



Brixham Town Council

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Town Clerk: Mrs Tracy Hallett

Report Number	13-2021	Date	18.02.21
Report Type	Public	Meeting	Full Council
Contact Councillors	Eleanor Hoggart David Giles		
Report Title	Community Transport		

Purpose of Report

To discuss and consider the motion proposed by Councillor Hoggart and seconded by Councillor Giles.

Research Information

The charity 'The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England' has recently issued a report on the state of public transport in England's small towns, saying:

"Small towns and their surrounding villages are the beating heart of England's countryside. Across the country there are more than a thousand small towns, which are home to at least 15 million people. Close to a further eight million people live in villages. In many people's imaginations, the quintessential English community is still a rural village surrounded by a green landscape. Yet, despite the fact that the public continues to treasure our rural landscapes, the focus of policy makers is all too often elsewhere. For too long decision makers have rarely considered the needs of communities living in the countryside. Nowhere is this clearer than in the current state of transport policy. Over a number of decades, villages and small towns have become increasingly cut off from public transport.

Thousands of communities lost their links to the national railway network during the Beeching cuts of the 1960s, but at the time it was promised that any rail route lost to station closures would be replaced by bus services. However, since the deregulation of bus services in the 1980s, routes that do not serve communities with a large enough population to ensure commercial viability have been hard to support.

More recently the impact of cuts to local authority budgets has meant that many councils have reduced or wholly withdrawn their financial support for bus routes serving rural communities."

In the South West, the research shows:

- After 80% cuts to spending on bus services, nine out of the 13 small towns in Dorset have become transport deserts or are at risk of being absorbed into one.
- In Devon, 17 of the 25 towns investigated are in the same position – and so are 14 of the 16 towns in Gloucestershire.
- Some towns with over 10,000 residents, like Verwood in Dorset, have just one bus per hour to another major settlement at peak hours.

To put this into context:

- A small town is a settlement with 5000 – 30,000 residents.
- Across England, local authority spending on buses is down by 43% over the past nine years (to 2019).
- Over 3000 bus routes have been withdrawn, reduced, or altered over the same period.

The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England report can be seen in full, by clicking the following links:

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CfBT-Transport-Deserts-Feb-2020-web-spreads.pdf>

and

<https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/future-bus-funding-arrangements.pdf>

Motion

In recognition of the ongoing threats to our local bus services – which are a lifeline to many in our community - Brixham Town Council resolves to support the campaign being led by the Council for the Protection of Rural England for the provision of better bus services to help create a thriving countryside, by signing up to their petition to the Secretary of State for Transport seeking a new rural transport fund to keep rural communities connected.