



PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project was commissioned by Merseytravel to guide the development of the new Local Transport Plan identifying the role and potential for DRT on Merseyside.

The work:

Examined the operation of existing services in Merseyside and made recommendations for improvement, taking account of potential impacts on existing supported bus services and taxi operations.

Reviewed the costs and operations of existing demand responsive transport services in the UK and benchmarked these with similar services in Merseyside.

Established any potential for expansion of DRT services in urban and rural Merseyside

Explored potential for co-ordination in the delivery of DRT and improved linkages with other service providers, including Ambulance Services, Community Transport operators, and local authorities.

MERSEYTRAVEL DRT REVIEW

The development of DRT cannot be seen in isolation from the modernisation of socially necessary public transport, patient transport and other services. All these aspects need to be considered in parallel within the framework of accessibility planning, with the aim of reducing and removing inequities in access and improving opportunities for those in society who may be excluded from them.

Between December 2004 and March 2005 DHC (with the TAS Partnership and Richard Armitage Transport Consultancy) undertook a wide-ranging review of DRT services in the Merseytravel area. The work was set within this developing agenda of accessibility planning and the new partnership approaches for delivering improvements for communities.

THE REVIEW

Identification of markets for DRT can be complex since there are a range of different types of service pattern and booking, user typologies, operator characteristics and legislative frameworks. To assist in the review and the development of policy by Merseytravel, five main attributes of DRT were developed describing key market opportunities for DRT:

- High value to user services where DRT can offer a premium service that is perceived as better than fixed public transport
- High value to agency services where the benefits of DRT over fixed services are primarily non transport
- High care needs where patterns of operation such as door-to-door can be tailored around the capabilities of passengers
- Low cost intervention models where due to low passenger numbers the costs of DRT operation are lower than for fixed services
- Services that complement the conventional PT network by linking into interchange points

The research team undertook a full local review of services of DRT in the Merseytravel area. This included consideration of the capabilities needs and requirements of the full range of DRT providers in Merseyside including the CT sector, Local Authorities, Ambulance Service, Merseytravel DRT services and the Taxi sector to deliver a context and baseline for future development.



Benchmarks for the delivery of DRT were then developed using information from best practice in DRT delivery.

An appraisal of options for the development of DRT in the Merseytravel area was then undertaken. Options for improving the existing Merseytravel DRT services were outlined. These included improvements to management and delivery of services and consideration of the particular benefits and stakeholders involved in the schemes.

INTEGRATING DRT SERVICES

Options for delivering integration of existing DRT services including Merseytravel's own DRT, public DRT, patient transport, education and social work services were explored. Experience and practice from elsewhere has indicated that integration delivers benefits but that there are no hard and fast rules for success in delivery beyond developing a culture that fosters joint working and is led by a champion able to drive the schemes forward.

The project identified options for development to integrate services including both building capacity and integration for delivery both at a local and Merseywide level.

TRANSFERRING FIXED ROUTE SERVICES TO DRT: CASE STUDY IN ST HELENS

A detailed case study in St Helens demonstrated how existing fixed route services could be replaced with DRT for low demand links, rural bus links, off peak services, works and hospital services, commercial services and how services could close current gaps in networks.

Based on this analysis of the potential for DRT, the impact on revenue funding was explored and implications for accessibility considered. Practical service operations were designed to improve network coverage with a package of taxibus and flexibus vehicle provision.

ABOUT DHC

Derek Halden Consultancy was established in 1996 to provide research and consultancy services on transport issues for both public and private sector clients.

We have now expanded and our current staff and associates includes leading expertise in transport planning, community development, psychology, transport and accessibility modelling, social inclusion, marketing, environmental assessment, and economic development.

Common to all projects is a commitment to draw from state of the art knowledge to ensure that solutions are soundly based and tailored to the needs of clients.

We have a strong track record of developing innovative approaches having trailblazed new approaches towards widespread practical application. These include safer routes to school, accessibility planning, and individualised marketing techniques.

We seek to deliver quality products on time and within budget and constantly seek ways to improve our performance.

contact

The logo for Derek Halden Consultancy (dHC) features the lowercase letters 'd', 'h', and 'c' in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The 'd' and 'h' are connected at the top, and the 'c' is positioned to the right of the 'h'.

 info@dhc1.co.uk
 www.dhc1.co.uk