to increase access to info/communication)
* Old people get cold whilst waiting for buses.

Other issues

* Need better communications/publicity to encourage/persuade people to use active travel.
* Bicycle schemes need to consider hilly nature of the county – e.bikes may be a better alternative.
* Provide lifts for footbridges
* Encourage local delivery companies to use EVs
* Consider the high costs of accessing blue spaces
* The Citymapper app is brilliant to plan your journey in cities and includes walking time and routes, live arrival and duration times & taxis. could we have one for Devon?