

Every Village, Every Hour



The countryside charity
Gloucestershire

Transport Deserts

- Last year CPRE published research into the phenomenon of ‘transport deserts’
- Transport deserts were defined as areas where people are severely limited in their ability to connect with friends and family, benefit from employment and education, and access shops and other services
- In the study areas 56% of small rural towns have become transport deserts or are at risk of becoming one
- This was clear evidence of the failure of our current bus system to meet the needs of rural communities



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Aims:

- To make the case for the re-establishment of a comprehensive bus network across England
- To examine the scale of investment needed to make such a network a reality



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Main Findings

- **Bus services are essential to decarbonise the transport sector**
- **They also provide numerous public goods and are essential for people who do not have access to a car**
- **They can help reduce traffic and air pollution, while boosting high street spending, employment, social mobility and equality**
- **The inadequate statutory framework for ensuring the provision of bus services and cuts to bus funding have resulted in a paucity of services to meet the needs of rural towns and villages**



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Main Findings

- **Examples from public transport systems across Switzerland, Austria and Germany show that it is possible to deliver a comprehensive bus network that offers excellent connectivity to rural communities**
- **Rural communities in these countries enjoy a far more comprehensive bus network than England because decent public transport is regarded as a basic right**
- **In Switzerland, minimum service frequency standards for communities of different sizes are enshrined in law**



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Main Findings

- We also need bus services that are fully publicly funded with regulated contracts and timetabling designed to integrate with rail and other forms of public transport
- Network planning, timetabling and ticketing is essential to making public transport a practicable, convenient and attractive option and as convenient and competitive as driving a private car
- Our modelling finds that the government could deliver a bus to every village, every hour across England from 6am to midnight, 7 days per week, for £2.7 billion annually



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Recommendations

- Continue emergency funding for bus operations, ensuring that the contractual terms are a fit basis for a transformed and fully regulated rural bus system
- Recognise a universal basic right to public transport and back it with statutory duties for local transport authorities to provide Swiss-style legal minimum service frequency standards
- Legislate to establish bus regulation under the ‘guiding mind’ of local or regional transport authorities in all areas, with the option for local transport authorities to contract services or to provide them directly



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Recommendations

- Establish revenue funding at national level in the order of £2.7 bn per year to enable an ‘every village, every hour’ bus network
- Redirect funding from current road building schemes to fund the ‘every village, every hour’ network
- Review the range of fundraising powers deployed by local transport authorities in other countries and assess the best ways to enable England’s transport authorities to access similar powers



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Recommendations

- Ensure that the network is affordable or free, to put an end to rural transport poverty and to provide an attractive alternative to car use
- Investigate how England, including all of rural England, could move to a Swiss-style single national public transport timetable, aligning all trains and buses on a 'pulse' model of repeated hourly services.



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Full report

You can download the full report at:
cpre.org.uk/everyvillageeveryhour



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