

3.0 PROGRAMME OF WORK AND METHOD

Wayconsult Associates were commissioned in September 2007 and a local project assistant was appointed. The research was overseen by CAT's newly formed Sustainable Transport Group (STG). The following activities were agreed with the STG:

1. Assess the level of support from Wiltshire County Council for the Go-between Project and a local brokerage scheme
2. Recruit a project officer to assist with community involvement
3. Recruit and train a small team of volunteers that would fit a pre-determined profile
4. Identify a representative range of transport operators serving the Calne area for interview
5. Conduct interviews transport providers and seek spare capacity and business opportunities
6. Investigate potential for community partnership with transport providers
7. Formulate conclusions about the feasibility of setting up a local brokerage scheme
8. Review possible revenue generating activities associated with transport brokerage
9. Investigate a multi modal travel hub in Calne and make recommendations for upgrading
10. The business case to include anticipated costs and indicate possible sources of funding
11. Investigate the feasibility of CAT's Go-between Project as a long term service
12. Production of 3-year plan of action and final report

3.1 Community involvement

Volunteers were recruited to assist with interviews. The purpose of holding interviews in the presence of local volunteer observers was twofold. The first was to bring local knowledge to the dialogue. The second was to act as a sounding board when testing the feasibility of the concept. It was considered desirable that the volunteers should be independent of the CAT committee but act as a link at subsequent meetings and consultations.

In view of the high level of community involvement that will be needed at the next stage of the Go-between Project, this investigation tested the relative ease of recruitment of volunteers. Over a period of two weeks the local project assistant circulated letters distributed leaflets, displayed posters on staff notice boards and offered a £20 token 'thank you' for successful recruits. A mailshot followed by telephone calls to delegates to CAT's transport seminar proved the most successful approach. Promotional material can be found in Appendix C. The target was for 6 volunteers to be recruited. 13 volunteers fitted the profile from which 6 were chosen on the basis of mutual availability. The remainder were encouraged by CAT to stay in touch with the group for future assistance.

It is hoped that the experienced volunteers will maintain contact with CAT beyond the research period. At the time of writing all six have maintained a personal interest.

3.2 Transport operators

CAT's network and Wiltshire County Council's Public Transport Unit assisted with identifying local transport providers. The target was to interview 12 transport organisations. 16 organisations were contacted of which 13 were interviewed throughout November and the early part of December.

A brief was sent in advance with a list of the key areas to be discussed. Volunteer observers were given a personal briefing prior to the interview. The briefing and list of interviewees can be found in Appendix C as well.

Volunteer observers attended all interviews with commercial operators with one exception due to a last minute change of date. It was decided that volunteers would not attend interviews with statutory bodies/providers. Interviews were digitally recorded for subsequent transcription.

3.3 Minibus audit and feasibility

Minibus ownership was originally outside the scope of the pilot project. However finding under utilization of group owned minibuses (and finding a market for them) was considered mutual to a future brokerage project, and a useful start to implementing CAT's longer term ambitions to act as a 'go-between'. It was therefore agreed to include a minibus audit of potential users and owners of minibuses adapting a survey supplied by Wiltshire and Swindon Community Transport.

A list of 100 community based organisations was compiled with assistance from Calne Town Council in early February. The deadline coincided with the close of this project and will be separately reported.

3.4 Calne multi modal transport hub

During the course of the project three site visits were made to explore the possible locations and premises for a multi modal hub in Calne town centre. Ways of increasing the visibility and accessibility of a range of transport services were considered. Ideas and practical implications were discussed with CAT and other local people and practice from elsewhere considered.