

A study into the feasibility of a Community Distribution system on Alston Moor – Final Report.

Introduction

This study will take many of the results gained in part one of this study as a basis for discussing the feasibility of such a scheme, including what shape the scheme may take. The shops, businesses and routes discussed in this document will be those outlined in part one of the report. Having said this, there may be considerable scope to expand the scheme. It will be important for the long term success of any CDS however, to make sure it is set up on a small but scaleable basis. This will allow for the removal of several of the barriers discussed in part one of the report.

There was a considerably favourable response to the work, and people were keen to help and be on board something of this kind. Its possible many of the points raised in this report may need discussion between members of any future CDS before one is implemented. This inclusive element in the decision making process is vital for businesses to feel like they have a say in the system.

Any CDS routes decided could be agreed upon on the following basis in order to assess their worth to the scheme as a whole:

Number of miles in round trip.

This will be a good indicator of how useful a collaborative approach will be to member organisations. Rather than simply taking costs into account (below), this will also give an indication of how much time organisations could save by collaborating.

Cost to organisations

How much will the trip cost in terms of standard mileage? This will be useful to work out potential savings to organisations, and also to explain simply the merits of collaboration. The higher the cost, the more likely organisations may want to collaborate on the route.

Number of organisations making regular journeys to destination

The higher the number, the more likely it is any administrator can find duplication in journeys by different organisations. This may also increase durability of the route; if an organisation cannot make the journey for a couple of days/weeks there is an increased likelihood that another organisation can make the same journey in its stead. The more organisations making the trip will also lessen unused vehicle capacity.

Number of combined journeys made per month

The higher the number of journeys made per month will increase the frequency at which duplication of journeys will occur. This will be an important measure of how successful the addition of the route will be to any future CDS.

Over the next few pages the routes are examined in turn to assess their viability based on the four points above and other factors where necessary.

Alston - Barnard Castle – Alston

Distance: 63.7 miles



Number of organisations travelling this route: 1

Number of times per month route is travelled: 1

Analysis:

On the surface this does not make an ideal route for the CDS to operate on. The number of miles in round trip is high which is good. This acts as a good incentive to combine resources on the route. However, with only one organisation in those questioned using the route, impact will be limited. Cost to the organisation is relatively high. The journey may be of use to other organisations that previously may have been unable to deliver to Barnard Castle because of financial consideration or lack of resources (e.g. a work van, or time to spare for delivery). However because there is only one trip made per month, this also limits its potential usefulness to partners.

Alston – Brampton - Alston

Distance: 40 miles



Number of organisations travelling this route: 1

Number of times per month route is travelled: 9

Analysis:

This may be good route for the CDS to operate. There are regular journeys along the route, but the number of organisations travelling the route is 1. This affects its viability. There is considerable mileage to the route, which may encourage other member organisations to take advantage of this one businesses regular trips to transport their own products alongside, or to bring their raw materials back with them. Unlike Barnard Castle, the increased regularity of the journey by the Moody Baker, allows other partners to favour it. One of any future co-ordinators roles could be to identify other businesses, which may be able to use such routes.

Alston-Carlisle-Alston

Distance: 57.6 miles



Number of organisations travelling this route: 5

Number of times per month route is travelled: 19

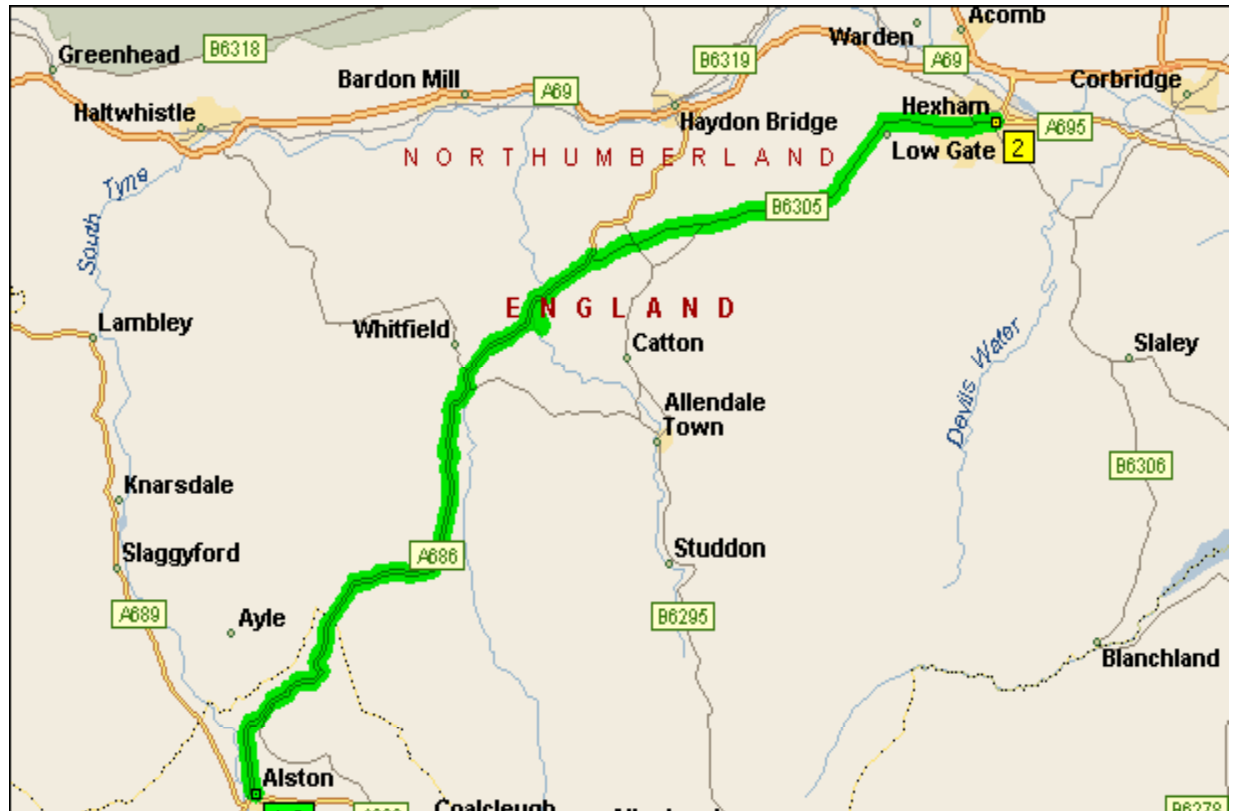
Analysis

This is a very favourable route. The number of miles per round trip is high, increasing the likelihood that businesses will be prepared to co-operate. The cost to organisations in terms of petrol, vehicle use, and time spent is also high. The number of organisations canvassed that regularly make the journey is also high; this increases the likelihood of a partnership being possible with little or no detouring. The number of monthly journeys is also high. This all point to a very viable route with lots of potential. A job of any future co-ordinator may be to look for duplication in terms of day travelled and final destination. For instance, if two organisations are going to the same cash and carry and are willing to change their practice just slightly, it may be that the journeys can be instantly amalgamated. Carlisle is the biggest of the nearest large towns, and may be an ideal spot for other organisations to start sending goods and services to.

One side effect of other businesses taking advantage of an existing partnership may be that they stop driving routes they do at the moment. For instance, if business C decides to start saving money but putting in a cash and carry order with businesses A and B along this route INSTEAD of driving to Hexham themselves, how will this affect the viability of the Hexham route?

Alston – Hexham - Alston

Distance: 43.4 miles



Number of organisations travelling this route: 2

Number of times per month route is travelled: 6

The route has medium potential as a possible CDS target. There are 6 trips per month with two organisations making journeys. The mileage along the route is high, and small detours along the route may be possible to take in towns such as Haydon Bridge or Allendale increasing the routes uptake and viability. There are only two organisations travelling the route at the moment, but it is also a route with an existing collaboration between Alston Wholefoods and The Moody Baker Co-op, as detailed in the first part of this report. It is likely this collaboration will expand in the near future as the Wholefood Shop plans to expand its range of locally produced items. There are few trips per month however, it is less likely to attract further businesses to seek out opportunities. It may make an idea route as a test run though, as it is already being used as a collaborative route, and the few number of organisations may work to the advantage of any future system by allowing us to learn from

running one route on a limited level before rolling out the system on a busier route.

Alston – Nenthead – Garrigill - Alston

Distance 11.3 miles



Number of organisations travelling this route: 5

Number of times per month route is travelled: 44

Analysis:

Local routes are a very important part of any rural economy. On Alston Moor this is highlighted by the recent closure of Nenthead Village Shop and Post office. This has left a gap, not just in economic terms, but also a large gap in the community infrastructure of the village. People are now forced to commute to Alston for many things they were previously able to get from their shop. Services in Garrigill are similar although the shop and post office is still open there are many times in the past when it has been threatened with closure. A Community Distribution System may have a part to play in stimulating the local economy by transferring goods between the three main villages on the Moor. Trips, as you can see, while being low in mileage, have a very high frequency. At this point, it is not the cost in fuel that is the businesses main concern, but the businesses ability to find to for deliveries

over such a small distance. Time becomes the limiting resource factor. The main advantage of this route being used is that the route is used every day by at LEAST one business from those surveyed.

Alston - Penrith – Alston

Distance: 41.5 miles



Number of organisations travelling this route: 6

Number of times per month route is travelled: 17

Assessment of route and journeys

This would be a favourable route for any CDS in the future to start businesses collaborating on. As well as 6 organisations making regular journeys to Penrith, the frequency of the trips is also high. With the Moody Baker about to start doing the regular weekly market at Penrith, this is likely to increase. The mileage is relatively high, and Penrith, being probably the most likely to attract tourists because of its proximity to the Lakes, may offer good opportunities for other businesses to trade goods there. It could be built into the role of any further co-ordinator to forge links between Alston businesses and those of neighbouring towns in order to try to reach capacity journeys, where delivery vehicles are full with produce or raw materials on both the way there and they way back. This may seem like a hard to reach target but progress could be made.

The table below shows some of the variables listed above. This table can be used as a basis of assessing routes. The table shows all organisations who were willing to join a future CDS and the most promising routes. Although this table only shows the most promising routes, others have been assessed later. Local trips are taken to mean anything transported from one part of Alston Moor to another.

Name of business	Local trips	Carlisle	Penrith	Totals
Everything & Nothing	2			2
The Moody Baker Ltd		5	1	6
Bunches and Baskets	4	1	4	9
The High Plaice				0
Pizza This Pizza That				0
Haldons of Alston	2	1		3
Alston Fruit and Veg	16		8	24
The Angel Inn		4		4
Hughes News	20		1	21
Cheers		8	1	9
Alston Wholefoods			2	2
Totals	44	19	17	

The most obvious choices for CDS routes are those with many organisations travelling along them, where the frequency of journeys is high, the cost and distance are also high. These factors lead to increased possibility of duplication and greater impetus for collaboration.

There are exceptions to this data. The movement of waste products from one area to another need not mean that there be duplicated routes or a high number of routes per month, due to some organisations not yet carrying out any recycling work. Similarly, trips to cash and carries may be able to be combined, with a little research, whether duplicated routes exist or not, as many cash and carries sell the same items. In such cases the concept of spare capacity in vehicles becomes more important than whether journey duplication is occurring.

How would such a scheme work?

Any CDS would need to be based around a system of maps so that members could map their own journeys, and also look at others in order to build collaboration. Its possible all of this can be achieved online, either through the use of a simple website, or, more likely, via an email group set up. This will depend on the I

Simple CDS

At its simplest level, a community distribution network would be a loose affiliation of local agreements between members. Co-ordination would be minimal and the reciprocation of agreements would be up to the members to administer. Co-ordination would consist of the drawing up and distribution of good collaborative routes to those businesses which travel them. Businesses could then contact each other in order to set up a combined journey. The advantages of this system would be little need for ongoing administration, and would also encourage businesses to communicate with each other more. Disadvantages might include the lack of time for businesses to collaborate in this way without any central administration, especially at the beginning, may mean the scheme failing soon after its implementation. It may also mean the scheme would not reach its full potential.

Complex CDS

On the other end of the scale, the CDS could become a full LETS trading scheme where members trade in routes, capacity, and time, in reciprocation of each other. A LETS systems can be defined as 'local, non-profit exchange networks in which goods and services can be traded without the need for printed currency.' (Wikipedia).

Obviously the services in question here would be journeys, capacity and/or time. It may be that a LETS system could run with only one of these variables being taken into account, but its more likely the scheme would survive best if credits were worked on a basis of at least two of these variables.

The easiest variables to quantify quickly would be journeys and time.

Journeys:

These would form credits by calculating miles covered. For example 1 credit could be awarded for each mile covered.

Time:

This would include any extra time required by the journeymaker in order to distribute the goods/services of the other business. Credit could be based on number of minutes, or a combination of minutes (for example one credit per 5 extra minutes) More work need to be carried out in this area to find out whether such a system would work.

New ways of Collaboration and further development.

There are many opportunities for collaboration on key issues affecting businesses and the movement of goods, services and wastes in and out of Alston Moor.

If we break down the CDS into the elements described in the initial report we can then map the most popular uses for the CDS. As the CDS is just starting, it will be important to make the workload manageable, concentrating on just two areas will mean we can ensure this happens and that we get good result these are tabled below.

Areas a CDS would be helpful with	Waste products	Raw Materials
Name of Business		
Everything & Nothing	x	
The Moody Baker Ltd	x	X
Bunches and Baskets		X
The High Plaice	x	
Pizza This Pizza That		X
Haldons of Alston		X
Alston Fruit and Veg	x	X
The Angel Inn	x	X
The Cumberland Hotel	x	X
Hughes News	x	X
Cheers	x	X
Alston Wholefoods	x	X

By concentrating the CDS on the areas of Waste Products and Raw Materials we get the following advantages.

1. From initial canvassing, it appears this is what businesses want.
2. Many of the existing collaborations already concentrate on one of these areas.
3. Waste products are easier to collaborate on, many peoples waste can be dropped off at ANY recycling centre.
4. This may also be true of Raw materials to come extent, as journeys to cash and carries for example may be able to be combined on the basis that many cash and carries offer the same goods.
5. These factors also allow journeys to be spread more easily around different businesses.

6. One point raised during our initial questionnaire was that some businesses may want to make trips themselves for other reasons, such as staying in face to face contact with their customers. Focussing on the above areas will minimise this factor.

There is a disadvantage to carrying waste products which we touched upon in the initial report. This is one of licensing. In order to carry peoples waste (including recyclable items) the business must have a Waste Carriers License. These cost £144, last for three years and are available from the Environment Agency. So far, it is unclear whether the CDS would need a separate licence for each vehicle involved, or whether we could form a consortium or voluntary organisation, which would give us blanket coverage to use whichever vehicle we choose. This may indeed be possible, it would seem the main reason for certification in this instance is adherence to a Duty of Care as laid down in the Environmental Protection Act of 1990.

Potential Collaborations are listed below:

WASTE PRODUCTS:

9 organisations from the ones that have been polled have expressed an interest in collaborating on journeys to recycle waste. The main items currently recycled are:

Glass (4 businesses)
Paper and Cardboard (5 businesses)
Plastics (4 businesses)
Organic Waste (5 businesses)

Glass: Currently there are four businesses making a total of roughly ten trips per month in order to recycle glass. Due to the popularity and relative longevity of recycling glass combining these trips should be relatively simple. From analysis the nearest recycling point is Haltwhistle but the one appearing on the most routes is Carlisle.

Potential Collaborations:

Businesses: Moody Baker-Hughes News-Angel Inn-Cheers

1. Moody Baker taking glass for all four organisations to Carlisle. This could be once a week.
2. Angel Inn taking glass to Haltwhistle once a week.

Both organisations have spare capacity for these trips. Where collaborations are listed in all these examples, businesses have considerable (more than 300 litres) spare capacity.

Paper & Cardboard: All 9 businesses who were interested in collaborating on waste recycling journeys said they would be interested in recycling their paper and cardboard. The nearest Recycling point may be Haltwhistle, although

there are also facilities on the road to Penrith, which may be more practical if one looks at the existing journeys.

Potential Collaborations:

Businesses: All

1. Bunches & Baskets and Alston Fruit and Veg sharing responsibility for the delivery of paper and cardboard to Penrith Community Recycling on behalf of all businesses. These two could take the trip in turns. Reciprocating could come in payments at standard mileage rate and/or credits for time and mileage in a more advanced CDS.

2. Moody Baker and Cheers sharing responsibility for delivery of waste to Carlisle.

Plastics: 5 businesses are interested in recycling more plastics. There are facilities near Carlisle and Penrith along existing weekly routes taken by the businesses surveyed.

Potential Collaborations:

Businesses: Moody Baker-Cheers-Alston Wholefoods-Cumberland-Angel

1. Angel taking plastics waste to Haltwhistle on behalf of all businesses. This would probably be available weekly, although it may be fortnightly due to capacity issues.
2. Cheers and Moody Baker taking plastics through to Carlisle weekly. Both organisations have spare capacity. The Cheers vehicle is entirely free for the journey there.

Organic Waste: 5 Organisations expressed an interest in recycling their organic waste. Currently there are no nearby community composting schemes being set up for businesses. Although only four organisations expressed an interest in this form of recycling, the main advantage of this is the potential for a quality end product which the CDS could then sell, possibly to fund other areas running at a deficit.

Some members of the Moody Baker have spoken about setting up a scheme like this in the past, and may be prepared to grant the use of land and/or materials. Cumbria County Council currently has a scheme running selling heavily subsidised organic waste bins.

Potential Collaborations:

Businesses: Moody Baker-Alston Fruit & Veg-Cumberland-Angel-The high Plaice

1. Hughes News and Alston Fruit and Veg taking responsibility for the delivery of organic waste to a local access point. This would be a good collaboration; both these organisations make many local trips.

2. The High Plaice have also said they would be prepared to journey locally on behalf of the CDS. They are also keen to recycle their organics waster, although they may have little to offer in the way of journeys, this would be an important 'feather' to add to their businesses cap, and in return may be prepared to make unreciprocated journeys.

I have estimated that collaboratively recycling in this way may save in the region of 100-150 road miles per month. While this figure will not be as high as those saved by collaborating on raw materials (please see next section) recycled waste could be expected to increase by between 30 to 60 percent.

RAW MATERIALS

10 businesses have agreed that there is potential for them to work together in order to develop collaborations to collect and deliver raw materials. This is an important step as work is already underway by some organisations working together in this area. These were discussed in the first report.

Cash and Carry journeys

Businesses: Cheers, Hughes News, Pizza This Pizza That, Cumberland, Angel.

I have found that the above businesses actually visit the same cash and carry company (Lowries), albeit some of them use different branches from others (there are branches in Hexham and Carlisle). This is a very good place for the CDS to start collaborations, if the businesses above are using the same cash and carry, it will be easier for them to collaborate to pick up raw materials for each other. There are currently about 15 journeys per month being made to these cash and carries. If we can just eliminate one of these journeys per week, we will be saving up to 230 miles journeyed per month. Its probable more can be achieved, being as both Cheers and Hughes News have spare capacity exceeding 300 litres. Cheers are also experienced in handling goods from other businesses as they have an informal agreement with the Crown Hotel.

Supermarket Journeys

Businesses: The Moody Baker, Hughes News, Angel, Cheers, Haldons.

These businesses run regular trips to Tescos in order to buy raw materials. Hughes News and the Moody Baker have a large amount of spare capacity for picking up other items. Little extra time would be needed, and no extra mileage would be added. Roughly 8 trips are currently made to both Hexham and Carlisle branches per month. If just two of these trips could be saved. Mileage covered by the consortium would decrease by roughly 120 miles per month.

Market Journeys

Businesses: Moody Baker, Bunches and Baskets, Haldons

Journeys to markets in order to sell goods or to pick up raw materials are currently underway by the above businesses. For the Moody Baker this is a large part of their work, and they already pick up raw materials for Alston Wholefoods and Cumberland Mustard. Obviously we cannot minus any journeys from those organisations going to markets in order to sell, however Bunches & Baskets go merely to pick up raw materials, allowing others to use their space capacity. The Moody Baker also has a very large amount of spare capacity when coming back from markets. This section rather than saving on journeys would improve efficiency by reducing spare capacity and possibly creating 'credit' for use in other areas of the CDS, which can be used to reduce, journeys. For example, The Moody Baker goes to market and picks up compost for Bunches and Baskets for sale in their shop. Bunches and Baskets reciprocate by taking cardboard and paper to be recycled from the Moody Baker, saving them a run to Eden Community Recycling.

The Next Steps

The next steps will include the circulation of the two reports (probably in condensed form) to all businesses questioned and interested in partaking. From then, it may be possible to have a meeting or series of meetings in order to discuss collaborations in detail. A series of meetings has the advantage of being able to separate the CDS into the distinct areas listed above and making sure the businesses who attend are going to find the meeting useful to them, without going over ground they do not wish to, or cannot cover.

Sources of funding need to be found in order to get the scheme off the ground. Our most likely sources may include Alston Community Chest, Parish, District, and County Councils, there are also more targeted grant giving bodies. A good example of these is the scheme run jointly by DEFRA and LA21 for collaborative recycling. Although the grant is only for £750 this would cover some initial start up costs such as those associated with licensing for the carriage of waste.