



## PRESS RELEASE

# Surf bus en-route for North Devon

**Thursday 25th November 2010:** North Devon surfers and cyclists are celebrating following the news that North Devon is to benefit from a surf bus next summer.

The downstairs of the double-decker bus will be converted to racking that is suitable for storing surf boards and bicycles. **Isabelle Bromham of North Devon+**, has been central to the successful bid for funds for the two year pilot. "The surf bus is great news for North Devon, it will get people out of cars and reduce traffic, make watersports more accessible to car and non car users, as well as help enhance the visitor experience in the area."

Extensive community consultation (see report on [www.northdevonplus.co.uk](http://www.northdevonplus.co.uk)) was undertaken to determine the viability of the project. 96% of survey respondents agreed that the area needed bus friendly transportation for watersports equipment. It also identified the need to include bikes as part of the scheme.

Substantial funding was granted through the Leader4 grant programme and supported by North Devon District Council, Transform of Ilfracombe, North Devon+ and the AONB, for a 2 year pilot scheme.

The Surf bus will run from April to October during 2011 and 2012. Daily timetables and the route are still being finalised, but will include Barnstaple, Ilfracombe and the main beaches in North Devon. "We are in the process of establishing a user group to help determine how the surf bus service will develop in the future. We appreciate that we might not get it right straight away, but we will work at it until we are delivering a service that works for residents and visitors alike." Says Isabelle.

**The Confederation of Passenger Transport's South West Regional Manager John Burch** said "This is a very interesting project. In these times when expenditure on bus services is

under extreme threat this is a welcome new initiative. In this case though, the project appears to combine a number of different possibilities. The service will continue to demonstrate the way in which buses can help towards a more sustainable future by taking cars off the already crowded coastal roads. It will also provide an opportunity for cyclists to cover more ground than they might otherwise have been able. We also note that it is intended to connect with the railway at Barnstaple, which demonstrates good integration. This will give operators a chance to bid for some work that may help to recover some of the ground lost as a result of rural bus retrenchment that seems an inevitable result of the spending cut backs all around us. We will look forward, with interest, to watching how this plan develops.”

North Devon+ will own the surf bus, and is going out to tender for a local operator to deliver the service. Early next year North Devon+ will be running a design competition with Petroc and Ilfracombe Arts College to design the graphics for the outside of the bus..

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### **About North Devon+**

North Devon+ is the destination management organisation responsible for promoting North Devon and Exmoor to the world. The organisation acts as a voice for tourism in North Devon and Exmoor and its aim is simple - to increase the number of visitors to North Devon and Exmoor by promoting the area as a year-round destination for business or leisure. North Devon+ is committed to growing the tourism sector sustainably, increasing the skills within the industry, and raising the quality of the visitor experience.