Accessing Employment

Coalfields Communities Campaign Conference, Wigan

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"It may work in practice, but it will never work in theory"

The Anonymous Economist

Mining areas

- **Often rural locations with urban problems**

- **So accessibility issues are key**

- **Housing tenure, single main employer, decline ….**

Individuals

- **Getting training, skills, education**

- **Finding a job**

- **Getting to a job**

Getting to training, skills, education

- **Employability**

- **Work experience (e.g. SkillsSeekers, ILMs)**

- **Availability of relevant training and education**

Job search - finding a job

- **Standard means of looking for a job**

- **Accessibility and informal social networking especially in isolated labour markets**

- **ICT: facilitating solutions**

Getting to a job

- **Accessibility to jobs (demand, supply and transport issues)**
- **Sector and occupational change in the economy**
- **Low paid or part-time less willing to travel far (so inbuilt bias)**
- **Travel to work**
  - **Demographic**
  - **Human capital**
  - **Financial (income, wages)**
  - **Other job characteristics (Contract, hours, career)**
  - **Local economy characteristics**
  - **Mode availability**

Getting to a job

- **Car ownership (94% in recent study), but young etc. (bus fares!)**

- **Some initiatives, e.g. Transfife Community Transport: Wheels to Work**

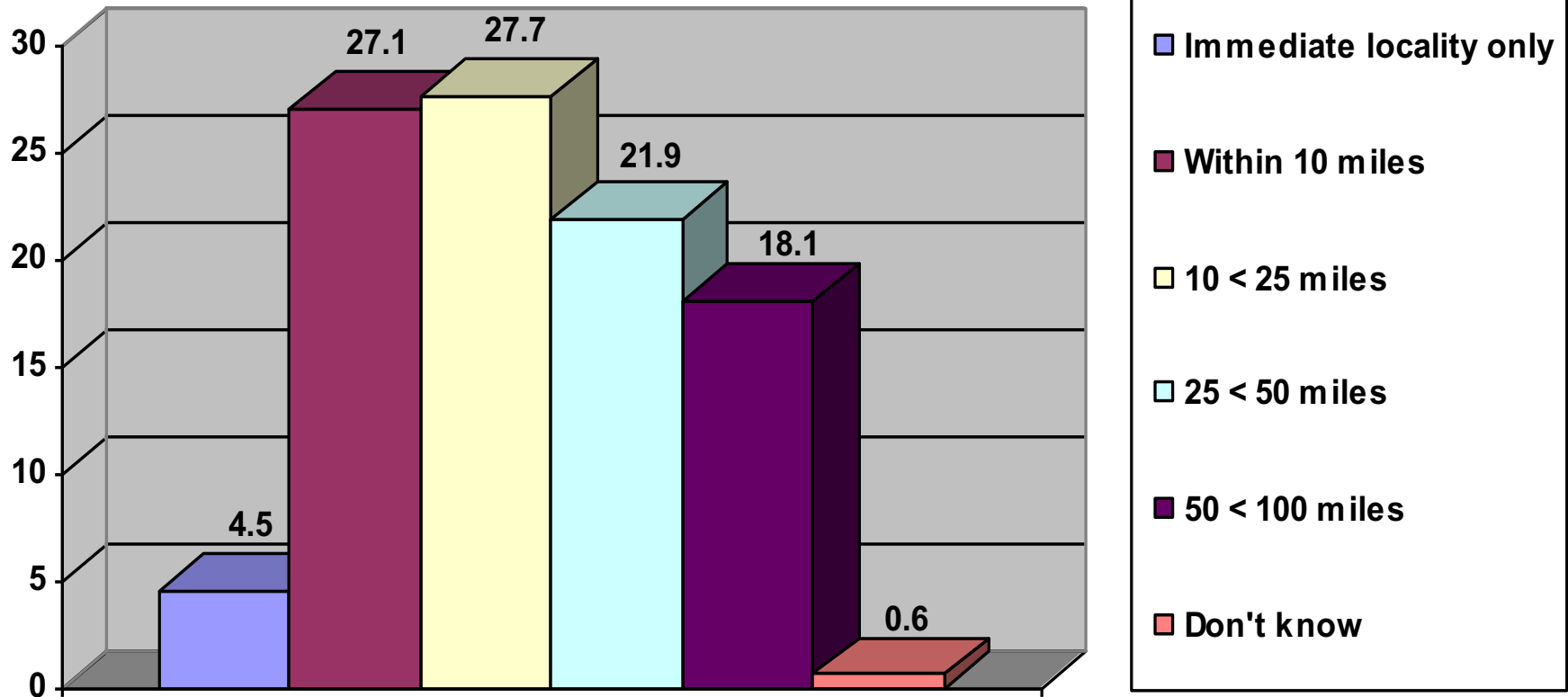 *"My shift starts at 5.45am, the first bus is not until 8.30"*

What needs to be done?

- Characteristics of transport
  - Safe, comfort, schedules, cost
- Specific transport for groups
- Changing peoples' travel horizons
- Reducing travel needs
- Reduce traffic impact and pollution
- New forms of flexible transport (e.g. DRT)

Areas where respondents would consider accepting work

(% total responses)

Chart data:
- Immediate locality only: 4.5
- Within 10 miles: 27.1
- 10 < 25 miles: 27.7
- 25 < 50 miles: 21.9
- 50 < 100 miles: 18.1
- Don't know: 0.6

Job Vacancies: Government Jobcentre Plus website (extensive web database of jobs)

Training Opportunities: Worktrain website (web database of training opportunities for the area)

Public Transport (but DRT): Traveline equivalent (identifies all public transport between source and destination, e.g. a job seekers residence and a potential job)

emires

bringing community and opportunity together

work train
THE NATIONAL JOBS AND LEARNING SITE

jobcentreplus
Part of the Department
for Work and Pensions

www.emiresscotland.org

Value Added of EMIRES

- **Integration of different information sources**
- **Improved access to data and information**
  - **Should ICT policies reflect existing behaviour or try to change behaviour to a more 'efficient' or effective way?**
- **May be able to add other potential value added services (e.g. booking travel and a restaurant)**
- **Use by government services – but implications?**

Focus group findings: is there a role for ICT?

- **Job seekers adapted well to the introduction of ICT into public Jobcentre facilities**

- **Perception that 'jobpoint' technology provided enhanced autonomy and privacy**

- **Perception that searchable database over-complicated the job search process:**
  - **for those seeking to browse across a range of jobs**
  - **for those in isolated rural areas with few vacancies**

![Napier University logo]

Focus groups: Is there a role for ICT?

"I preferred the old card system…. I used to walk in and look at things and think, 'I'll try that'. Now, you've got to have a specific idea. I mean, I'm a manual labourer; I don't have a specific idea."
Peter, 53, unemployed two years, Wick

The jobpoints are actually better, because with the cards it was too crowded and people would get in your way. The old way, I used to get really claustrophobic and it never gave you any privacy.
Laura, 18, unemployed six months, West Lothian

Focus groups: Limits on the role of ICT

- **The impact of social networking**
  - marginal in peri-urban areas, although crucial in more remote rural areas
  - formal services often by-passed
- **The impact of labour demand**
  - lack of opportunities limiting impact of interventions
  - lack of labour demand - scepticism regarding the value of *any* public service interventions
- **Need for ICT resources and facilities that have a local dimension and tap local knowledge**

Focus groups: Limits on the role of ICT

The terminal gives you a slip. You take the slip to the staff. You ask about the job, they tell you about it. Not very interactive is it?

Alan, 51, unemployed six months, West Lothian

I'm in my sixties and I know nothing about the new technology. To try to learn about that technology now is way beyond my comprehension. A computer sitting in the corner that's blank would stay blank as far as I'm concerned. Every job in my working life has been a manual job, I couldn't work computers.

Dennis, 65, unemployed one year, West Lothian

Focus groups: Limits on the role of ICT

I agree that personal approaches and using people you know is often the best way. But for me it somehow doesn't feel right to use friends or people you used to work with just to look for work.

Mary, 48, unemployed one year, West Lothian

On lack of demand: *"It sounds great. But number one we need jobs, number two we need transport. Forget about the Internet"*

Robbie, 45, unemployed two years

ICT and job seeking: Benefits and barriers

- **Job seekers can adapt to ICT-based services**
- **An emerging but limited role in many areas**
- **A digital divide affecting the most disadvantaged**
- **The design of software must reflect the realities of local labour markets in rural areas**
- **Acknowledging the role of informal networking**
- **Lack of demand in many areas**
- **Transport is important and should be linked to other policies**

Summary

- **Accessibility to jobs is crucial**

- **Need to consider:**

- supply side issues (personal characteristics etc.)

- demand side issues (shift patterns etc.)

- modal issues

Accessibility and Employers

Role of transport in business location

A necessary but not sufficient condition

- geographical scale

- **type of business**

- **displacement or growth?**

- **expanding role of logistics firms?**

Public Organizations

- **co-ordination and new mindsets**

Some Evidence

The Role of Transport

Good transport links, both internal and external are part of a portfolio of area assets that potential investors consider when making location decisions.

The importance and effect of transport varies depending on firm characteristics, characteristics of the locality and external conditions.

Transport costs are often a relatively small proportion of total costs, but that it is perceived costs, in terms of money, reliability and time that are equally or more likely to influence location decisions.

The location of specialist logistics firms, rather than transport infrastructure, that may increasingly attract other businesses. Transport has an increasing influence on these specialist firms but less influence on manufacturing and service firms.
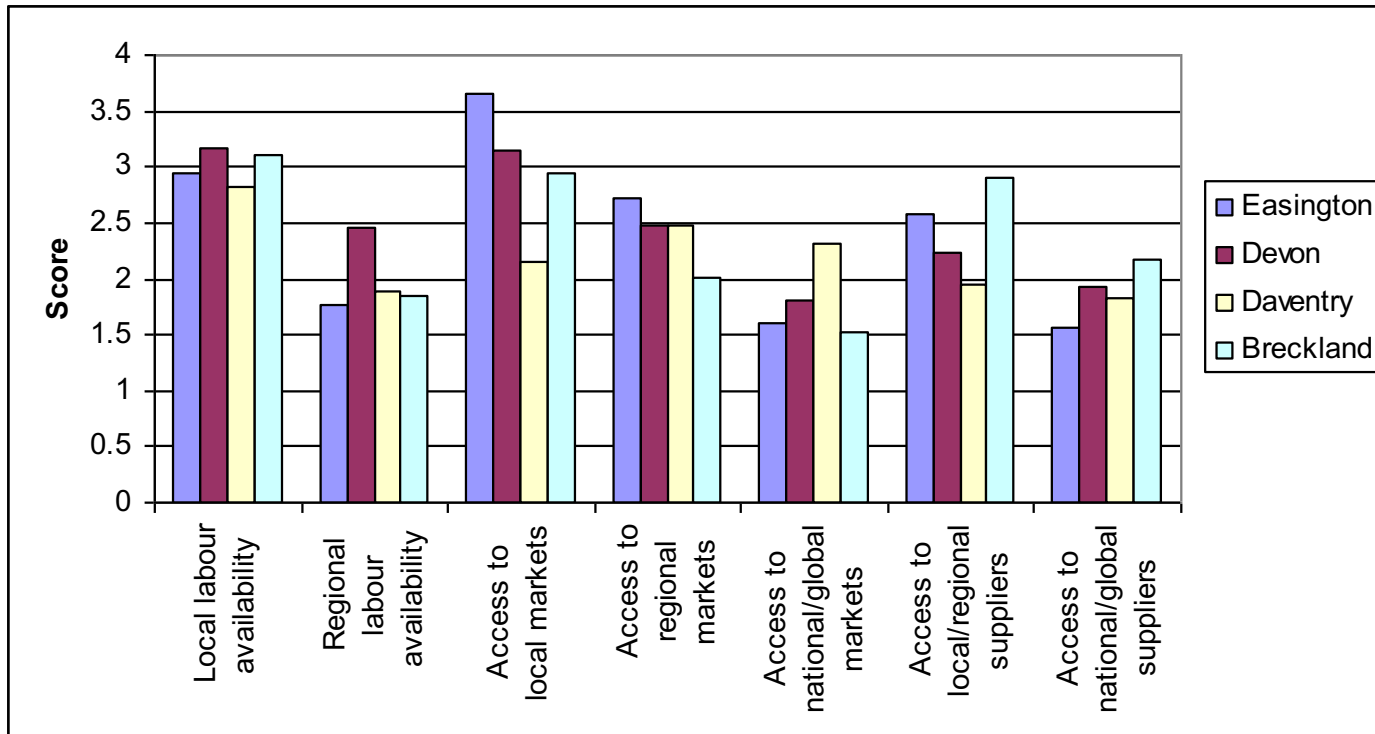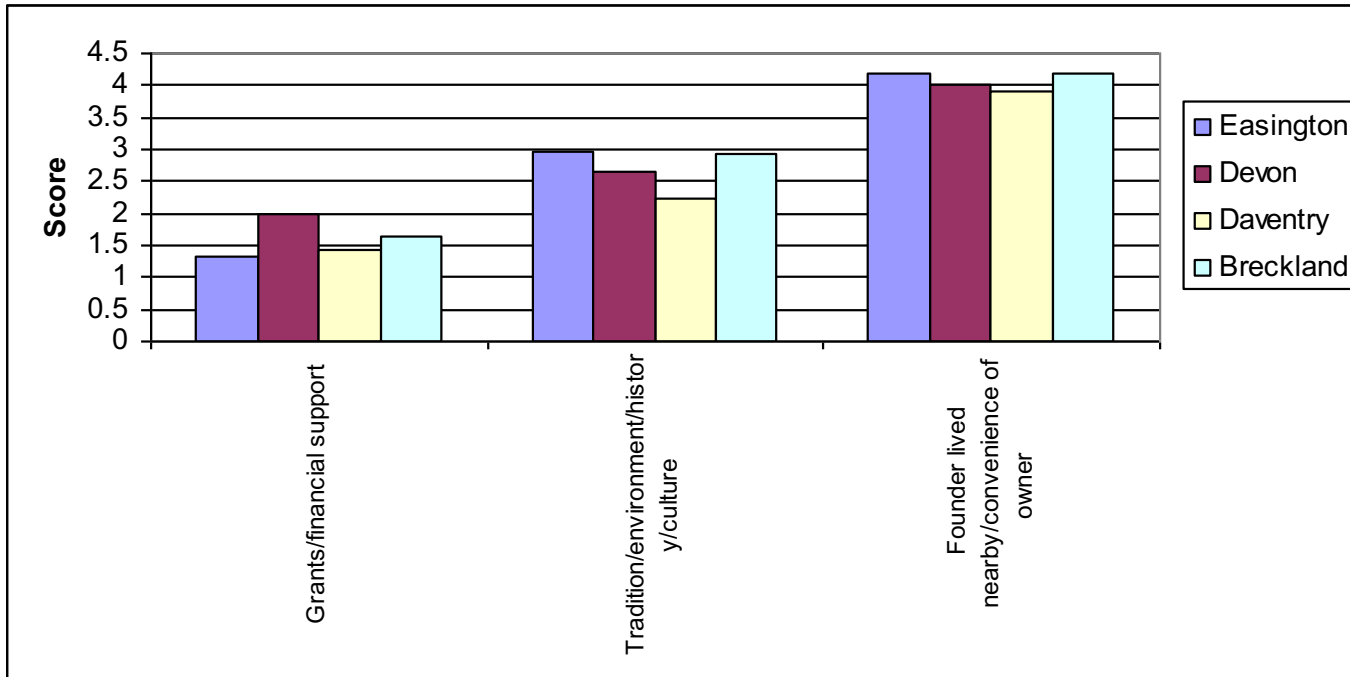
Some Evidence cont.

The location of FDI in the UK, (particularly business service and high-tech manufacturing), is influenced by air transport, workforce and premises, whereas domestic investment is more dependent on road transport.

Measures to increase accessibility are most likely to be effective if addressed at a local level, for example improvements to local public transport.

Relocation of business to suburban and other decentralised areas creates accessibility problems and also makes retrospective public transport provision more difficult.

The effectiveness of urban transport schemes is dependent on complementary urban development policies. Evidence suggests either policy in isolation to be less effective.

Accessibility and firms

Some Evidence cont.

Transport factors are more likely to influence intra-regional than inter-regional location decisions, in other words they influence the decision of where to locate within a region once that region has been chosen.

New transport infrastructure can often involve displacing business and employment from one area to another, even within a region.

Summary

- **Accessibility to is crucial**
- **Accessibility to what?**
- **Accessibility is not just transport:**
  - **It is accessibility to information and services**
  - **To jobs (so improving skills, education etc. are crucial)**
  - **To opening/work times**
  - **To childcare etc.**
  - **Etc.**
- **How to improve it?**

Employment Research Institute

http://napier.ac.uk/depts/eri/home.htm

Change in Transport Employment 1995-2003