

Integrating transport (buses)

TransWilts CIC / Summer 2015

Linking buses to trains and to other buses

Right bus provision at right place & time

Integrated fares and information

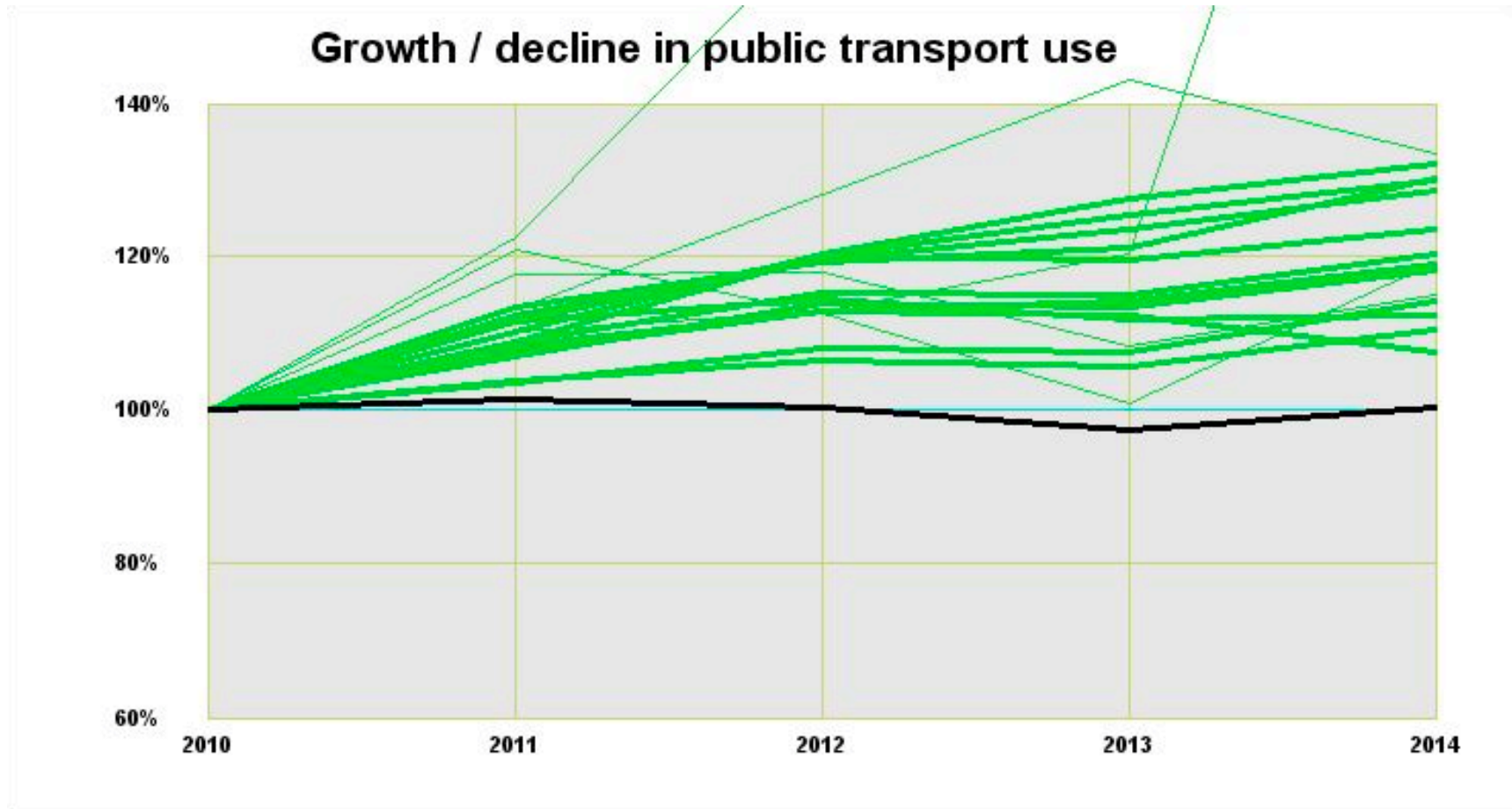
Reducing subsidy yet retaining competition

Draft (2) – Lee Fletcher (lead), Graham Ellis (edit)

Background

- * Only 20% of rail journeys in our region are pure journeys on a single train with station walks at both ends. 80% involve some other piece of transport at one end or the other. People's true journeys are home to work (or equivalent) and not station to station.
- * Where linkage is in place, it can work well. Witnessed recently at Gunnislake. with a single car local train transferring passengers in both directions to / from a bus that had arrived at the station before the train arrived. Both train and bus left a few minutes later.
- * In Wiltshire, bus to rail transfers accounted for over 10% of passenger journeys in Salisbury (old data) and Melksham (June 2015 data). Figures for some other stations are 0% !

Public Transport Usage



Changing public transport use

- * Train travel is growing.
 - Green lines on graph represent Wiltshire station journeys
- * Bus travel is static.
 - Black line is England non-metropolitan journeys
- * More miles are travelled in Wiltshire on the train
 - but more separate journeys made by bus.

(Train journeys longer; figure exclude journeys just passing through Wiltshire)

Some Bus Finances

- * There is
 - a commercial bus network of routes, operated without subsidy
 - a subsidised bus network providing socially and economically necessary services
- * Subsidy has been reduced by 30% in recent years
- * There's a requirement to cut a further 50%.

Rural Bus fares have risen 10% over inflation over last 10 years

An extra 3 paying passengers somewhere on each existing journey would achieve the 50% subsidy cut.

Why don't people use the bus?

People are put off using the bus as a connection because of:

- * Poor connections at stations
- * Lack of bus information
- * Lack of through ticketing
- * Perceived unreliability of buses / risk of being stranded
- * Lack of bus services at commuter time especially at home end

Proposal – First mechanism

The TransWilts proposal is to request "designated service" status for the TransWilts, which will need the support of

- * the main train operator (First Great Western)
- * the main local council (Wiltshire Council)
- * ACoRP (Association of Community Rail Partnerships).

It would allow access to new funding streams, and to some local tuning of the fare system.

Which means

Proposal - effect

Using an amended fare system (with a small supplementary fare) on stations served, additional income can be generated to cover the cost of operation of town / connecting bus services, the fare on which is included in the rail ticket supplement.

Bus services are retimed within the hour to make best possible connections with the trains, and are extended to cover early morning commuter traffic and returning evening commuters.

The maths shows this to be comfortably achievable, and a real (paid) local service is also provided 6 or even 7 days a week around the towns.

Could this be done (1)

“Are there examples elsewhere of where rail fares have been used to help provide bus support?”

There are a number of through ticketing arrangements in place where buses in effect assume the role of trains (Honiton - Sidmouth for instance) and other rail/bus east-west services. There is also PlusBus.

The idea of a small fare rise to pay for a rail improvement has also been tried before - a few years ago, Off Peak Day Returns on the Barnstaple line went up by 50p to pay for an improved train service (this being not too long after the big reduction in 2006). It worked fine and there was no public reaction, and the improved train service was and is very successful.

There are probably other examples in other parts of the UK too.

Could this be done (2)

“It’s a big step from letting local fares be set to using that as a mechanism to provide funding into buses. Has anyone spoken to the DfT as to whether this would be acceptable / similarly to FGW”

We haven't yet asked the DfT or FGW as to whether this would be acceptable, as we didn't want to do so without putting the idea to Wiltshire Council first.

However, we have had senior ACORP/Community Rail figures look at what the views of FGW and DfT are likely to be. They aren't confident that FGW will say yes directly because the additional revenue raised won't benefit them directly, so we are going via the DfT/ATOC route instead on the basis that if they say yes, then everyone will. The senior ACORP contact working with us on this strand has told us (and I quote) "I think DfT will be very interested and supportive". Examples are available on request of their initial workings, with which they are being directly assisted by Transport Focus.

Could this be done (3)

“Grounds for suggesting the funding on all journeys rather than just TransWilts journeys?”

Non TransWilts passengers will still be using the stations, and therefore may still benefit from add on bus travel.

In terms of viability, ACORP/Transport Focus technical work is being conducted on an "all journeys" basis, and examples are available on request of their initial workings.

We believe that the parameters of a 3 to 5 year experiment provide a viable framework with which to launch.

Could this be done (4)

“Will people use the additional services they are buying?”

We believe so ... indeed as it settles in we ask "will be buses be able to cope?".

- * It's very attractive to commuters to have a door to door service
- * Issues raised at the top of this presentation all fixed.
- * Subsidy issue also fixed with a positive growth outcome for all

Proposal – Second Mechanism

Quality Bus Contracts

- Retain competition between private bus companies
- Bus companies compete to operate routes / services to specified timetables
- Already in use in London and Cornwall and coming to Manchester.

Proposal - effect

- Regularisation of services on multi-operator routes and removal of excessive services
- Provision of services at “shoulder” times
- Consistent and transferrable information and tickets
- Services planned as a connecting network
- Service changes co-ordinated

Could this be done?

Yes

- Papers presented to Wiltshire Council show how this operating contract can be provided within budget making the 60% saving the council is looking for.
- The mechanism is very similar to the railway franchise / operating system. Note rail growth.

And also

- Costing models are based on vehicle leases for contract term – so modern suitable vehicles
- Specifications by a local transport board and service users to ensure fitness for purpose
- Incentivised contracts to ensure operator buy-in.

We are proposing this model for North and West Wiltshire. Quality bus partnership (different thing) working in South.

Outcome

An opportunity to make a

- * significant
- * sustainable
- * social change

Which

- * increases quality of life
- * has health and road congestion benefits too
- * removes the need for local council subsidies

Any Questions?

- This presentation is backed up by technical papers and data available on request from the TransWilts CIC bus team.
- Further work is needed to guide these proposals towards the detail of their implementation

Initial Contact – buses@transwilts.org.uk