

Good Practice Case Study

Nottinghamshire gets people
on board! ▼

East Midlands
Improvement and
Efficiency Partnership



Green Flag for Transport in Nottinghamshire ▼

Nottinghamshire County Council (CC) has been awarded a Green Flag for its excellent provision of public transport across the county.

Against a backdrop of government targets to increase bus patronage (National Indicator 176) coupled with a drive to generate efficiency savings, over the past two years Nottinghamshire CC has increased numbers of passengers and reduced the level of funded transport from 20% to 15%. This has been achieved by developing and maintaining accessible, acceptable, available and affordable transport services. The county now has the highest passenger satisfaction levels for bus

service and information provision of all the county areas in the country, and has made savings of over £1.2 million since integrating its transport functions in May 2007.

“None of this could have been achieved without the partnerships we have with bus operators, users, community groups and organisations at a local and national level. The dedicated staff at Nottinghamshire Transport Services (NTS) have gone the extra mile to make all this possible and ensuring the high levels of satisfaction.”

Mark Hudson, Nottinghamshire Head of Transport Services

Transport in Nottinghamshire ▾

Nottinghamshire has an approximate population of one million people including 250,000 in Nottingham city centre, 250,000 in surrounding conurbations and 500,000 within other towns and rural areas.

NTS was formed in May 2007 as the integrated provider of passenger transport services in Nottinghamshire. Adult social care, health, school travel and passenger transport all come under this service with the aim of delivering £1.2 million worth of efficiency savings over three years, which has already been delivered.

In 2000, the government outlined a target of increasing bus patronage by 1% year on year across a 12-year period. Nottinghamshire CC has far exceeded this with a 50% increase from 12% over the past decade, bucking all trends. This has been encouraged by the promotion of the concessionary fare scheme for older people and people with disabilities, better routes and timetabling, increased availability of public transport information and more accessible bus stations and bus stops. Bus, tram or light railway services link nearly everyone in Nottinghamshire with work places, district centres and hospitals. Work is also underway to involve community transport providers in providing services in isolated areas.

Key successes for the use of bus and tram services across the county include:

- Total journeys on the bus and tram have increased from around 29 million to 35 million a year over the past five years.
- 61% of passengers are satisfied with local bus services in Nottinghamshire - which is the highest satisfaction of all the county areas in the country.
- 54% of Nottinghamshire residents are satisfied with public transport information - amongst the best nationally.
- 94% of households can now access a district centre, such as a small town, by public transport, whilst 92% have access to a hospital.
- Nottinghamshire County Council received a Beacon award for improving accessibility in 2008/2009.

Success through partnership ▼

Helped by the creation of the NTS, Nottinghamshire CC wholly believes solid and open working partnerships with suppliers, passengers, community groups, local businesses and national organisations underpins their achievements:

- Nottinghamshire CC uses evaluation and measurement to identify routes with the most potential for expansion of bus routes, creating commercially viable contracts and providing quality local bus infrastructure. With this business-focused approach, commercial bus operators are more apt to taking the risk rather than relying on revenue support by Nottinghamshire CC.
- The strength of the relationship with local bus operators can be seen through the quality of services and passenger feedback. It is also evident through the operators' willingness to continue working relations with the NTS even when budgets have been reduced, resulting in none of the partners leaving the project.
- Significant investment, and working in partnership with the bus operators has helped improve bus service punctuality and reliability.
- High profile marketing and publicity to support all activities and raise the profile of bus services across the region has ensured the continued satisfaction with bus service information.

The 'driver' for excellent transport services ▼

Performance Management Framework

With the target for 90% of passenger transport services being provided commercially in the County it was imperative to give people access to services they need such as leisure, employment, health and education. To deliver this meant Nottinghamshire CC working effectively, as well as changing perceptions and business practice significantly. It also required the

development of an ongoing strategy outlined by using information from district councils, businesses, forums and local residents.

The Council's strategy needed to be efficient and effective, to maintain standards and services without needing additional funding. The primary way in which this was done was through a performance framework (PMF), following EU Guidelines, monitoring all services and contracts:

- PMF allows for monitoring of all supported services and contracts and assessing all information, data, usage and revenue.
- Each service is given a score based on their performance and commercial potential – in fact some are already operating commercially as they are returning more revenue than investment.
- All contracts are held on a database which indicates when contracts should be reviewed based on six criteria:
 1. Cost for passenger
 2. Alternative services available
 3. Level of deprivation
 4. Journey purpose
 5. Car ownership
 6. Revenue and patronage
- Framework contracts were put in place and in this way savings were made and a new market was opened up.
- Use of PMF to identify funded services that are most commercial and convert them into non-funded, commercial services. Additionally, PMF identifies services, which are not performing, which can lead to the service being withdrawn and funding being transferred elsewhere.

The ‘4 As’: Accessibility, Affordability, Acceptability & Availability ▾

“It doesn’t matter where you live, you should expect, and receive, consistent high quality transport networks to enable you to access key services”

Mark Hudson, Nottinghamshire Head of Transport Services

Although too numerous to mention all, key services that exemplify the success of working with partners, identifying commercially viable networks and delivering the ‘4As’; Accessibility, Availability, Affordability and Acceptability, can

be demonstrated using the following two projects:

The West Bridgford bus project

Introduced in 2007 revenue support for this project has finished and is now fully supported to be commercial. West Bridgford is a predominantly affluent area, where the majority of residents have access to a car. Working with Nottingham City Transport a total of £400,000 was invested into making bus travel more appealing and acceptable for this demographic,

installing leather seats, Wi-Fi, and real-time information at bus stops. The infrastructure for the project was provided by Nottinghamshire CC which included bus priority measures and bus stops enabling the network to be sustained. NCT also reconfigured the bus network following extensive local consultation

and introduced a raised level of service.

The average investment per passenger was 10 pence, with the results delivering a 15% increase in bus usage in the area, lower CO2 emissions, a reduction in congestion and people travelling in smarter forms.



One of Nottinghamshire's award winning bus stations

Smart ticketing initiatives

Smart Card ticketing was implemented in 2006 offering free travel for elderly, disabled and children including the roll-out of ITSO™ integrated ticketing infrastructure and is now used with 11 million journeys from a total of 35 million across the county.

This local scheme, managed by NTS, was set up by Nottinghamshire CC and the seven district and borough councils working together, saving money in administration and other costs.

Concessionary fares for those aged

60 or over and those with a disability have helped increase public transport usage - 81% of people aged over 60 or with a disability now have a concessionary bus pass which can also be used on the Nottingham tram.

Overall the scheme is judged as incredibly successful with a 30% increase in concessionary bus passes issued and a 75% increase in journeys taken.

An additional benefit of this initiative is that it speeds up boarding by up to 1 minute per passenger making journey times much quicker.

Lessons to take on board ▾

Partnerships – need to be truly equal, transparent and open with clear goals for both the authority and commercial operators. This is all achieved via proactive engagement and collaboration between all the stakeholders to ensure the needs of all public transport users are at the forefront of the partners' minds, thus enabling everyone to work to a common objective.

Flexibility – there are likely to always be factors that are out of your control, for example political change can affect the balance of partnerships. Collaboration is essential as well as having a unified goal.

Monitoring & reviewing – the use of PMFs for planning and efficiency

are vital as well as other evaluation strategies such as the use of mystery shoppers, which are undertaken every three months on bus services in the county.

Commercialisation of bus services – reduces the risk and burden on the Council. This is a high-risk strategy but by identifying those services with the most potential it can be hugely successful, particularly at times of economic uncertainty and funding constraints.

Healthy competition – assessing the market and providing competitive fares for patrons can result in a more customer-focused approach; greater choice, better value for money and therefore higher satisfaction for the consumer.

The next stop ▾

Nottinghamshire County Council is pleased with its transport successes to date, but recognises that these are part of a larger journey. Economic factors have meant a 5% reduction in next year's budget, however NTS is continuing to strive to achieve its 90% commercial vs. 10% supported transport targets whilst maintaining transport standards and levels of service delivery.

To this end, future initiatives are already being planned and implemented, including:

Phase 2: Transport Transformation (TT) starting in 2010, the aim over the next three years is to generate £1.8 - 3.7 million in efficiency savings, primarily through the vision of one point of contact.

An integrated IT system which is currently being implemented - investing in the back office function will assist in planning, generate savings and integrate needs, but most importantly provides one point of contact for customers.

It will plan and coordinate services across the whole sphere of provision of community transport, including volunteer car schemes.

A mobility strategy - creating minimum standards for access to key services and engaging with transport providers to ensure the most cost-effective and efficient transport solution is found for each passenger.

Building on smart card ticketing – plans are at conceptual stage to develop commercial tie-ups for the Smart Card, providing greater value for customers and consolidate it as a value-for-money venture with partners.

Further commercialisation – for example integrating school services with local bus providers has been identified as a potential commercial project requiring minimum revenue support.

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East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership Case Studies

The East Midlands Improvement & Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP) is committed to celebrating the successful, innovative and imaginative project work that exists in the East Midlands region.

The EM IEP Support Team publish case studies showing how East Midlands councils are improving services, and delivering significant improvements and efficiencies.

The case studies are intended to inspire councils in the region, and indeed nationally, to transform services and benefit from the processes developed by those councils that have pioneered the way forward.

For all the latest news, guidance, good practice case studies and video case studies visit our website:

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