

## **2. RURAL TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIPS FUTURES (A8705/ED)**

### **Proposal**

1 To make members aware that the study into the future of Rural Transport Partnerships has been completed and a report was published in December 2006. In addition, members are requested to approve the Rural Transport Partnership Futures steering groups response to the report, so that the preferred option can begin to be implemented in 2007/8.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION:**

### **That**

- 1. Members note the publication of the Rural Transport Partnerships Futures Report.**
- 2. Members approve the Steering Group Response to the Consultation on Rural Transport Partnerships Futures.**
- 3. Members approve the Officer's concerns as listed in paragraph 16-20 of this report, and ask Derbyshire County Council to take these into consideration when they implement the preferred option.**

### **Policy/Legal Background**

3 The concept of Rural Transport Partnerships (RTPs) was introduced by the Countryside Agency (CA) in 1997. The purpose of these partnerships was to provide ways of assessing local rural transport need, with regard to people's ability to access jobs, services and other social activities, and to provide locally tailored solutions from a wide range of sources. The partnerships were predominantly funded by the CA until April 2001, but this was extended to March 2004, and again until March 2006.

4 Derbyshire had five RTPs, two corridor based and three community based, delivering a variety of schemes. The Authority was involved with, and provided funding to the two corridor partnerships, which were the Hope Valley and High Peak Transport Partnership (HVHPTP) and Derwent Valley RTP. In addition, we were involved with and provided funding to the North Staffordshire / West Derbyshire RTP, which was community based. Members should be aware that the two corridor based partnerships are still fully functional, but the community based partnership no longer exists due to a lack of funding.

5 A study to investigate the future of RTPs was prompted by the withdrawal of direct funding of RTPs by the CA at the end of March 2006. However, it was agreed amongst the Derbyshire RTP's funding bodies, that funding be extended to September 2006 in order that a review could take place on how the rural accessibility work undertaken by RTPs be taken forward. This funding has been provided through EMDA.

6 Scott Wilson were commissioned by Derbyshire County Council and the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership, to review the work of all RTPs within Derbyshire and suggest appropriate roles and structures of any future transport partnerships. A copy of the brief for this report is outlined in the Appendix of this report. A critical element of the study was to assess how any future partnerships linked to Derbyshire County Councils accessibility strategy partnerships that already exist. This Authority was invited to be part of a Steering Group of interested parties to guide the direction of

the Study. The membership of the Steering Group is Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership, Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Rural Community Council.

- 7 The final RTP Futures Report was published in December 2006, which contained the consultants preferred option for future partnerships, and was issued to all partners of the existing partnerships. This was to provide them with the opportunity to assess whether they were comfortable with the preferred option for future partnerships. At this point, the steering group formed their response to the RTP Futures Report.

### **Key Issues**

- 8 The Rural Transport Partnership Future Report recommends the future partnerships and structure as outlined in the appendix of this report. This option is a mixture of existing and new partnerships, consisting of three new local accessibility partnerships and the two existing rail partnerships – the HVHPTP and Derwent Valley RTP (shown on the left hand side of the diagram). A structure above these community/local focussed partnerships is the proposed Derbyshire Accessibility Partnership, which is proposed to provide the local partnerships with a policy focus and direction. Above the Derbyshire Accessibility Partnership would be the Local Area Agreement Sustainable Counties Block, which would provide the Derbyshire Accessibility Partnership with accountability. Finally, on the right hand side of the diagram are Derbyshire County Council's five strategic theme groups, formed as part of their accessibility strategy, which will need to work closely with the local partnerships. The consultant recommended that the Authority was represented on the Derbyshire Accessibility Co-ordinating Group, relevant local partnerships, and all theme groups of Derbyshire County Councils accessibility strategy.
- 9 This option would require at least five full time equivalent officers; one to service each local partnership. The steering group has estimated funds for these potential partnerships, based on current levels of funding available, and after careful consideration, considered this option could not be delivered on financial grounds.
- 10 Therefore, the steering group considered several variations on the preferred option in the RTP Futures Report, and developed an option that is felt to be financially and practically deliverable. This option is illustrated in the appendix to this report. The key difference between the steering groups proposed option compared to the reports preferred option is that there would be three local partnerships rather than five, as the two rail partnerships would be sub-partnerships of the geographically relevant local partnerships. Making this change means that the estimated levels of funding are sufficient to provide suitable officer time for each partnership. The steering groups preferred option suggests that the Authority is involved with a number of key elements of the revised partnerships structure. These are set out in the Annex 1.
- 11 The following paragraphs provide members with some key implications for the Authority in relation to the proposed structure and roles of the revised partnerships.
- 12 **HVHPTP Staff posts**  
The Authority is the employing body for the HVHPTP team, which consists of one full time equivalent officer and a part time administrative assistant. The proposed changes would have an impact on their current roles. Therefore, their job descriptions will need to be updated to reflect these changes.

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- 13      EMT Peak District Public Realm Project  
As members will be aware, the HVHPTP and Derwent Valley RTP secured a significant amount of funding for improvements to visitor public accessibility in the two valleys. This funding was provided over three years, with the projects final funding in 2007/8. In order to ensure that the remainder of the project is delivered within the timescales, the current officers will remain in post, and will primarily be delivering the final elements of this project. Although, their job descriptions will be updated to reflect the revised partnerships and the change of duties.
- 14      Authority Funding  
In the financial year 2006/7, the Transport Policy Team provided the HVHPTP, Derwent Valley Partnership, and North Staffordshire / West Derbyshire partnership with £4000 each. The estimated level of funding for the future partnerships is the same level as this, as we have been estimated to assist with funding three of the revised partnerships, as outlined in the 'resources' paragraph of this report. Thus, there are no significant estimated changes in the Transport Policy Team's budget.
- 15      Members should note that although the Authority's estimated contribution to the partnerships in total is £12,000 per annum, the Transport Policy Team will be assessing whether the proposed partnerships assist the Authority in meeting its corporate outcomes and actions. Therefore, the level of funding provided by the Transport Policy Team to the partnerships will be determined at a later date, but will be no more than £12,000.
- 16      Officer Concerns regarding the revised Partnerships  
Authority officers have a number of concerns that they would like Derbyshire County Council, to take into consideration when they implement the steering groups preferred option.
- 17      Firstly, ensuring that the revised partnerships structure does not have an adverse impact on the EMT Project. The Authority is the accountable body for this project, thus it would have significant adverse impacts for the Authority if the project was adversely affected.
- 18      Secondly, the steering groups preferred managing body for all the partnership officer is Derbyshire Council, with all officers based at County Hall in Matlock. Authority officers have concerns regarding a slight conflict between this and some of the findings in the RTP Futures Report. – The report states that some members of the public feel alienated from Matlock, which conflicts with an aim of the partnerships, which are proposed as 'bottom up' partnerships. In addition, Matlock is a considerable distance from the areas covered by some of the partnerships, thus the officers would spend a considerable amount of time travelling between Matlock and their partnership area. Therefore, Authority officers would like Derbyshire County Council to consider situating the officers in a location within their relevant partnership area, as both the HVHPTP and Derwent Valley RTP officers are now. Although members should note that the HVHPTP will remain based at New Mills.
- 19      Thirdly, the HVHPTP currently works with and secures funding from local authorities outside of Derbyshire. Authority officers feel that this cross border working is vital, as the Hope Valley Line brings people into the National Park from the metropolitan areas. Therefore, Authority officers would like Derbyshire County Council to consider that as well as continued liaison with Derby City Council, there needs to continue to be cross boundary working with other areas outside Derbyshire.

20 Finally, the steering groups preferred option has two partnerships that have a local accessibility and rail focus within them. Authority officers feel that the skills and knowledge of these two elements are very different, and as such would like Derbyshire County Council to consider a job split into two part time posts so that both elements have the necessary officer skills to effectively cover both elements. In addition, this may assist with the funding concerns that the rail focussed partners of the partnership will have, as they could ring fence their funding more easily.

21 Next Steps

At present, each of the steering group organisations are producing their own responses to the RTP Futures Report, so that the preferred option can be implemented. Should approval be given by each of the steering group members, existing partners will be consulted on the preferred option, in the hope of seeking agreement to begin to implement this option in 2007/8. Once agreement on the preferred option is established, job descriptions will be drafted for the new officer posts, and recruitment will begin. In addition, existing officers job descriptions will be revised to reflect the revised partnerships and the change of duties. At the same time, an inaugural meeting of the Derbyshire Accessibility Co-ordinating Group will be established, until this point, the steering group will act as a temporary Derbyshire Accessibility Co-ordinating Group, and train companies will be asked to join the group.

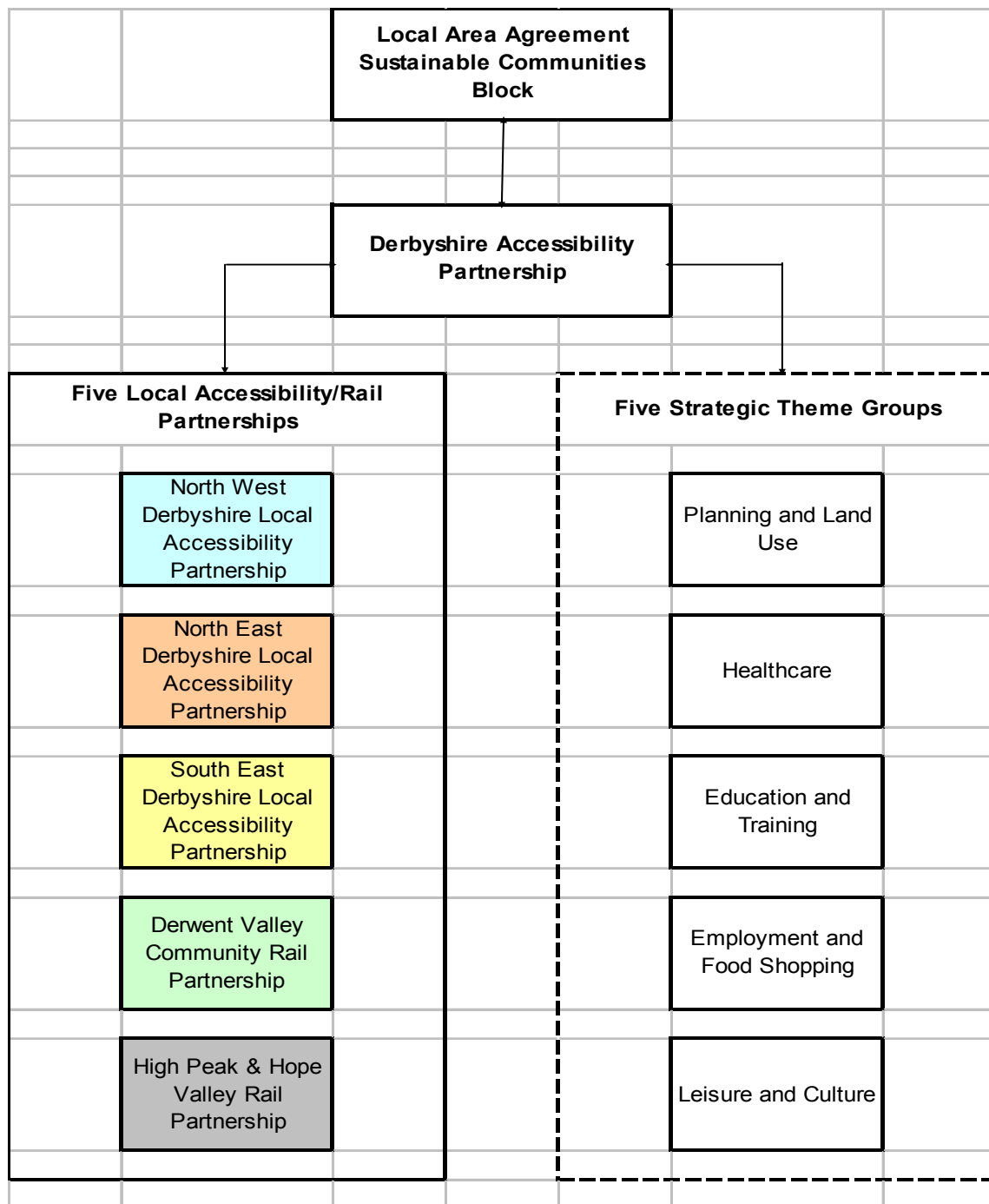
## **APPENDIX**

### **Background**

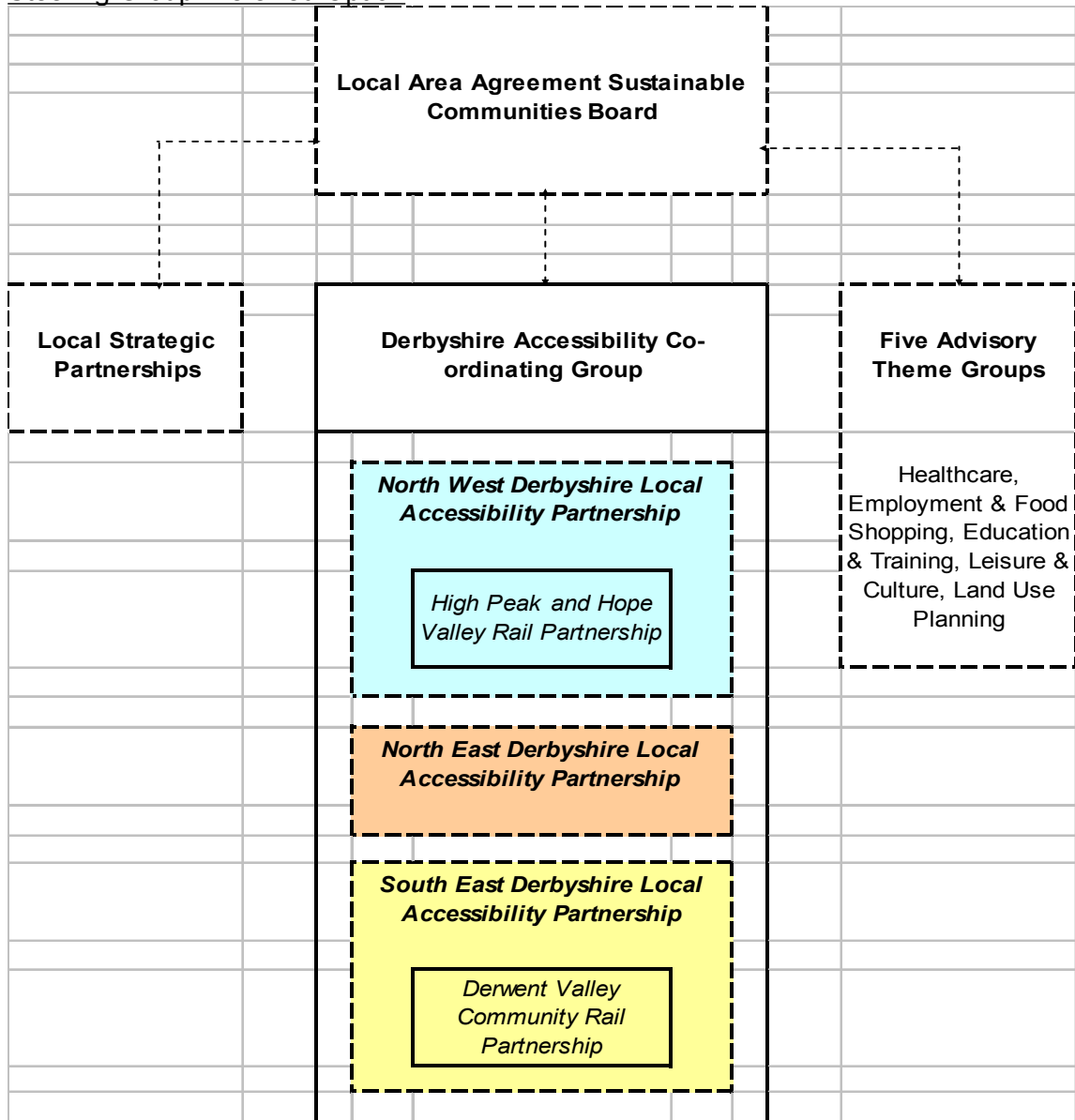
#### **RTP Futures Study Brief**

1. To investigate the impact and effectiveness of each RTP.
2. To discuss with RTP Officers the achievements of their respective RTPs to date.
3. To determine how stakeholders/independent witnesses value the service offered by RTPs.
4. To assess how funding sources and their requirements, and the strategic environment for the delivery of rural transport and access have changed since the inception of RTPs.
5. Determine if there is still a role for RTPs in the current situation with particular reference to Accessibility Planning and LTP2.
6. Determine the appropriate roles and responsibilities of public sector partners in the future delivery of rural transport and access.
7. Identify potential areas of activity/strategic initiatives which Derbyshire County Council, Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership, Alliance SSP and others should consider for support.
8. Provide options/recommendations on appropriate partnership delivery mechanisms for addressing rural transport and access.

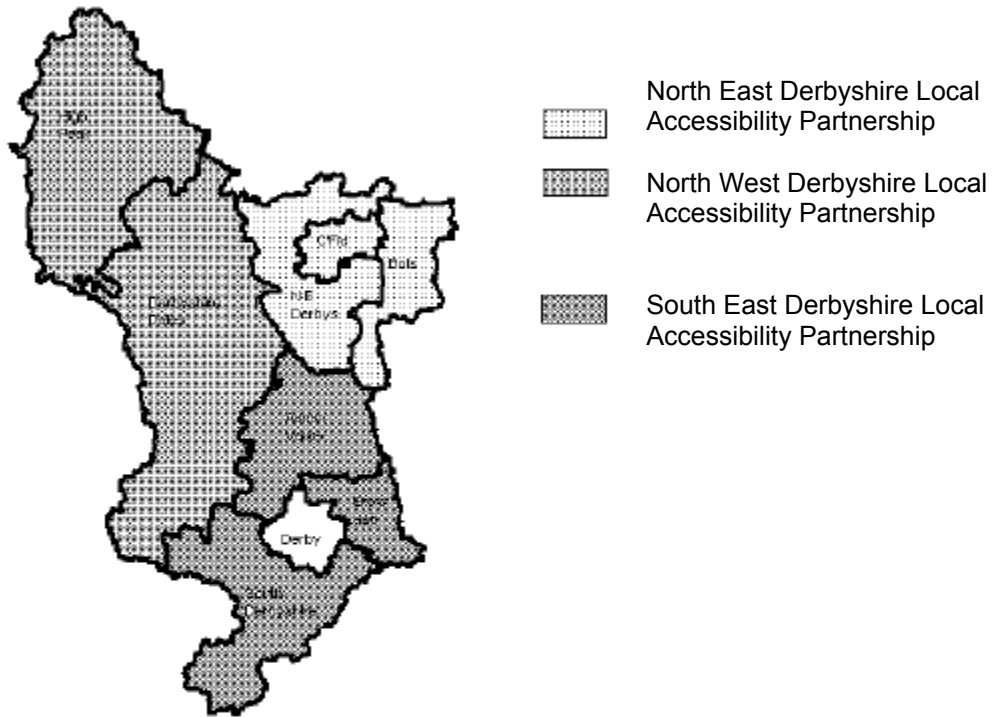
RTP Futures Report Preferred Option



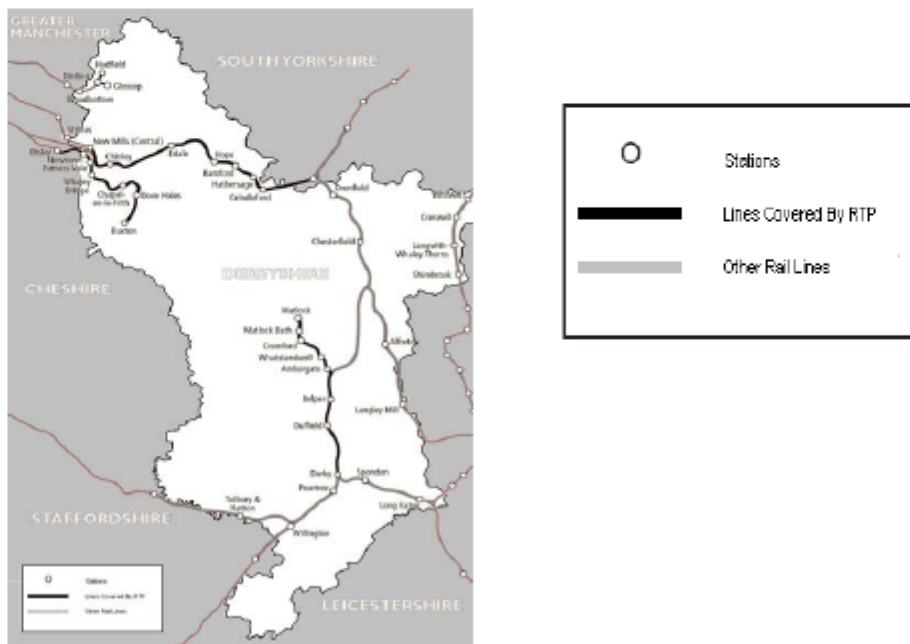
Steering Group Preferred Option



Maps indicating the location of the proposed partnerships are set below  
Map 1 Local Accessibility Partnerships



Map 2 Rail Partnerships





## **Resources**

- 2 2006/7 Transport Policy Team contributions to partnerships

<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Level of funding</b>
Hope Valley High Peak Transport Partnership	£4000
Derwent Valley RTP	£4000
North Staffordshire / West Derbyshire RTP	£4000
Total	£12,000

Estimated 2007/8 – 2010/11 funding

<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Level of funding</b>
South East Derbyshire Local Accessibility Partnership	£2000
Derwent Valley Community Rail Partnership	£2000
North West Derbyshire Local Accessibility Partnership	£4000
High Peak and Hope Valley Rail Partnership	£4000
Total	£12,000

The funding tables above illustrate that there are no significant estimated changes in the Transport Policy Team's budget. However, the Transport Policy Team will be assessing whether the partnerships it is expected to assist fund will provide benefits to the National Park's corporate outcomes and actions, therefore, the allocation of the £12,000 funding may differ between the partnerships, but will not exceed £12,000.

- 3 Members should note that in order to provide the revised partnerships with continuity and financial security, all partners will be requested to provide provisional funding for three years in advance. In addition, partners are requested to provide a years notice if they no longer wish to fund a partnership.

## **Risk Management**

- 4 The HVHPTP Team's job descriptions will be updated inline with the revised partnerships role, and will become effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. The Transport Policy Manager will ensure that all changes will be undertaken within the Managing Change guidelines and with guidance from Human Resources.

## **Human Rights, Equalities, Health & Safety**

- 5 There are no significant aspects that relate to this report.

## **Consultees**

- 6 Chief Executive  
Head of Finance  
Head of Human Resources and Performance  
Head of Policy, Research and Partnerships

## **Enclosures**

- 7 Annex 1

## **List of Background Papers** (not previously published)

- 8 Steering Group Response to the Consultation on Rural Transport Futures, March 2007  
Rural Transport Partnership Futures, December 2006

Copies of these documents can be supplied by contacting Emily Davies: 01629 816213 or [emily.davies@peakdistrict.gov.uk](mailto:emily.davies@peakdistrict.gov.uk))

**Report Author**

9 Emily Davies, Transport Policy Manager

**Publication date**

10 Thursday 22 March 2007