



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# C21

## **Rural Area Working Party 15 June 2011**

### **Suffolk County Council Transport Solutions Toolkit**

**Attached is the Suffolk County Council  
Transport Solutions Toolkit**



**Suffolk**  
County Council

**Transport  
needs**

**What  
exists?**

**What  
else?**

**Consider  
options**

**Market  
result**

# Toolkit

to help communities  
explore solutions to  
transport issues

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Produced by Business Development  
Suffolk County Council  
Endeavour House  
8 Russell Road  
Ipswich  
IP1 2BX

## Toolkit to help communities to explore solutions to transport issues

### When to use this toolkit

- Are you losing a scheduled bus service?
- Do you currently think you have no or insufficient public transport in your area?
- Do you need to renew a community minibus?
- Is a local service closing (eg Post Office, library, shop, residential home)?
- Is getting to medical services from your area a problem? (Scheduled bus can get you to the surgery but there is then a long wait to get home again?)

The following step by step approach will help you build a picture of your needs and what transport services are currently available in your area. If there is a gap in services it guides you to contacts that may be able to help you. It also explains the types of community transport schemes that can exist and things you need to know should you consider getting involved in expanding or reshaping services.

Transport Needs

What exists?

What else?

Consider options

Market result

Transport Needs

### Establish your needs

You may be losing your scheduled bus or shop but who needs a transport service and why? Look broader than your immediate problem and find out about the nature of your potential customer base.

#### ***How you can do this:***

- Check if your local Parish Council has prepared a Parish Plan as there is likely to be some information in it about transport needs and aspirations. Speak to the Parish Council in case they are planning a review and you could work together. If there is no Parish Plan and it is a good time to prepare one, you could speak to [Suffolk Acre](#) for advice. They offer a survey service you could buy into.
- Check if Suffolk County Council has carried out a transport survey in your area in the last 18 months. Map 1 shows the areas where recent survey work has been carried out (particularly parts of St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath, Stradbroke area and East Waveney). For further information email [will.marshall@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:will.marshall@suffolk.gov.uk)
- Ask the local bus operator for information on the number of passengers using bus services servicing your community – they may be able to help and are likely to work with you if you can help increase passenger numbers. A full list of commercial operators that may be operating in Suffolk is available, see links below.
- Ask your Parish Council if you have a designated local transport officer as they may have information on current services serving different needs.
- Do your own survey of current use of bus or shop etc and ask other community groups meeting in the community about their transport needs.



- **Questions you should ask:**
- Where are people going? (Next town, to link to another transport service like a train)
- Why? (school, college, work, Job Centre Plus to sign on, Post Office, bank, shop, supermarket, leisure activities like swimming pool, cinema, sports, library, market, church, bridge, keep fit)
- When? Daily, Weekly, monthly, randomly
- How are they travelling? By bus, minibus, works bus, works van, car, share lifts, taxi, train, cycle, walk.

Think about other transport that currently runs out of your community as well – school buses where do they go? Does anyone use car sharing schemes or informal local arrangements? Is there a train service you could use if only you could access the station?

Where do people want to go? Ask the same questions at groups meeting in the community – Scouts, guides, church, child nurseries etc and how they currently travel. If these groups have not got a vehicle how do they transport people and how frequently?

Be sure to get the views of the range of different groups in your community including young people, mothers, workers, unemployed, retired, people in residential homes and local companies Think broadly about your community - you never know what ideas or information may turn up that you can then put together to make something innovative.

Is it always necessary for people to travel or could the reason they are travelling be transported to them?

Could more trips be made locally by walking or cycling? But do facilities need to be improved to encourage this?

***Useful web links:***

[List of parish councils](#)

Suffolk Acre – [Parish Plans service](#)

Contact details for [commercial operators](#) registered to run services in Suffolk

Examples of [transport surveys](#)

[Suffolk County Council's Accessible and Community Transport Guide](#)

What exists?

## Establish what transport services are already running in your area

Make a list of all the transport services that already serve your community, including taxis, school and club minibuses.

### *How you can do this:*

- Go to [Suffolkonboard.com](http://Suffolkonboard.com) to find out what bus services currently run in your area. You can look at timetables by area.
- Also check [Suffolk Links – Demand responsive transport](#) on the [Suffolkonboard.com](http://Suffolkonboard.com) site. Pick an area and you will find a map showing the geographical area covered by the service and a contact to book a service. Map 2 shows the demand responsive services currently running.
- Also check the [community transport](#) page on [Suffolkonboard.com](http://Suffolkonboard.com) to see what specialist services are available – these can include Dial-a – ride, community cars, and WRVS services. If you want, check by parish and for particular needs (e.g. wheelchair user wanting to do shopping) [a2b info.net](http://a2b.info.net) (Information about the different types of services is given in Options section below).
- Find out if you have local taxis that regularly run to your community. District Councils register taxis but a list of those registered for contract work with Suffolk County Council can be found under [hackney carriage operators](#). This does not include all taxis operating in Suffolk so it is worth looking at other online lists for example [Information Britain](#).)
- Talk to your nearest local Community transport operator – if they don't currently operate in your area they might be aware of any plans for expansion or new services.
- Another way of finding services in your area is to look at [Traveline](#) and put your town (or nearest settlement) and a destination (eg Halesworth to Leiston) to see which services run through your village and the connections you would need to make. Traveline includes demand responsive services.
- Check if there are any car sharing schemes operating? Do nearby major companies (like BT) have car sharing schemes? Check the [www.suffolkcarshare.com](http://www.suffolkcarshare.com) to see if there are people registered looking for lifts to and from your area that you could link up with.

Make early contact with all relevant transport groups to establish capacity, hours available, how you access service, costs etc. get hold of any marketing material.

Be sure to speak to neighbouring parishes about what they have.

### *Questions you should ask:*

- What capacity is there to cope with increased demand?
- Could the service be expanded if necessary? If not what are the limiting factors? How could your community help to overcome these limiting factors?
- Would they be prepared to adjust routes or timings?
- How do they currently market their services?

What exists?

- What are the costs?
- Can anyone use the service or is it restricted to particular age groups, types of uses?
- Are any vehicles coming up for replacement?
- Is there any possibility of joining up with local community groups with vehicles due for replacement?
- Are there any voluntary drivers who might drive for you too?
- Are there any paid drivers who might be prepared to do some voluntary hours?

Establish if there are existing services that can serve your community's needs. If there are, go to the marketing section and consider what you can do so everyone knows what is available.

If some of your needs could be met, negotiate with the operator of the service to see how you might be able to improve the offer. This will depend on what the limiting factors are.

### Find out what other resources are available locally

If there are gaps in the services already available, first consider what other resources might be available. This can help you design a local solution and may need you to speak to businesses, schools, clubs etc in and around your immediate area. Some of the community transport fleet is used by communities when not in service.

What else?

#### How to do this:

List what services you have in your community and who visits regularly. Consider:

- Local Shop deliveries
- Supermarket deliveries
- School minibus or do they hire when they need one?
- Sports club minibus
- Scout/guides minibus
- Church groups
- Major firms – do they have a works bus or [travel plan](#) offering other sustainable travel incentives you could join in with?
- Mobile library
- Residential homes
- County parks
- Hotels – courtesy vehicles?
- Farms – services for farm workers
- Doctors
- Care workers

#### Questions you should ask:

- Frequency of movements?
- Are the vehicles available at particular times of the day, only used at weekends/evenings?
- When is the vehicle due to be renewed?

What else?

- Who owns/runs the vehicle?
- What is the capacity of the vehicle? Is it currently too big/too small to meet the current needs?
- Suitability of vehicles for different needs – e.g. can it take people with disabilities, packages, medicines.

Consider the possibility of new arrangements and try to bring people together to discuss future plans and aspirations. You may be able to join ideas up and save money.

## Consider your options

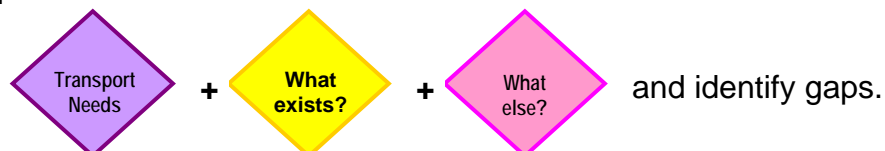
Consider  
Options

**What are the options?** There are a wide range of transport services operating in Suffolk and Table 1 sets out the differences between the services. You may be surprised to find you do already have community and demand responsive services serving your community. Different types of services have been designed for different needs and below are some of the terms you might hear (not all of which are currently operating in Suffolk):

- Community Car Service (Volunteer drivers)
- Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) (paid, trained, Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked- all CT staff have enhanced CRB checks)
- Dial a ride
- [Car share](#) informal/using software/ organised by volunteer?
- Wheels within wheels – accessible vehicles
- [Car club](#)
- Brokerage
- Sponsored bus service (Parish Council or local employer sponsor a service from a local commercial operator)
- [Kickstart](#) Moped scheme available in Mid Suffolk only to get people to work.
- Taxi share scheme – can your community identify a way of making known when people want to travel so people have an opportunity to share?
- [Whip car](#) – An on-line service that allows a car owner to rent out their car when they are not using it. It free to join, it calculates the hire price and provides insurance.

### **How to go about this:**

- From the surveys identify who needs what in your area (be aware that what people say they want and will use is not always what transpires).
- From your check of what transport services exist identify what may be suitable solutions including any adjustments necessary /desirable and who would be able to make the changes.
- Consider what other resources might be available.
- Match



Consider  
Options

- Could any of the options cover those gaps? If so, follow up through the suggested links in Table 1.
- Work through your networks to see if anyone else / another parish/ etc has already done this and can help you – are they neighbouring and could it be extended to you as well.
- Pick everyone's brains,
- Identify what resource would be needed for your plan. Vehicles? Drivers? Telephone(s), Funding? Loan? Someone to look after the paperwork/ arrange journeys, co-ordinate passengers or design a leaflet? A kitchen table, corner of a desk, a full office? Access to a computer and particular software?
- Once the plan is together, go back to the people you asked first and see if you have understood and met their needs – only then go ahead with any financial outlay.
- Start small – you can always grow.

### ***What questions you should ask?***

Can you encourage the development of an existing scheme?

Can you get some funding?

Do you have a vehicle or do you need to acquire one?

Do you need to design an information package to market what already exists to the different types of transport users?

Can you work with commercial service operators to help increase passenger numbers to improve the long term viability of services?

### **Who you might ask for help:**

[Suffolk ACRE](#) runs a number of different transport services across Suffolk. These include bus style transport services in the Shotley Peninsula where there is a lack of public transport and accessible transport within Ipswich to cater for those people with mobility problems or disabilities. It is also able to offer loan mopeds in Mid Suffolk to allow those people in rural areas easier access to employment opportunities. It runs a range of courses to assist voluntary groups in setting up, for example with business planning and provides general advice on [starting voluntary or community groups](#).

[SAVO](#) (Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations) aims to provide Suffolk's voluntary and community groups with tools, resources and relevant information to help them operate successfully. It has a range of on-line information covering governance to budget setting. SAVO can offer 1 to1 support in setting up an organisation, on-going advice on developing and improving an organisation's work and performance, plus guidance should your group hit any problems as it develops.

[CTA UK](#) The Community Transport Association is a non-profit making organisation of community, voluntary and other specialist transport operators and their supporters that exists to promote good practice. It offers advice on minibus and accessible transport operation. Subjects covered include employment, the law, vehicles and equipment, training and finance. The service covers the UK.

[Suffolk County Council](#) – If you think you need improved walking or cycling facilities in your community speak to your [County Councillor](#).



## Marketing

Once you have agreed the service(s) you are to promote consider how you are going to communicate information to your community.

**How to go about this:** Consider where you can get free advertising:

- Parish newsletter
- East Anglian Daily Times/local paper as a news item
- Local radio
- Ask your local youth group if they will do a leaflet drop for a small contribution to funds or a free trip on the transport!
- Community groups newsletters
- Neighbourhood watch
- Social networking media – facebook, twitter
- Parish website
- Women's Institute/ Round Table/Lions/ Townswomens Guild, local Parent/Teacher Associations, East Suffolk Travellers Association (if appropriate to geography) Suffolk Acre & SAVO newsletters, Parish and other noticeboards, Managers and HR departments at local employers.

Design a leaflet for distribution at the local shop, library, employers or household distribution.

**What questions you should ask?**

- How many people live in the immediate area and a few miles beyond that you might want to reach?
- Do you have any money to spend on marketing?
- Can you design your own local leaflet or web page to promote services available?
- If a commercial operator is involved can they provide material but the community distribute and promote?
- Do you need a different approach for different parts of your community? e.g. teenagers use mobile phones, facebook and other social networking media; young mums, working parents, unemployed, retired, carers, frail elderly, mobility restricted, churchgoers, sports clubs may use a leaflet if you get it to them. Remember people from outside your community might want to use facilities, shops or join clubs and societies running in your community so you need to get the information out to them.

## Other useful information

### Funding

Budget reductions are resulting in community leaders having to explore new funding options and those typically not just from local authorities. There are a number of community transport initiatives around, however, they have typically complemented an existing transport service. Examples include the purchase or hire of minibuses that accommodate the needs of a disability

group or specific group, such as a social club or service for the elderly and small grants from the [National Lottery](#) or the [Suffolk Foundation](#) have been accessed to meet this evidenced need. Big grants from funders (charitable trusts or public funds) for main stream passenger transport services are however more difficult, which means your research into community needs, needs to be robust and thorough. Missing out the opinions of a user group may dilute the impact of any funding proposal, for example mothers with young children living in a rural community and needing to access health services.

Rather than submitting a project proposal for the entire amount you are seeking - this is probably unlikely, adopting a collective approach to accessing funds means leveraging funds to use as match. Additionally, local sponsorship is worth investigating too.

Suffolk County Council - Councillor Locality Funds (contact your [local county councillor](#))

District Council - Community Development

[Suffolk Foundation - Transforming Suffolk Innovation Fund](#) (closing date for Round 2 25 March 2011); [Improve and Prove Fund](#)

[National Lottery - Awards for All](#)

Any main employers in the area whose employees regularly use the service

There are very few opportunities for focused public transport projects, therefore, the research you conduct will prove vital in identifying rural service gaps. Approaching community transport from a number of subject areas, for example: access to health, employment and skills, social inclusion are approaches to accessing funding where some funding could be allocated to transport costs.

The GrantNet website is free to use and you can conduct searches for various non council funding through this system. Grants come and go and deadlines expire, so worth checking on a regular basis:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/BusinessAndConsumer/RegenerationAndCommunityDevelopment/Funding/Grantnet.htm>

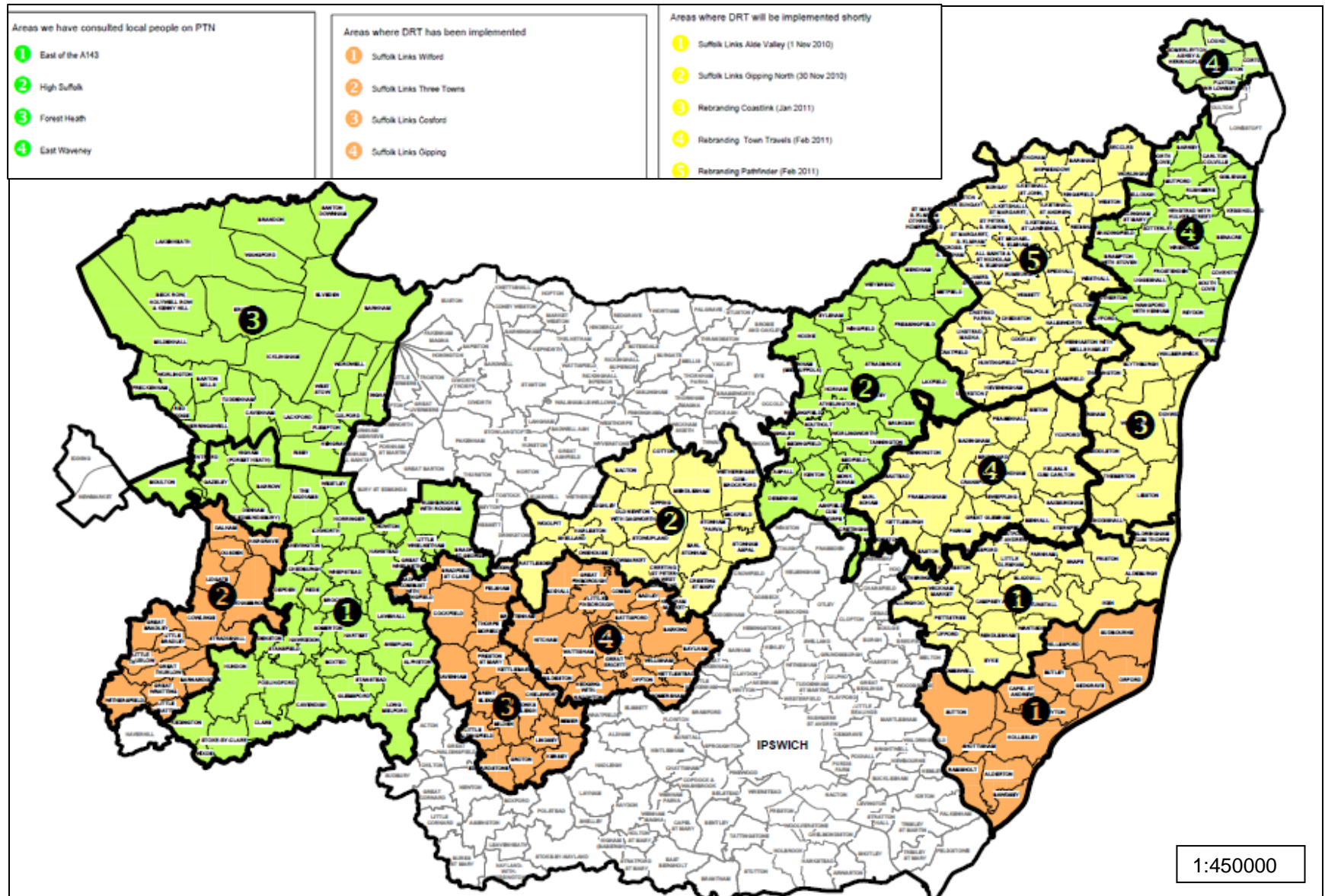
### **Saving Money tips**

1 If close to major supermarket or local garage with points/loyalty card scheme etc – use them for all fuel on same loyalty card – savings mount up and points can be used to purchase other items needed

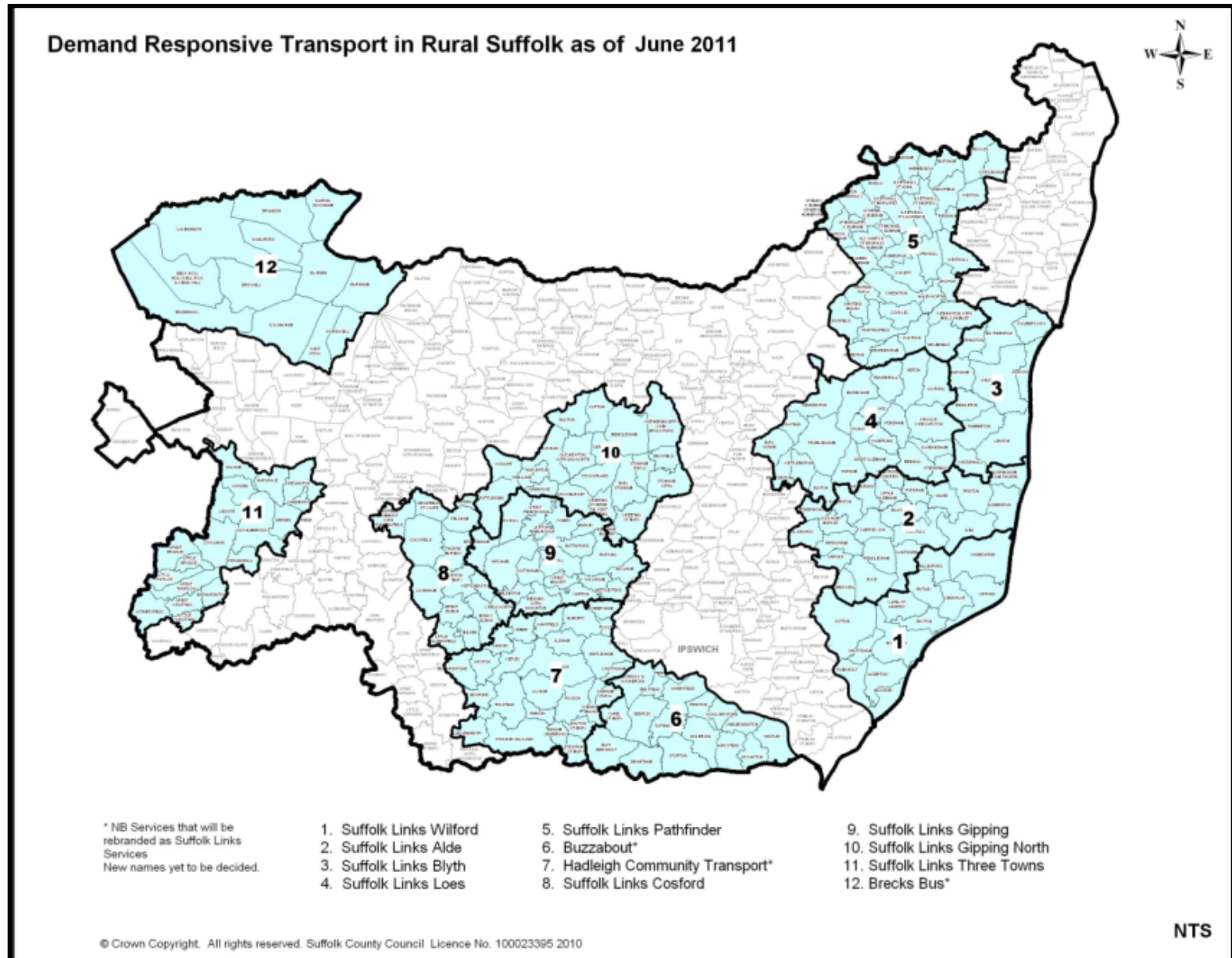
2 Consider if installing photovoltaic cells might help provide electricity to charge electric vehicles – will there be a surplus which could be sold to the national grid to help support costs? The range of the vehicles might be an issue for more rural areas but could be ideal for urban fringes

3 Might the local taxi driver/company be prepared to enable journey sharing for regular passengers to save costs and reduce emissions?

**Map 1**  
**Areas where transport surveys have been completed**



Map 2



**Table 1: Examples of Community Transport - Transport delivered in, for and by the Community**

	Type/ Name	Eligibility	Form of Transport / Service	Conditions	Cost/Pricing basis	Concessions accepted?	Suffolk?
1.	Dial-a-Ride/ ring-a-ride	Registered individuals unable to access public transport due to age, frailty, mobility issues or rurality	Accessible minibus. Volunteer drivers	Pre-booked	Set by Local Authority – broadly in line with bus fares	Travel vouchers	Yes
2.	Community car service	Residents (generally elderly) unable to access public transport and without access to a private car. Traditional car share schemes	Volunteer drivers using own vehicle	Pre-booked	Re-imbusement of expenses to driver. 31p per mile paid by passenger. 10p per mile paid by SCC	Travel Vouchers	Yes
3.	Wheels Within Wheels	Wheelchair users	Wheelchair accessible car. Volunteer driver	Pre-booked	As Community Car Service	Travel Vouchers	Yes
4.	<a href="#">Wheels to Work</a>	Young people accessing work or possibly college (not usually 6 <sup>th</sup> Form)	Scooter, electric cycle or sometimes car.	Referral/Approval of individual eg by College, employer or JobCentre Plus etc	Agreed sum paid per week by beneficiary for set period. Vehicle ownership may be transferred to beneficiary on completion of payment	N/A	Yes (see Note 1)
5.	Demand Responsive Transport / Feeder service / flexible bus service	General public. Priority given to passengers requiring connection to onward public transport – buses/trains etc. Into and out of urban areas from rural areas but not usually within urban area	Accessible vehicle, may be 7 – 16 seats. Drivers usually paid	Pre-booked. May include scheduled service/route eg Constable Country Border Hopper, or totally flexible eg Suffolk Links	Bus fares	Concessionary passes, OAP and young people	Yes
6.	<a href="#">Car Share</a>	Formally, may be open to general public through eg national web site or restricted to employees of	Privately owned car or any suitable vehicle	None unless restricted version	Varies from no payment to driver if all care share participants have a vehicle and drive in turn, or a	N/A	Yes

		one organisation. May also be arranged informally.			share of cost of petrol (or 40p per mile). No profit margin allowed – may invalidate insurance		
7.	<a href="#">Car club</a>	Vehicles owned by scheme are booked on hourly (daily) basis by club members at agreed rate. Membership card opens vehicle which is collected and returned to identified point	Range of Cars – often in urban areas suitable for electric vehicles	Must be Club member	Eg £60 membership pa VW Polo £5 per hour to use. Premium range BMW at £9 phr. Includes full insurance etc	N/A	Not aware of one
8.	Community bus	Residents and groups within a village/town or area. May require membership	7 – 16 seat vehicle (could be larger)	Usually hirer required to provide suitable driver	Usually full cost recovery but may be further supported by fundraising activity	N/A	Yes
9.	<a href="#">Hospital Rides</a>	Passengers requiring to attend Ipswich Hospital. Uses national car share website with local interface	Privately-owned vehicles	Pre-booked	Cost – sharing as at 6. above	N/a	Yes
10.	Hospital cars	Patients requiring transport to and from hospital	Car share organised by individual hospitals using volunteer drivers in private cars	Patient must be able to access vehicle and be fit to travel	No cost to patient. Hospital pays driver 40p per mile expenses	N/A	Yes
11.	Brokerage	Participating Community groups	Co-ordination of use of “pooled” vehicles by eligible groups	Pre-booked. Hiring group may provide driver	Payment in accordance with brokerage conditions eg rate per mile or per hour	N/A	Yes
12	<a href="#">Whipcar</a>	Anyone with a driving licence “hires” vehicle for specified time	Local privately owned cars registered with the scheme are available for hire when not required by owners	Pre booked through website	Payment according to tariff. Cost includes insurance	N/A	Yes

Note 1 – Currently restricted availability