

Sustainable Communities Act 2007

Proposal Summary Form

Date of Panel Meeting: Wednesday 27 May 2009

Name of proposer or organisation

Transition Exeter Transport Group

Summary of proposal

Bikes on rural buses - Ensure that all buses in rural areas must be capable of carrying at least two bikes.

Details of Consultation carried out

Discussions have taken place at the Exeter Transport Conference 9/5/09 where the proposal was supported. Further discussion is required with local bus operators and Devon County Council's Public transport team and their cycling specialists.

Officers Comments

Such facilities are common on rural buses in Austria and Germany. In England they have been provided experimentally in various locations including in Devon. The experience previously has been that there were significant difficulties over liability for the carriage of bikes and thus concerns of drivers, trades unions and operating companies were difficult to overcome. The benefits listed in the attached proposal form are probably over-stated – it would be hard to argue convincingly that this facility will improve organic food production! The primary beneficiaries will be urban residents wanting to use their bikes for leisure journeys in rural areas. Key issues to be addressed are: what constitutes a 'rural' service – is the proposal intended to apply to all services running beyond the Exeter boundary; is it realistic to impose such a duty on bus operators, without grant aid, given the minimal prospects of increased revenue; what liability issues are there around the carriage of bikes and who would carry that liability; how would operators' concerns over the impact on timekeeping be addressed (drivers will have to leave their cab and secure the bike on the rack safely) if this is intended as a commuter facility?

Panel Questions/Comments/Further information

- Rural areas are not well served by buses – this proposal will enable people to make use of existing transport systems by being able to cycle to bus stops.
- This proposal would promote both essential and leisure use.
- There should be space for four bikes in order to accommodate a family.
- Initial costs to be met by bus company and charges for use should be kept to a minimum.
- Concerns over booking spaces in advance of journey to secure a space. A scheme in Brecon Beacons was carrying larger number of bikes so no pre-booking was required.
- It would inevitably have an impact on time of journeys to allow time to secure bike to rack.
- Bus drivers should be consulted to identify most appropriate way of managing this proposal.

Supported/Not Supported by Panel and reasons

The panel supported the proposal subject to appropriate consultation with bus operators and other related partners, that four bike racks be provided on rural buses, and that any charges are kept to a minimum.