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Built Environment

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Local Strategic Partnerships, Transport & Accessibility  
Issues Paper (Final Version)

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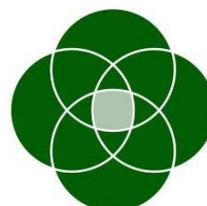
A Report to the  
Department for Transport

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NOTE The authors wish to thank Professor Murray Stewart of the Faculty of the Built Environment at the University of the West of England, Bristol for his valuable guidance throughout and his contribution to the case study work. Professor Stewart is deputy director of the national LSPs research programme. Grateful thanks are also due to the many individuals who gave their time and shared their experiences to make this report possible.

## Executive Summary

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In 2003 the Government's Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) published a report concerning the links between social exclusion and transport. Recommendations in the report have since been taken up and local transport authorities (LTAs) are now charged with responsibility for its key recommendation - accessibility planning, a formalised process to improve access to everyday facilities in local communities, especially for defined disadvantaged groups in society. LTAs will be expected to address this responsibility as part of their 2005 Local Transport Plans (LTPs). At the time of writing, the Department for Transport (DfT) is in the process of drawing up guidance for the preparation of the LTPs and this will include the approach for addressing the responsibility for accessibility planning. Accessibility planning extends beyond only issues of transport and therefore needs to draw upon a wider set of expertise, responsibilities and interests from a number of agencies.

The SEU suggested that one means to 'ensure effective joining up' would be through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). LSPs are voluntary bodies that draw together a range of public and private sector agencies with a common goal to address the interests of the local community. This report is the result of a piece of research carried out by the Centre for Transport & Society at the University of the West of England, Bristol, for the DfT and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). The aim of the research was to explore and make recommendations concerning the potential role of LSPs in addressing accessibility planning.

In order to obtain robust results the research involved the following three elements: (i) a review of existing research and information; (ii) a detailed study of ten selected LSPs and LTAs accompanied by a further six 'mini' case studies; and (iii) a stakeholders' seminar to discuss preliminary findings. Each of these elements has contributed to the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

In section 3 of the report the findings of the review of other relevant research are summarised. The national evaluation of LSPs, of which this research forms a part, has concluded that transport issues do not feature strongly in the work of LSPs, although transport in general, and certain aspects of accessibility, are widely seen as important but challenging issues. In the DfT's research on developing and piloting accessibility planning only one of the eight pilot projects has involved direct links with an LSP but the formation of new partnerships has played an important role during most of the pilots. The research acknowledged that there are pros and cons of a wide involvement of stakeholders. Initial work in the DfT's project to evaluate LTP policy has suggested that most LTA practitioners have not given serious consideration to the involvement of LSPs in the LTP process.

The main focus of the research addressed in this report has been a series of case studies of the development of LSPs, their approach to addressing transport issues and the relationship between LSPs and the corresponding LTAs. In section 4 the emergence and current status of LSPs is discussed. LSPs are still a relatively new type of community body and, in the absence of prescriptive guidance on their make-up and *modus operandi*, are evolving entities. Across England a wide range of types and sizes of LSPs exist, overlaying a range of differing local circumstances in relation to transport and access.

Accordingly, this report does not seek to proffer prescriptive recommendations. Rather, it has sought to acknowledge the diversity of situations. In section 5 it explores a series of twelve key issues with reference to the cases studies in which

differing current practices and associated benefits and limitations are discussed. The key issues discussed are:

1. the role of LSPs in building on existing mechanisms of LTA engagement with stakeholders;
2. the importance of the involvement of specialist (transport) local authority officers in the work of LSPs;
3. the resource implications of LTA staff involvement in LSPs in different types of administrative areas;
4. securing involvement of transport operators in LSPs;
5. the utilisation of transport and accessibility theme groups by LSPs;
6. the extent of consultation and integration of policy areas in community strategy development;
7. the extent to which performance management (objectives, priorities, actions, targets, monitoring) is built into community strategies;
8. the readability of community strategies;
9. the range of approaches proposed to address accessibility in community strategies and the recognition of cross-boundary requirements;
10. the appropriateness of transport proposals included in community strategies;
11. the development of linkages between LTA and LSP work on accessibility; and
12. opportunities for LSPs to provide added value to the accessibility planning process.

A series of ten recommendations is set out in section 6 aimed at addressing the key issues. These can be interpreted according to local circumstances by each LTA (and its associated LSPs). In summary, the recommendations are as follows:

1. While current LTA partnership arrangements may exist, LSPs represent a mechanism for potentially effective partnership working that can help rationalise the process of information gathering and consulting and engaging in discussion with multiple bodies.
2. If LSPs are to make an added-value contribution to accessibility planning then a clear, positive and timely commitment is needed by both the LTA and the LSP (and in turn other bodies that influence accessibility).
3. Accessibility should be an explicit linking theme between the LTP, community strategy and neighbourhood renewal strategy, and a common accessibility planning document should be included in all three strategy documents.
4. As the responsible authority for accessibility planning, the LTA should ensure that the LSP board is aware of the accessibility planning agenda and the benefits and responsibilities it brings to partners.
5. LSPs should explicitly address accessibility in their work but different models can be used for this purpose: (i) accessibility theme group; (ii) accessibility sub-group; or (iii) treating accessibility as a cross-cutting theme.
6. Those tasked with addressing accessibility on the LSP should critically appraise the factors governing accessibility, in which they should be guided by the LTA.
7. Those tasked with addressing accessibility on the LSP should draw upon and guide other exercises that the LTA is engaged in - notably the LTP consultation.

8. There is a need to ensure that LSPs in districts which lie within a sub-regional functional transport area adopt preferably joint, but at least consistent, approaches to improving accessibility, and appropriate LSPs should collaborate in this.
9. Both the LTA and LSP should work to ensure that any newly established working partnership arrangements stemming from recommendations 1-8 are maintained and further developed beyond completion of the 2005 LTP.
10. All documents related to accessibility planning should be written in a clear, readable way, avoiding jargon.

The report's recommendations are intended to inform the DfT guidance to LTAs on what role LSPs might have in accessibility planning and on how that role can be facilitated and supported.

One central observation must be highlighted. Success or otherwise in the relationship between LSPs and LTAs will depend upon their both acknowledging and responding to the issues and recommendations set out in this report. The relationship risks entering a vicious circle in which LTAs fail to engage fully with LSPs, resulting in community planning by LSPs that under- or mis-represents transport and accessibility issues and thus fails to address them effectively. This could further discourage LTAs' engagement with LSPs while exacerbating the challenges LTAs face in local transport delivery. Conversely, the report's guidance points to the opportunity for a virtuous circle whereby LTAs engage with LSPs in a way that shared expertise leads to more effective community planning and delivery responsibilities discharged to the LTA that can be actioned to achieve transport and access improvements. In this respect it should be recognised that while LTAs have been established in their present role for some years, the responsibility for them to carry out accessibility planning is new. Furthermore, LSPs are also relatively new and most of them continue to develop their methods of working. In consequence both the process of accessibility planning and the contribution of LSPs are likely to take time to develop.

## 1 Introduction

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### *Background*

1. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are intended to play an important role in the co-ordination of public services at a local level, focused through community strategies and local neighbourhood renewal strategies. Their broad aim concerns partnership working and 'joined-up thinking', and in consequence their coverage of policy areas is necessarily wide. Most LSPs are still in their formative stages: they are at different stages of maturity, and have as yet differing capacities to play a substantial co-ordination role. LSPs - especially in neighbourhood renewal areas - focus on the five key policy areas of worklessness, education, crime reduction, health and housing/environment; many have found transport a very difficult area in which to have an impact and achieve results.
2. The 1998 Integrated Transport White Paper<sup>1</sup> aimed to bring about comprehensive change in patterns of transport provision and use to meet the broad objective of sustainability. '*Improving access to everyday facilities for those without a car and reducing community severance*' was stated to be a key objective of the policy. However, concerns subsequently emerged that this objective was not being adequately addressed, and the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) undertook a thorough study into this.
3. The 2003 SEU report 'Making the Connections: Transport and Social Exclusion'<sup>2</sup> highlighted the problems some people have in accessing work, education, healthcare and other opportunities. It defined accessibility as '*can people get to key services at reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease?*'. The report examined the underlying causes and identified that 'the problem of inaccessible services and activities has arisen in part because no single public body has had overall responsibility for accessibility'.
4. The SEU report included a number of policy recommendations applicable across different government departments. The Department for Transport (DfT) was given overall responsibility for implementation, monitoring and longer term policy development and given specific responsibility to develop and implement accessibility planning, a formalised process for addressing access to be carried out by local transport authorities (LTAs). Accessibility planning will require both technical processes and partnership working with stakeholders in other policy areas.
5. In planning for improved accessibility for defined groups in society, LTAs will need to assess the accessibility problems affecting the area, audit the resources potentially available, bring forward solutions, in terms of action plans, and monitor progress. Many of these solutions will be through provision of

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<sup>1</sup> DETR (1998). *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone. The Government's White Paper on the Future of Transport*. Department of the Environment, Transport, and the Regions. TSO, London. July 1998.

<sup>2</sup> SEU (2003). *Making the Connections. Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion*. Social Exclusion Unit. February 2003.

appropriate transport services and facilities, and this is also the responsibility of LTAs. However, solutions are also possible through other processes - spatial planning and service delivery - responsibilities for which are in the hands of other agencies. Some of these agencies may be functions (such as school education) within local authorities which are also LTAs. Most of them will be other organisations, in the public, commercial and voluntary fields. The SEU report suggested that *'where appropriate, LSPs should provide a way of ensuring effective joining up. The partners from each sector will be responsible for taking forward the actions identified for them in the local accessibility action plan'*.

6. In principle the LSPs form a valuable and potentially single point of reference for co-ordination with those other agencies, to assess accessibility priorities and resources and to feed back in the opportunities for solving accessibility problems through means other than transport. Additionally, by bringing partners together on an issue, they should see the effects their activities have on the delivery of one another's services, and thus think in a more joined up way. Furthermore, many LSPs themselves work through similar processes to those of LTAs - community consultation, assessment of needs, audit of resources, action plans, monitoring - which parallel those to be undertaken for accessibility planning. There is, however, a fundamental difference in approach. LSPs are voluntary partnerships with no statutory obligations or powers in their own right and they are not delivery agencies. Their role is to agree a strategic framework within which delivery agencies can work, and thus they can assess and act only through the medium of the partners. Therefore, it is very important to fully understand how they do this, in order that recommendations may guide LTAs towards the most appropriate approach.

### *Aims, Objectives and Approach*

7. To inform the development of guidance on accessibility planning, due to be issued in the summer of 2004, the DfT, in liaison with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), commissioned the Centre for Transport & Society at the University of the West of England, Bristol, to consider the potential role of LSPs in its delivery. The research forms one component of the wider national evaluation of LSPs commissioned by ODPM and DfT.
8. The objectives of the research were to:
  - Identify cases where LSPs and LTAs are working together or have worked together to address transport and access issues, to identify how this has been made possible, including barriers and how they were overcome, and to identify how it can be extended to other locations.
  - Identify cases where LSPs and LTAs are not working together to address transport and access issues and to identify the barriers to partnership working.
  - Identify any other activities relating to transport and access being undertaken by English LSPs independent of LTAs and to assess whether such activities could be included as part of accessibility planning processes.
  - Identify the relationships between LSPs and LTAs and how LTAs can effectively engage with LSPs in delivering accessibility planning, with particular reference to institutional factors such as boundary differences and the existence (in England) of two levels of local authority.

- Identify the contribution that can be made by LSPs in the accessibility planning process.
- Develop an understanding of general levels of partnership working between English LSPs and LTAs on transport and access issues.

9. The research involved three main elements:

- a review of existing research and information;
- a detailed study of ten case studies of selected LSPs and LTAs and a more limited study of six 'mini' case studies; and
- a stakeholders seminar to discuss preliminary findings.

10. The report is organised as follows. An overview of the research methodology is provided in the next section. Section 3 summarises the findings of the review of other relevant research. Overall findings of the research are presented in sections 4 and 5, particularly drawing on the case studies. In section 4 the current status of LSPs is summarised, while section 5 identifies a series of key issues that need to be considered in assessing the role of LSPs in accessibility planning. Recommendations are put forward in section 6, which form the basis for LTP guidance on the role of LSPs in accessibility planning.

## 2 Research Methodology

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### *Other Research*

11. The first part of the research involved taking stock of other research projects in hand or recently completed which covered similar or complementary areas. This included the main LSPs research programme for ODPM (of which this study forms a part), DfT's accessibility planning research programme and the evaluation of DfT's LTP policy. The review of related research had the purposes of:
  - Providing the research team with a general appreciation of the field of investigation;
  - Providing insights to consider alongside the findings from the case studies; and
  - Providing information which could assist in the selection of case studies.
  
12. Meetings were held with members of the research team of related projects and examination made of relevant documentation. Meetings were also held with DfT and ODPM officers responsible for management of the research projects and responsible for policy development on LSPs, LTPs and social exclusion. Section 3 summarises the findings of the review of other relevant research.

### *Case Studies*

13. This research was principally case study based. Therefore selection of the case studies formed an important stage in the work. The objective for each case study was to include both the LSP and the LTA for each area selected. It was agreed with the client that the number of case studies should be 'about 10 to 12': sufficient to give a range of types and experiences but manageable within the resources for the project. It was appreciated that this number forms a very small proportion of the total, in a large and complex field where there is a great deal of activity but also many unknowns. This placed more emphasis on the need for making the selection in a disciplined and transparent fashion. The selection of case studies is described in Appendix 1. Section 4 reviews the overall findings of the research which is substantially based on the case studies.
  
14. A total of ten full case studies were carried out. Individual case study reports are included as Appendix 3. As the table in Appendix 1 shows, these formed a good spread in terms of type, geography and other characteristics. Some involved contacts with more than one authority in a two-tier area (district and county council, metropolitan borough and Passenger Transport Executive (PTE)). The selected case studies were as follows:
  - Blackburn with Darwen
  - Bristol
  - Broxbourne / East Hertfordshire / Hertfordshire
  - Easington / Durham
  - Eastleigh / Hampshire
  - Leeds / West Yorkshire
  - Malvern Hills / Worcestershire
  - Medway

- Southampton
  - Tameside / Greater Manchester
15. In addition to the main case studies, information on other areas with something to contribute was gathered as available from a mix of *ad hoc* information and contacts, telephone discussions, and references. A summary of the main points arising from these 'mini' case studies is included in Appendix 4.

### *Stakeholder Seminar*

16. After conducting the case studies, a one-day seminar, hosted by the DfT, was held on 5 April 2004 to present to stakeholders the initial findings of the research and to receive views and experiences which would assist in the development of recommendations and final report. Attendance at the seminar was organised through invitation only in order to ensure that participants represented a range of interests, including representatives of LSPs and LTAs, members of the Central Local Working Group on Accessibility Planning (CLWGAP) and representatives of relevant Government Departments and research teams. A total of 87 people were invited to the seminar including 19 representing LTAs, 18 representing LSPs and 17 representing CLWGAP. 33 people attended the seminar including 10 representing LTAs, 3 representing LSPs and 4 representing CLWGAP, together with Government Department officers, the research team, and members of other research teams.
17. At the seminar the research team presented the initial study findings, including a set of key issues and initial recommendations on LSPs and accessibility planning. Two parallel workshop sessions were held to explore views on the issues and recommendations, to identify omitted issues and to provide wider feedback. The seminar programme is included in Appendix 2.

### 3 Review of Other Research

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18. The findings of the review of other relevant research are summarised in this section. The projects which were reviewed included:
- The main LSPs research programme for ODPM (of which this study forms a part).
  - Pooling Resources across Sectors (report of a Health Development Agency led round table).
  - Accessibility Planning: Developing and Piloting Approaches, which is part of DfT's programme of research for developing accessibility planning. (This programme also includes development of an accessibility planning software model, development of methods of measuring public transport network coverage and evaluation of integrated and co-ordinated transport provision.)
  - Long Term Process and Impact Evaluation of DfT's LTP Policy.
  - The County Surveyors' Society (CSS) surveys of LSPs.
  - The Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO) survey of LSPs.
19. Some other bodies are known to be interested in the activities and role of LSPs related to transport but none appear yet to have instituted any research into the topic.
20. The reviews included discussion with one or more of the research team members for each project together with study of short reports and other material supplied. They are not intended to be in any way a thorough analysis and account of these research projects. (For a full understanding of their aims and work, reference should be made to the individual project reports.)

#### *The National Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships*

21. The national evaluation of LSPs, sponsored by ODPM and DfT and designed to support the development of local and central policy and practice, involves a number of strands: surveys of all English LSPs in 2002 and 2004; nine in-depth case studies between 2002 and 2005; a series of seven issue papers; eight action learning sets; nine regional dissemination networks; and a number of specific 'call-down' projects.
22. The Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies (LNRS) 'call-down' project noted that transport features both as a theme or sub-theme on its own but also as one that spans other policy areas. Strategies include a number of proposals for improving accessibility - of public transport in general, of links to schools, to complement community safety work, to improve access to job opportunities, to support policies for people with disabilities, and to counter exclusion in general. Thus, transport is clearly a recognised issue for many NRF LSPs but is addressed in different ways and to varying degrees of depth.
23. Within the case studies research the national evaluation Interim Report concluded that transport issues did not feature strongly. This seemed to sit oddly with the impression gained from most case studies that transport in general, and certain aspects of accessibility, are widely seen as the most challenging issues confronting localities. It seemed possible, therefore, that a

larger number of LSPs would follow the example of those for whom a concern for accessibility/transport issues had resulted in structural and in some instances substantive innovation, and indeed the findings from the research reported in this confirm that the issue is becoming more visible. From the information collected in the case studies there emerged a number of questions for further work:

- Scale - the appropriate level at which to handle transport issues and the appropriate LSPs or other bodies which might address these issues. This raised specific questions about two tier working and the relationship of district concerns about accessibility, congestion, buses, town-centres, etc. to the broader concerns at county or sub-regional/regional levels.
- Boundaries - a related question was that of boundaries and the handling of cross-boundary issues, especially where these are cross sub-regional or cross-regional boundaries. Lack of co-terminosity exacerbates these issues.
- Complexity - the sector was characterised by multiple actors often with competing interests - competing providers and regulators, user bodies, public and private sector interests and so on. It is difficult to reflect that complexity clearly and with any simplicity within LSP arrangements.
- Representation - the complexity problem invited questions about who should be a member of an LSP and who they should attempt to represent.
- Planning - it was not clear where major planning and investment issues lie insofar as they may be regional, sub-regional, PTE, county or district, and what are the processes and protocols for discussion between LSPs.
- Competing interests - there was a tension between economic goals (of business or of those interests wanting to stimulate activity e.g. tourism) and environmental /sustainability interests.
- Cross-cutting issues - there was little discussion as yet in LSPs of health or education linkages to transport issues.
- Funding - it was argued that there is little flexibility in transport funding so that the possibilities of joint programmes/projects and pooling of budgets is limited and that this weakens the links between transport and other sectors.

24. The Interim Report of the project as a whole comments on a wide range of organisational and substantive matters - membership, structures, leadership, engagement of partners, commitment. It recognises that few LSPs have as yet fully developed working methods to address all the issues that might confront them. It points to the emergence of partnership overload, recommending that government needs to consider carefully which tasks it wishes to allocate to LSPs and which to local authorities or other agencies. The national evaluation - to which this issues paper represents a major input - continues until March 2005, with a final report pulling together all findings from surveys, case studies and issues papers.

### *Pooling Resources across Sectors*

25. Using resources in a more flexible way across LSPs is at the heart of improving public services and the wellbeing of local communities. LSPs are now exploring how best to use these flexibilities and funds. A new report<sup>3</sup> produced by the Health Development Agency (HDA) on behalf of a national roundtable including

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<sup>3</sup> HDA (2004). *Pooling Resources across Sectors: A Report for Local Strategic Partnerships*. Health Development Agency, London.

the Department of Health, ODPM, Regional Co-ordination Unit, Local Government Association and the Improvement and Development Agency provides a framework for developing the more flexible use of resources across partnerships, together with a summary of the main government flexibilities and funds that can be used across sectors and case studies of progress being made by a range of LSPs across the country. In relation to transport the report comments:

- DfT actively encourages the involvement of other sectors in local transport planning and requires local authorities to consult widely in the development of their LTPs. LTAs have discretion to use capital allocations made through the LTP process for jointly funded investment in local transport schemes with other partners.
- There are a number of individual funding streams for transport initiatives such as the Urban and Rural Bus Challenge Funds, Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and speed camera partnership funds that can be used in partnership with other sectors.
- The Bus Challenge Funds are awarded to local authorities to implement innovative schemes to improve bus services and to support the broader transport objectives of improving access to services and facilities. In using the funds, authorities are encouraged to work collaboratively with commercial and community transport providers. The Urban Bus Challenge Fund has a particular focus on urban areas of economic or social deprivation.
- There are also parish transport grants and rural transport partnership grants to support the development of local services in rural areas, through local partnerships.
- Pilots have been set up to improve road safety in disadvantaged areas. Eligible local authorities are encouraged to work in partnership with others (such as the health, education, social services, neighbourhood renewal and crime reduction sectors). Additional funding has been provided which can be used with mainstream funds and Neighbourhood Renewal Funds.

### *Accessibility Planning: Developing and Piloting Approaches*

26. This project was commissioned by DfT from a consortium of the University of Westminster, Derek Halden Consultancy, CAG Consultants, Transport and Travel Research Ltd and the TAS Partnership, with supporting advisers. It was let in June 2003, the final report being presented in April 2004. The main aim of the project was to develop and pilot approaches to accessibility planning that are transferable, or adaptable, to different geographical areas. This was to inform DfT guidance to LTAs on accessibility planning relating to the preparation and implementation of the second round of LTPs.
27. Seven research objectives were identified, covering datasets for analysis, approaches and techniques that would enable local authorities to identify groups and areas experiencing problems accessing key local services, identification of existing and potential resources, and development and agreement of an accessibility action plan. In addition, the project was intended *'to develop and recommend ways to improve and promote co-ordination and partnership working between local service providers'*. The overall aim was to identify lessons learnt, potential barriers to implementation and examples of good practice to inform DfT's future guidance.

28. The work centred on research and development in eight pilot areas. These included:
  - access to work (Nottinghamshire and South Tyneside);
  - access to learning (Devon and Greater Manchester);
  - access to health care (Lincolnshire and Merseyside); and
  - access to food shops (Wiltshire and Merseyside).
29. In each case, one rural and one urban pilot were selected for each theme.
30. The research covered six main stages:
  - Inception
  - Forming the Pilots
  - Accessibility Assessment
  - Resource Audit
  - Develop Accessibility Action Plan
  - Recommendations on accessibility planning and best practice
31. Involvement of stakeholders was one of the main tasks for the pilot projects to date. A steering group of core partners was formed in each of the pilots. In some cases, the steering group involved a fairly wide range of potential partners, in others it was fairly narrow but with the aim of seeking broader involvement of stakeholders at particular points in the process. Different types of partners were included for each theme; the local authority (transport) or PTE was common to all of them, but the rest varied widely according to the theme. Only one of the pilot projects involved direct links with an LSP. The Nottinghamshire Access to Work pilot worked with the transport sub-group of the Bassetlaw LSP, exploring the scope for accessibility planning to be integrated with the LSP's on-going delivery programme; this link arose because of the early identification of Bassetlaw as the geographical focus for this pilot.
32. Issues about stakeholder involvement, and especially the role of LSPs, raised by the project included:
  - There were pros and cons to the different approaches: wide stakeholder involvement in a steering group versus a narrow 'project working group' which could reach out to stakeholders at a later stage.
  - Partners tended to be more involved when accessibility planning fitted well with their own policy agendas. At the same time it was difficult to get some partners to set clear priorities within their own field.
  - The SEU recommendation on accessibility planning did not envisage the creation of new partnerships, but most of the project's pilots were found to require this to some degree. Other than Bassetlaw, district-level LSPs were not central to early stages of the project, partly because the early stages were not geographically-focused.
  - There might be potential for local LSPs to get more involved at the action planning stage; at district/borough level, accessibility planning should be more relevant to particular LSPs.
  - Stakeholders tended mostly to remain protective about their budgets. For this reason, it was difficult to fully cover resource audits. Tighter control over budgets can form a serious constraint to achieving actions. In LTAs

control over budgets tends to be in the hands of the main professional groups.

- Neighbourhood renewal and community planning groups have good community development skills: these need to be used to guide accessibility planning and transport plans rather than have these led by transport people.

### *The Long Term Process and Impact Evaluation of DfT's LTP Policy*

33. This project was commissioned by DfT from Atkins Transport Planning, and runs from September 2003 to September 2006. The project's main aims are to prepare an objective, robust identification, assessment and understanding of:
  - The extent to which the application by LTAs of the LTP framework has met original and evolving policy aims and objectives, as well as having any wider impacts.
  - The related lessons and recommendations about what approaches and processes are most effective where, why, when, how and for whom, to assist and inform local delivery as well as ongoing national policy development and guidance.
34. The two main research objectives, in brief, are:
  - To assess and understand the ongoing approaches and processes in the implementation and delivery of the LTP framework, to assist and inform local delivery as well as on-going national policy development and guidance.
  - Drawing on the ongoing process evaluation of LTPs (Objective 1), to produce a thorough ongoing and final assessment of the local and collective impacts of the LTP framework.
35. The research focuses on several key issues, including the LTPs guidance and monitoring, local authorities' transport policies, joint working with other bodies, freedoms and flexibilities, local authority resources, finance and delivery. It also requires a focus on the contribution of LTPs to national policy aims and to wider objectives, including regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion; these are seen as very important.
36. It follows a previous (Part 1) research study into LTPs, carried out between January 2002 and March 2003 (also by Atkins). This looked at eight main themes, including partnership and consultation. Among the overall conclusions of the Part 1 Study were the following related to process and partnership:
  - The introduction of LTPs has been strongly supported by local authorities in England as a step forward from the previous TPP process; the strengths are seen as outweighing the weaknesses.
  - Where weaknesses are identified, these relate to how the process is administered and financed rather than fundamentally related to the principles of the process itself. Whilst authorities are making progress with LTP programmes, there is increasing realism over the challenges of delivery relative to high expectations when LTPs were first introduced.

- Performance of the first LTPs against the Department's LTP Guidance is mixed and reflects wider issues of organisational capacity and political leadership. Staff and skills shortages are major barriers to LTP development and delivery for almost all authorities.
  - Solutions to many of the challenges may lie outside the scope of the LTP process itself.
37. The current study is looking closely at what is being delivered within a number of case studies, taking into account how LTPs match up against the 10-year PSA targets. It reflects the current agendas of modernising local government and moving towards regionalisation: should LTPs be geared to achieving government agendas, in some form of contract, or should they have freedom and flexibility? LSPs feature in two respects:
- as a basis for consultation and partnership.
  - as a vehicle for integrating key stakeholders' activities.
38. Feedback from initial work has suggested that most LTA practitioners either have not considered the role of LSPs or look upon them as a separate and remote activity. This may reflect either cynicism or lack of awareness.

### *The CSS Surveys of LSPs*

39. In autumn 2002 the SPARC Committee of the County Surveyors Society carried out a survey into LSPs and the development of community strategies. A request was sent to all CSS member authorities, seeking information on the existence of LSPs, at county and district level in two-tier authorities, and on the main themes in county community strategies. Responses were received from 13 English county councils, and a report was made to the Committee. In January 2004 a follow-up survey was carried out, drawing responses from 12 county councils and one metropolitan district council (largely the same group as for 2002), and reported to the Committee in March 2004. Both reports compiled the information into tables; they did not provide any qualitative analysis.
40. The second survey focused on the extent to which community strategies were developing in practice. The main findings were:
- Community strategy in place? ('yes' - 7, 'not yet' - 5, 'no' (not intended) - 1)
  - Action plan prepared? ('yes' - 4, 'in preparation' - 3, 'not yet/not applicable' - 6)
  - Monitoring in place? ('yes' - 3, 'in preparation' - 3, 'not yet/not applicable' - 7)

41. Themes specifically identified were the following:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Number</u>
Economy	13
Environment/quality of life	13
Health	11
Safety	11
Learning	10
Culture/leisure	8
Housing/communities	7
Inclusion	7
Transport	6
Young people	4
Older people	3

42. The total membership of CSS is 88, thus the return was relatively small. This is not intended as a comment on CSS membership as a whole (from whom the CTS research team gained a very high return on a previous research project) but rather a possible indicator of the relatively low significance allocated to LSPs in relation to the other main areas of responsibility.

### *The ATCO Survey of LSPs*

43. In January 2004 the Association of Transport Coordinating Officers (ATCO) circulated a request for information and issues from members concerning liaison with LSPs. Six responses were received. Of these three reported very briefly on some development of links with LSPs over transport. A fourth reported on a rural community bus for which funding was obtained after the (rural district) LSP identified rural transport as an issue; it also identified the operating problems subsequently encountered, largely because most of the potential routes identified were already covered by existing conventional buses. The other two responses (from Brighton & Hove and from Devon Rural Transport Partnership) are included as 'mini' case studies in Appendix 3 of this report. Given ATCO's substantial membership among senior officers responsible for public and community transport throughout British LTAs, the small level of response may again indicate very low understanding of, or interest in, LSPs.

## 4 Emergence of Local Strategic Partnerships

44. Broad findings on the current status and work of LSPs are summarised in this section. This draws upon the findings of the national evaluation of LSPs as well as the case studies investigated in this research.
45. The context for relationships between LSPs and LTAs is illustrated in Figure 1. It shows that a key requirement for LTAs is to produce the Local Transport Plan and for LSPs is to produce the Community Strategy. LSPs in the 88 most deprived local authorities in England have a duty to produce Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies (in order to access Neighbourhood Renewal Funding). LTP guidance requires LTPs to be developed with due regard for the relevant Community Strategy / Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

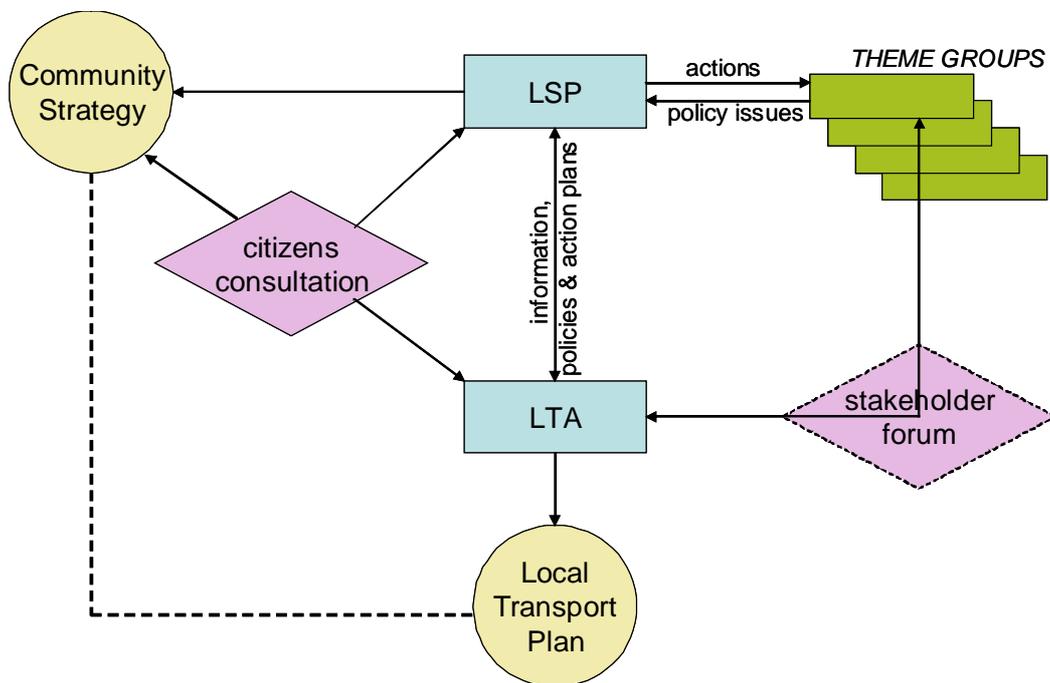


Figure 1: Illustrative representation of context for relationships between LSPs and LTAs

### The Role of Existing Partnerships

46. The current LSPs reflect the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000 which places a community leadership role on local authorities, together with guidance on the establishment of LSPs. The guidance indicated the importance of building upon any existing partnerships in establishing LSPs. Whilst most LSPs were created as new bodies, they did incorporate previously existing partnerships where available, often as sub-partnerships or theme groups. Where such groups exist, they have usually added momentum to the development and activities of LSPs.
47. Before the establishment of LSPs, partnerships had developed for various reasons. For example, working links between local authorities and health

authorities have been common over many years. These have often been geared to optimise the working of social services and local health professionals, to the benefit of both bodies' resource efficiency and of services to clients within the authorities' areas. Pre-LSP partnerships between local authorities, other public bodies and business interests have also developed. Some of these have been based around regeneration, especially related to the acquisition and use of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). New Commitment to Regeneration pathfinders were a model for the LSP in a number of areas. Regeneration based LSPs, now holding neighbourhood renewal responsibilities have appeared across most types of local authority where poor economic, social and physical conditions have warranted it (Easington and Tameside are examples in this study). Others have additionally been aimed at establishing a strategic common voice for the city or area (e.g. Leeds). These have tended to be found more in the main urban areas, and especially reflect common aims between business and public bodies to promote the interests of their cities. In many areas, however, LSPs have been created largely from scratch. This is more particularly the case for county and district councils in two-tier areas in England.

48. LSPs are still, in relative terms, very new bodies. This, coupled with the lack of a specific blueprint for their establishment, structure and activities, means that they are only at an early stage in what will be an evolutionary process. Many are now only beginning to move into the process of developing and implementing action plans. It is clear that the current situation is one of considerable fluidity. This even applies to those LSPs that were established on the basis of past working relationships and have longer experience of partnership working.
49. In addition to the LSPs, many other forms of partnership exist (e.g. Community Safety, Transport, Children and Young People, Early Years, Local Agenda 21, Learning). These range from substantial organisations, often funded by Government grant, to links between two bodies at the local level over particular initiatives. Some of these partnerships were in existence before LSPs formed and some have been created as separate organisations through the work of the LSPs. Many of them enjoy close working links with LSPs and they are often sub-partnerships or theme groups of the LSP.
50. Particular rules apply to LSPs with access to Neighbourhood Renewal Funding; notably the need for performance management frameworks and accreditation against them. In spite of this stronger formal guidance (which is likely to gradually encompass the remaining non-NRF LSPs) NRF LSPs show many of the same varieties of form and basis as for other LSPs.

### *Structure of LSPs*

51. Government guidance on LSPs laid down broad principles for their creation rather than specific requirements, and in consequence different models have evolved. In principle LSPs operate through some combination of:
  - Board (the formal body to which partners sign up);
  - Executive (officers fulfilling decisions of the LSP);
  - Theme Groups taking forward either particular service area themes (health community safety, learning, for example) or cross-cutting themes such as inclusion, sustainability or young people;

- Task Groups (charged with specific functions to support the LSP); and
  - Neighbourhood or Community Forums (which draw together teams of community development workers/neighbourhood officers and/or local community organisations and resident groups).
52. In practice LSPs vary widely in their structure and in the interests represented on them. There are some common features but also notable differences. A few common features can be identified.
- There is almost invariably a single central partnership body: board/committee. This has a membership likely to be between 15 and 30. The names applied to the central body vary widely. (Further references in this report to the central body use the term 'board' for convenience.)
  - Most LSPs are in practice heavily influenced and supported by the local authority for the area, although an increasing number of LSPs now have their own executive or staff. Thus the local authority invariably is represented on the board. Very often it has more than one representative and also holds the chair. Most are largely resourced by the local authority (perhaps a secondment); though a few (e.g. Medway) do have their costs met by two or three partners.
  - Most LSPs include representatives from health interests and from the police force. Often also present are business, voluntary and community sectors, some other non-departmental public bodies (e.g. Environment Agency), or other stakeholders (e.g. higher/further education bodies).
53. Total membership varies widely. For some LSPs the numbers of recognised members are small and all are on the board. In other cases the numbers are very large, with only a small proportion on the board; the other bodies may be on theme groups but otherwise have a primarily consultee position (e.g. Hertfordshire). A lot of LSPs also have a wider circle of 'satellite' bodies with whom they liaise, and who are involved in some ways in their activities (e.g. Leeds). These may also contribute to partnership working over particular actions or initiatives.
54. Business, environmental and community interests are represented on LSPs but often the representation is not even. For some LSPs, more especially in city and other urban areas, business interests have a strong voice and play an active part (e.g. Leeds). In others, notably in less urbanised two-tier authorities in England, environmental interests play a rather more dominant role (e.g. East Hertfordshire, Malvern Hills). Community interests can be dominant in urban LSPs and are generally weaker in rural areas.

### *LSPs and Local Authorities*

55. Central to the LSPs' working is the role of the local authority. The LSPs are, in principle, free standing organisations responsible to the community at large, and their strategy is owned by the community (including public agencies, commercial bodies and voluntary bodies). In practice they are often steered by the local authority, with local authority members and directors holding a number of seats on the board and providing the chair. They are mostly resourced by local authority funds, or at least by grant funds obtained under the leadership of the local authority. Local authority members tend to play a leadership role on the board and some of the theme groups. Local authorities

hold much of the funding and policy levers needed to tackle many of the issues raised by LSPs. They also have staff expertise in most of the relevant fields of action. In consequence local authorities retain a pivotal role on LSPs in practice.

56. An added dimension exists in English two-tier areas. These include the 'shire' county council areas, and also the few large metropolitan areas, where the Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) and its managing Executive (PTE) have a major role in passenger transport provision and in transport planning generally. There are always LSPs at the district council levels, and these have the same broad relationship with their district council. However, there are usually LSPs at shire county level (e.g. Hertfordshire, County Durham), and also for the PTE area (e.g. Greater Manchester).
57. LSPs are intended to reflect the community view and therefore the county/PTA level LSPs do not usually assume any hierarchical relationship with the district level LSPs. Instead they tend to leave the local LSPs to develop issues and priorities related to their interests and views, while they themselves concentrate on matters which are of county-wide interest, such as county infrastructure and environment. In this approach, links between the two levels remain important: county/PTA level LSPs usually include representatives from all district level LSPs on their board.

## 5 Review of Findings and Issues

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58. This review looks for patterns which may explain activities and potential of the LSPs in assessing and improving accessibility, especially the relationship with LTAs. It is based primarily on the case studies (set out in detail in Appendix 3) but also draws in the findings from other research, notably the National Evaluation of LSPs. There was no real contradiction between these, indeed the case studies and the other studies revealed very similar issues and patterns. In doing so, contrasts are sometimes made between two (or sometimes more) different types of LSP or patterns of LSP activity and different types of LTA. These contrasts are valuable for understanding the problems and opportunities posed for LTAs and LSPs in working together over accessibility planning and other transport matters. However, it should be noted that such contrasts sometimes reflect two ends of a range of circumstance, rather than distinctively different circumstance.
59. It follows that guidance on how LTAs might best engage LSPs in accessibility planning should look to both organisations working together to develop the best understanding of those issues and opportunities which can be realistically addressed within the current local circumstances. This has to accept that the scope for LSPs contributing actively will vary; in particular the LTA in a two-tier area may well find different potential in different district LSPs. Suggesting prescriptive and abrupt change to the approach of LSPs to accessibility is likely to prove counter productive to the effective development of LSPs and to the success of partnership in accessibility planning.

### *Issue 1 LTAs and Transport Partnerships*

60. Requirements for the Local Transport Plan (LTP), set out in the Transport Act 2000 and in the various guidance notes issued by the DfT, lay considerable emphasis on effective consultation with stakeholders and with the community at large. Almost all LTAs have created one or more panels for consultation and stakeholder reference (some of which may even pre-date the LTP process). They have usually involved a range of user groups, transport providers, business and community bodies, and other public agencies. Some have tended to exist on an *ad hoc* basis, enabling consultation to be carried out but not otherwise having a distinctive function.
61. These forums have often created a useful basis for co-operative planning and action, especially between LTAs and public transport providers. Their nature often bears a close resemblance to partnerships, and in some cases they have been specifically designated as a partnership. Where such partnerships existed, they have sometimes been incorporated into LSPs when these were founded, usually as a transport theme group. In one or two cases they may have been the main basis for an LSP.

*Box 1.1*

**Medway Council** established the Medway Transport Partnership (MTP) to act as the prime focus for stakeholder engagement in preparing for its first LTP. Its members include representatives of transport providers, transport users' and community groups, business interests, and Medway Council (members and officers), and it is administered by the Council's Integrated Transport Unit. When the **Medway LSP** was set up, MTP became its transport theme group, thus providing a direct link between the LSP, community planning, and the Council's transport policies and action through the LTP.

In the **Leeds Initiative** (the LSP for Leeds), the theme group for transport policy and action is the Integrated Transport Partnership (ITP). This has three dozen members, drawn from education, health, business, environmental groups, the City Council, the PTE and transport providers. It has an independent chairman. **West Yorkshire PTE** is represented by its Director General. The ITP meets about 3 or 4 times a year, with some flexibility; it may deal with matters through email communications at any time.

The Southampton Transport Forum was established shortly after the **Southampton Partnership** (LSP) formed in January 2002 to represent the transport and infrastructure sector. A member of the Transport Forum sits on the LSP Board. Transport officers from the city council attend the Transport Forum and are able to ensure that the Forum is well informed about LTP plans and policies. The Transport Forum (and Southampton Partnership) is considered to be an important new medium for consultation in the LTP development process.

**Durham County Council** had developed a LTP Partnership Forum as part of its work on the first LTP and the APRs. This remains in existence, but now also forms the transport theme group for the County Partnership. It will play an important role in the new LTP, for which workshops are already being held. The district LSPs will be consulted as part of this process.

In **Hampshire** joint working takes place between the county council and district councils and neighbouring unitary authorities through Joint Member Panels for the ten Area Transport Strategies which cover the county. These Local Area Transport Panels invite up to three members of the LSP to act as representatives and ensure effective communication takes place.

⇒ *Recommendations 1, 7*

## Issue 2 *LSP Administration and Officer Involvement*

62. LSPs are administered by an executive. The form of the executive varies widely, according to type of LSP and local authority area. Main features are:
- The level of staffing ranges from one person (or one person equivalent) for LSPs in small local authority areas (especially district councils in English two-tier areas) up to around ten for the largest. On average, across this wide range, NRF areas tend to have twice the level of administrative resources as non-NRF areas.
  - For some of the larger LSPs, especially in urban and NRF areas, the LSP administration is separate. However, even here it is likely to be closely associated with the local authority; e.g. use of the local authority's common services and location in accommodation owned by the local authority. In most other LSPs the officers responsible for LSP administration form part of the local authority staff. Usually they are located in the chief executive's or corporate strategy department; they may also be part of a division located in the environment (or equivalent) department responsible for management of economic and social policy areas.
  - Generally the formal responsibility for the LSP's work in local authorities lies with a senior management officer, such as assistant chief executive or director of corporate strategy. The practical administration of policy development, partnership working and policy implementation is in the hands of professional staff.

### Box 2.1

In **Blackburn with Darwen** overall management of LSP matters is in the hands of the Council's Executive Director for Corporate Resources. Sub Groups of the LSP have been established to develop and deliver seven Community Strategy themes. Most of the Sub Group chairmen are members or senior managers of the Borough Council, and all of the lead officers responsible for Sub Group management are Council officers from relevant divisions.

The **Leeds Initiative** has a separate administrative team, located in their own premises. However, the Initiative's costs are met mostly by the City Council, which also provides various central services.

In **Durham** the county LSP is directed by the Deputy Chief Executive (Policy) and managed by the Head of Corporate Policy. The **East Durham LSP** is managed by **Easington DC's** Regeneration & Partnerships Team, reflecting the emphasis on regeneration in this district.

In **Hertfordshire** the county LSP is managed by the Assistant Director Strategy in the Environment Department, who also has a dual role as Assistant Chief Executive. **East Hertfordshire DC** has a community planning officer responsible for managing their LSP.

63. Clearly the LSPs' work is one of many strands of activity for the local authority; it is also generally a relatively new one. The officers managing it are fully *au fait* with the aims, process and progress, and generally seek to promote effective understanding and consultation throughout the authority. However, given that the local authority is likely to remain a major player in most aspects of implementing the LSP's community strategy, it is vital that they maintain a

close working relationship with officers in the key local authority functions, as well as other agencies. Most see this as an important part of their work, but the approach varies. Often officers from other functions will be advised of the LSP's work, and consulted on areas relevant to their responsibilities, but they may not be so directly involved. The involvement of such officers, including those in transport functions, varies: some only see the community strategy as another policy line they have to note; some may work to support a theme group related to their function and expertise. In some cases authorities are specifically involving other professionals as managers of the relevant theme group; this is particularly so where the theme group was established before the LSP was set up (e.g. Medway, Leeds - see Box 1.1). All officers, in determining their approaches, need to judge the extent to which they, and any assistants or colleagues, should give priority to the LSP's work.

⇒ *Recommendation 1*

### *Issue 3 Are LSPs a Challenge to LTA Officers?*

64. Given the pressure on local authorities' staffing, and the need to produce effective results in all fields, there is a strong tendency for many officers to concentrate on their own projects and programmes, in line with the decisions of the authority's cabinet and council. Thus new or additional areas of work may, through necessity, receive less attention. In addition, experienced officers may see proposals for change emanating from outside their function as a challenge to their expertise and even to their commitment to their employer. If they are directly engaged in the theme groups, especially where the theme groups do prove successful in enabling more effective delivery of particular functions, then their view is more likely to be positive.
65. For the most part the LSP can only add significantly to the performance of an existing function if (a) those responsible for the function are not delivering it effectively at present with available tools and the engagement of suitable bodies; and/or (b) the LSP or its theme group provide significant new insights and opportunities. The extent to which this is happening at present remains unclear. Proposals coming forward from initial thinking by LSPs can lie outside the mainstream of the LTP's transport policies or can be ideas previously considered and rejected by the LTA for good reason. This situation may result in a vicious circle: transport professionals become more certain that LSPs have nothing to offer and thus provide less inputs; this means that the LSP is less well advised than it might have been, and thus continues to produce ineffective proposals, thus further weakening its links with transport professionals and failing to achieve added value.
66. However, it must be stressed that responsibility for the vicious circle depicted here does not lie with the LSP alone. The LTA has responsibilities for ensuring that other bodies have an effective awareness of transport's role in accessibility of facilities and services. To instead create a virtuous circle between the LTA and LSP requires that a two-way relationship exists. By positively engaging with the LSP, the LTA will be in a position to advise community strategy development and neighbourhood renewal strategy development yielding outcome proposals for it to address that hold greater prospect of being effective. (The same applies to professionals in other functions besides transport.)

67. In most LTAs there are three broad categories of staff: transport policy and planning; highways management and development; public transport. Within this, transport policy and planning staff, who are responsible for the LTP management, are more likely to be closer to LSPs and community planning work, because their role involves taking stock of policy issues and of relevant information sources in fields other than transport alone. Members of staff involved with implementation - highways management and public transport - are primarily concerned with implementing the policies within the LTP, and are at a further distance from LSPs' administration. In consequence the risk exists that there will not be effective two-way links between the LSPs' work and the practical aspects of transport planning.
68. A further complication arises for district level LSPs in two-tier English local authority areas. Here the administrator for the district council LSP usually liaises with their equivalent for the county LSP. This may well mean that other county staff, including those responsible for transport, are at a further stage removed from the district LSPs. English district councils have hardly any specific transport responsibilities; most joint highways agency agreements with district councils have been withdrawn, being transferred to term contractors, and public transport involvement is limited to concessionary fares and some projects. Some district council officers work closely with their county colleagues over local transport matters.

*Box 3.1*

In Hampshire the Cabinet member for community development and regeneration chairs the Hampshire Strategic Partnership and is a member of, and often attends, all eleven Hampshire district LSPs. An elaborate and well-resourced machinery for two-tier collaboration has developed to support links with district LSPs and Community Strategies, comprising elected members (normally two/three per district), a corporate lead officer and support officer, specialist officers available to offer advice in area of expertise (four available for transport) and community safety link officers. The county has established a Community Strategy grants budget to support collaborative work.

In Worcestershire responsibility for managing the LSPs at County Council level lies within the Chief Executive's department, led by a team of three, who liaise closely with district council Community Strategy officers. An additional post (partnership co-ordinator) has been set up to link parish plans in with the County and district Community Strategies. The County Council aims for a free flowing relationship between community planning at all three levels. This is reflected in the close working relationships over the LTP development and implementation between the transport strategy unit and district council officers.

69. However, in some places a divide remains. In consequence, district LSPs may ignore transport or develop unrealistic aspirations, further widening the gap between county council transport officers and district level LSP priorities. This can be a serious problem, as the district level LSP is in principle the body reflecting the local community view.

70. This does not happen everywhere. There are some valuable counterpoints, especially within urban areas. Two main ones may be identified:
- Within the PTA areas the PTE management are strongly involved with the LSPs serving the various metropolitan district areas. In some cases this means PTE directors serving on the LSP (e.g. Leeds Initiative and West Yorkshire PTE - see Box 1.1). In consequence, their officers are kept closely in touch with the community strategy, especially the transport aspects, and thus are able to act effectively in partnership with officers and managers from other services.
  - In some urban areas administered by a unitary authority, there is a more co-ordinated management approach. This often involves more compact areas served by rather smaller teams of officers. In consequence there is closer liaison between the officers of various functions, including transport officers (e.g. Medway - see Box 3.2).

*Box 3.2*

The Medway Transport Partnership (MTP) acts as the transport theme group of the Medway LSP. The MTP brings together the main bodies with transport interests, including community representatives, and those responsible for both planning and provision of transport facilities and services. It is administered by the Integrated Transport Unit of Medway Council; this unit is responsible for LTP production and monitoring as well as other transport-related functions. The arrangement enables a well informed discussion on all aspects of transport, in principles and in detail, and also feeds directly into particular action programmes. Due to concerns over the capacity of the MTP to deal with the significant amount of transport issues affecting Medway, three sub-groups have now been established covering rail, transport planning and regeneration.

71. Accessibility planning will place an extra burden on LTA staff resources, especially for the liaison with other stakeholders to build up understanding of needs, criteria and standards. For two-tier authorities in England there could be further demands on staff resources if they need to develop significant links with several district level LSPs. Unless this were perceived as significantly improving the effectiveness of the accessibility planning process, then it would probably be seen as an inappropriate use of scarce resources.

⇒ *Recommendations 2, 4, 5*

#### ***Issue 4    Involvement of Other Transport Representatives***

72. Representation of transport interests in LSP activities, other than that by LTA officers, tends to be weak (except within some PTE and urban unitary council areas). It might be expected that local transport providers would at least be on the transport (or equivalent) theme group; and often LSP members are keen to see them involved.
73. The major question is over attendance by public transport providers, especially representatives of bus and rail businesses. In major urban areas, including the PTA areas, there often is such representation, at least from major bus companies, sometimes at board level, and certainly on the transport theme group. Representation from railway providers is rather less common. In most

other areas bus and rail companies are not usually represented on the main board, and may not even be involved with meetings of the relevant theme group. LSP/LTA representatives suggest that commercial considerations prevent greater engagement by public transport operators. Most public transport operators in Great Britain are managed with a firm focus on gaining returns from activities in competitive and sometimes circumscribed circumstances. They also have very lean management teams, especially at local level. Attending LSPs for most of them is very unlikely to provide clues to additional business or influence over the operating environment (this requires contacts with the LTA's public transport and highways teams, which public transport companies usually do maintain). In areas where partnership working has included a strong focus on transport it has been found that public transport operators have maintained engagement over a long period of time.

*Box 4.1*

Public transport operators play an important role on the LSP and transport theme groups for Brighton & Hove, Hampshire and Medway LSPs and for the Leeds Initiative.

Concerns over the absence of transport operators have been expressed by LSPs for Blackburn with Darwen, East Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire, Malvern Hills and Worcestershire.

⇒ *Recommendations 4, 5, 7*

## **Issue 5 LSP Theme Groups**

74. Typically LSPs have between six and ten theme groups, reflecting a similar number of themes (see Issue 7). These theme groups usually involve a wide group of organisations, including a number who are not represented on the board. In the cases where there is a specific theme group for transport (e.g. Durham, Medway, Leeds, Southampton - see Box 1.1), membership can include representatives from transport providers, public authority transport units and community and business organisations with transport interests (including transport campaign groups). Often, however, LSPs do not have a (dedicated) transport theme group. Instead transport is identified as a main issue but transport and related issues become the responsibility for a theme group with a broader remit, such as environment or community. In such cases, while the main priorities and actions concerning transport will be developed by that group, its transport membership may not necessarily be significant.
75. While some transport theme groups exist, none of the LSPs in the case studies has established a theme group to expressly address accessibility. Transport represents one means to provide access but it is not the sole means (as noted earlier). It would be ill advised to task a transport theme group with a sole role in accessibility planning since its membership would (likely) only reflect a subset of bodies able to advise upon and work together to identify and implement plans to improve access.

76. In principle the theme groups exist for two reasons: to develop the priorities in a particular field, for input to the overall community strategy; and to develop and implement the action plan for its priorities. Because strategies are in many cases developed largely from community views, there are cases where theme groups have taken on an active role only after completion of the strategy; so they exist to implement policies which may not seem feasible to the informed members of the theme group, and which therefore do not get taken forward. This can reduce the LSP's ability to produce practical results or deliverable outcomes.

⇒ *Recommendations 5, 6*

## ***Issue 6      Development of Community Strategies***

77. The material in community strategies is intended to be derived primarily from the community itself: a principle typically defined as 'the community strategy belongs to the community'. Most community strategies reflect this fully, drawing on often substantial consultation exercises to establish the concerns, needs and aspirations of the community. This is common to almost all LSPs in the case studies. What varies widely is the extent to which the consultation process and subsequent production of priority themes and actions also involves input from relevant professionals able to offer important additional perspectives and understanding. This depends on the structure of the LSP and of its supporting staff. For some of the LSPs in the case studies, especially smaller ones outside the main urban areas, the final policies of the community strategy tend to reflect the results of the consultation with an absence of critical professional input; i.e. LSPs can adopt the more common and popular views of what should be done, sometimes in detail.
78. The view was expressed by LSP/LTA representatives that community strategies are most effective if they can produce recommendations which are well founded in relation to the powers, resources and abilities of the local authorities (both county and district councils) and other service providers. This means that local people have to understand how local authorities work and what they can and cannot do. Quite often, however, the citizen elements of groups are dominated by the 'usual suspects', and this risks popular but unrealistic ideas gaining prominence. In response, some LSPs, more especially in the main urban areas, apply some measure of interpretation to the consultation findings, so that the community strategy policies are framed strongly in the light of current policies and practices, i.e. within the mainstream of current policy directions. There are also some cases where the LSP has compiled an initial community strategy largely from partners' own policies and views, in order to produce a document that will form a focus for development.

*Box 6.1*

The East Durham LSP (Easington DC) has produced both a Community Strategy and a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. The former sets out aspirations for the well being of the area, in terms of its economy, environment and society; the latter forms a vision and plan for positive change in those areas in need of renewal. The initial Community Strategy was heavily influenced by the District Council's focus on regeneration and renewal.

The first Community Strategy issued by Medway LSP particularly reflected the priorities of the existing partnerships, including programmes of their principal partner bodies, and was rather focused on individual policy areas. This formed the subject of widespread consultation, and the second Community Strategy was much more driven by the results of this; it has also sought to integrate issues and actions across themes.

The Southampton Partnership launched its first Community Strategy in April 2004. It followed from (i) a 2020 Vision debated at a stakeholder conference; (ii) a draft strategy which was put through a rigorous 'golden threading' sustainability exercise to ascertain the maximum impact and sustainability of its proposals; (iii) a public consultation exercise which received 1,600 comments. At the consultation stage criticism was made that the targets in the Community Strategy are organised into professional silos and do not readily relate to quality of life. The Partnership recognised this and in the finalised first Community Strategy started work towards integrating targets with quality of life outcomes (this will be completed in 2004/05).

79. The extent to which policy themes are integrated and cross-referenced also varies widely. Where the community strategy has been assembled from partners' own strategies, then the themes are likely to remain discrete. Once the groups within the LSP are working well together - a situation that requires effective administration - then 'cross-cutting' issues and themes will start to emerge, and the relationships between themes and between groups of people and organisations will be brought out.
80. Resource analysis forms an important element in community strategies. In some this can be good, and clear establishment of the range of funds and opportunities by the LSP can play a valuable role for both transport and other functions, especially in highlighting the various possibilities for improving accessibility. However, resource analysis can be poor as well. Smaller LSPs, such as those within two-tier district council areas, are less likely to have a comprehensive understanding of the resources and opportunities across all the issues which concern their community; often because they lack the expertise or time within their administration. However, this is not always the case: larger LSPs can demonstrate failures here too. Poor resource analysis is dangerous in misinforming the LSP. It also distances transport professionals, in the local authority or in local bus companies and other transport providers, thus creating a barrier to effective evolution and implementation of policies.

*Box 6.2*

For the first **Durham County** Community Strategy transport is identified as a challenge in its own right, and there is a specific transport theme. The exact title of the theme is Integrated Transport Network, which reflects concerns over access drawn from all the other policy areas adopted as challenges by the Partnership. In the light of these, it is also the one challenge that is deemed to have significant links with all other challenges, reflected in the structure and cross-referencing in the Community Strategy. The main policies in the transport challenge reflect those of the LTP, input by the County Council as LTP authority.

The **Eastleigh** Community Plan consultation document considers eight topic areas (community safety, employment, etc.) and identifies possible priorities in each topic area. In addition four cross-cutting themes (sustainability, access, partnerships, sharing information) are identified with which to assess the contribution to the whole community of the plans and activities across the whole of the Community Strategy.

Building on a first Vision for Leeds published in 1999, the **Leeds Initiative** has developed a second Vision for Leeds setting out a comprehensive strategy for the city, with an inter-related set of eight main themes (which include transport) to address three overall aims (which include narrowing disadvantage) for the city. A prioritised programme of action is identified.

In **Tameside** the first Community Strategy produced in 2000 has been subject to a monitoring exercise and widespread community consultation. The consultation exercise was carried out by MORI and recognised as a good practice model. It involved ranking the existing eight priority themes. In this transport was rated as of lowest concern. Nonetheless, it was widely seen as an issue of widespread importance to all the other themes, and thus it was decided to treat it as a cross-cutting theme.

⇒ *Recommendations 5, 7*

## **Issue 7**    *Contents of Community Strategies*

81. Community strategies normally address two key aspects, namely the area and its residents. The main themes identified then concern aspects which are seen to affect these. In the early stages of community planning issues raised tend to be populist, and reflect the sort of community aspirations that are often aired in the local press. Quite often they are not well aligned to existing policies. Proposed actions may be very general (i.e. broad improvements) or may involve very specific local initiatives.
82. LSPs with established partnerships are less likely to exhibit this approach to community planning (e.g. Durham, Leeds, Medway - see Box 1.1). This suggests that the approach across LSPs could well change over time, as the interactions and thinking of LSPs evolve. However, in the shorter term it does suggest that of the viability of overcoming problems is often given little or no attention, and this includes appreciation of accessibility needs.

83. The main themes that emerge in community planning will usually include:
- Security/safety/crime
  - Health/fitness/social well-being
  - Community engagement/cultural harmony
  - Economic success/jobs/prosperity
  - Housing/regeneration/development
  - Education/lifelong learning/personal development
  - Environment/neighbourhood/countryside
  - Shops and services
  - Leisure/sport
  - Transport
84. The extent to which priorities are developed into specific measures varies widely. Most are developed into a series of sub sections, with particular actions. In some cases these are defined in fairly general terms. In others there are quite specific actions, with defined targets. These offer scope for implementation, because tangible goals can guide practical action, and performance can be measured. It is more common for such specific goals to be set out in community strategies for urban areas. Those subject to NRF need to do this, as a basis for their performance management framework. There is no obligation on other areas; although the direction of current policies suggests that clear performance measures will become important for all LSPs at some point in the future. What is of most importance is that specified performance measures allow LSP priority actions to be linked closely into the actions of other agencies, including the LTAs.

*Box 7.1*

Transport is not one of the seven priority themes in the **Blackburn with Darwen** Community Plan but it does contain some transport aims, including the specific one of improving public transport and encouraging more people to use it with a target to control the emission of harmful fumes from cars by increasing the number of people who travel into the town centres by bus by 12% in the next five years. There are also targets for improving road maintenance and air quality.

In **Bristol's** Community Strategy transport is one of five areas for short-term priority action. The transport priority encompasses developing a sustainable transport system, and creating and developing attractive well designed safe streets, buildings and neighbourhoods. More specific elements of the strategy - with objectives and targets - are reliable, affordable, accessible and safe transport; Travel Plans; air quality; Home Zones; and accident reduction. These are consistent with the Bristol LTP and the city council's Traffic and Transport team is responsible for delivery of these.

'Improving transport and the environment' is one of the six themes of the **Broxbourne** Community Plan. The only action relating to transport identified, however, is to support the Integrated Transport Partnership (ITP). The ITP is a project jointly between the County Council and local NHS to co-ordinate information on and development of community transport services. The Community Strategy for **East Hertfordshire** includes a theme 'Improving transport and traffic'. This focuses on innovative public transport for rural areas, safer routes to school, encouraging cycling and better rail services to London. The strategy points to the County Council's various transport policy and action documents, including the LTP, as the focus for addressing the priorities, but does not develop specific measures and priorities.

For **Tameside's** second Community Strategy, transport was rated as an important cross-cutting theme, reflecting concerns expressed by business interests and citizens' panels. The principal objective is 'to produce a quality alternative to the car', which is linked to specific targets. These are fed into the business plan of Tameside's transport division, and thus help determine its work programme for the year, including work on joint activities with the PTE over public transport. It is backed up by the strong involvement of Borough Council members on the Tameside Partnership. Relevant Borough Council officers are in this way closely involved with the Partnership's activities.

⇒ *Recommendation 3*

## Issue 8 *Readability*

85. Community strategies are generally presented in a form that is very readable; perhaps to an extent that may contrast with established policy documents, such as the Local Transport Plan and the Local Plan (to become the Local Development Framework (LDF)). The use of plain English and attractive available documentation is welcome. Of course there has been steady improvement in this field over many years, and local authorities have generally taken valuable steps in this direction. But it is of interest to consider whether this reflects the fact that LSPs have no executive responsibility and do, as indicated above, tend to reflect popular aspirations to quite a large degree. They do not have to reflect statutory guidance, formal public authority procedures, decisions over granting of permission or decisions over use of funding. Nonetheless the approach has merits, especially where common policies are being adopted by partners to link their respective policy documents.

⇒ *Recommendations 3, 10*

## Issue 9 *Accessibility and Transport in Community Strategies*

86. Transport often emerges as one of the main issues which concern consultees in community planning; sometimes it forms the top area for policy concern. Consultees frequently seek two particular objectives: higher quality bus services, in terms of performance, quality, integration and ticketing; and new bus links to support defined functions and areas. These tend to be socially necessary and popular, e.g. buses linking main residential areas to hospitals or employment areas, or to link new residential areas with town centres. What does not emerge to anything like the same extent from consultation are other ways of improving accessibility.

### *Box 9.1*

The **Malvern Hills** Community Strategy was developed on the basis of a heavily publicised three month consultation process. The issues and directions in it were drawn out from the views expressed, without any attempt to filter them. Transport formed the dominant issue to emerge in the consultation, and this is reflected in the Community Strategy. The first theme is 'an effective transport system that offers choice'. The main components for this are 'improved levels of affordable passenger transport, offering a higher level of quality, operating reliably and more frequently' and better conditions for cyclists. Calls for this came not only from the public but also from employers (for access to jobs), from the health sector (access to health facilities) and parish councils.

Transport was the topic raising the most responses from the public in the consultation exercise for **Southampton Partnership's** draft Community Strategy. 'Improving the city's transport provision' is one of the 11 key challenges in the approved Strategy. For this key challenge a number of improvement areas and actions are identified. The only improvement area explicitly mentioned to relate to accessibility is demand responsive bus services which are expected to 'reduce social exclusion'. Elsewhere in the other 10 key challenges, there are improvements related to transport (reducing road accidents, improving air quality through reduced car use) and access (better access to key services for socially excluded citizens and disabled people, better and fairer access to health services).

87. Accessibility to services is an underlying consideration of many of the policy themes in community planning. This often relates to availability: e.g. sufficient trained staff offering appropriate services to meet needs, especially for the more deprived members of the community. However, community strategies often ignore the physical element: e.g. reaching even one clinic, school or food shop of those existing in an area may be very difficult by existing public transport for those without a car, perhaps impossible.
88. There are in principle three options for improving accessibility:
- Transport - improved roads (and their management) and improved footways, but especially better services by public and community transport.
  - Development/land use planning - provision for locating services near to those needing to use them or in places accessible to them by public, community or private transport and ensuring services are provided or accessible to residents of new dwellings.
  - Service delivery - rescheduling times at which services offered and mobile delivery of services to those needing them.
89. It is unlikely that any one option will be the exclusive solution to any local problem. More importantly, it is essential that all are considered together. This involves two levels in the LSP:
- The issue of accessibility must be considered fully at board level in developing the community strategy and the various action plans. This does not mean that the board has to undertake particular work or discussion; but it should be fully satisfied that the theme groups and key partners have properly assessed and planned for accessibility.
  - The action plans for the priority themes should involve explicit consideration of accessibility, with a thorough understanding of where transport may - or may not - be the most effective solution, and how it balances against other factors.
90. In two-tier authorities outside the main urban areas there is a serious risk that district level LSPs will be heavily divorced from county council thinking and action, even where there is a measure of co-ordination of transport work. Thus the aims and themes for district level LSPs may be far removed from the direction of the county council approach. Cross-reference with LTPs appears to be uncommon. In some cases there has been good liaison (e.g. Malvern Hills and other districts in Worcestershire - see Box 3.1), and this is strengthening the transport approach overall. These cases appear to have involved significant input of time and energy on the part of the county council transport department; this may be of value where there is a positive gain, but not otherwise. In the PTA areas, there is generally closer working, and the PTE is usually more willing to take a strong lead, at least on public transport matters, and on transport generally through the joint LTP arrangements normally found.
91. For some areas, notably the main urban areas, the relationship between LSP accessibility and transport policies and the policies in the LTP can be close: two-way exchanges have been made to ensure that transport policies adopted within the emerging community strategies reflect those in the LTP and then in turn the LTP picks up aspects raised by the community strategy (e.g. Bristol - see Box 7.1; Southampton - see Box 1.1). This is particularly helped where there is a

strong working relationship between the LSP and an established transport organisation: the PTE in PTE areas (e.g. Leeds and West Yorkshire PTE - see Box 1.1), or an LTP forum/partnership in other areas (e.g. Medway - see Box 1.1). In contrast the links can be weak in some areas, notably those where there is no established transport organisation or forum, and more particularly in two-tier areas. Developing agreement over principles can help to tie these in. However this does take time and effort, and may be seen as one element which needs to evolve as the LSP itself evolves.

*Box 9.2*

In Greater Manchester there already exists a joint Steering Group for the LTP, representing the PTE and all the metropolitan borough councils. This co-ordinates the input from all of these and guides a joint action team within the PTE which does the actual work (this includes staff on secondment from the boroughs). The Steering Group will continue to have a key role. It will be complemented by a joint Greater Manchester Strategic Forum now being established to represent all the boroughs and other agencies. This will receive input from the ten borough partnerships and establish theme groups, probably including a transport theme group. The chairman of the LTP Steering Group will play an important role on this.

Improving accessibility is an area for priority action in the Hampshire Community Strategy for its 2004-2007 development plan. Consistent with this is the fact that Eastleigh is considering accessibility as a cross-cutting issue and considering non-mobility solutions to access problems. In other districts in Hampshire it tends to have been considered at a service level (e.g. access to hospitals) and normally public transport solutions have been proposed without realistic consideration of funding availability and of the alternative of bringing services to people. A greater comprehension of the accessibility planning approach is required at a district level and there may be a role in the county providing educational support on this.

County Durham provides a typical case of the difficulties faced in co-ordinating county and district transport plans. The districts have no transport functions but have links with the County LTP Partnership Forum which is a wide group and covers mainly strategic transport matters. There is a concern in districts like Easington that the County is reactive rather than proactive over district level issues. Thus the main links with the County Council are over specific projects. In the District Council's view, regeneration and related factors should be far more strongly weighed in transport decisions and priorities, especially for public transport. For Durham County Council's transport officers they see a need to educate the district councils, LSPs and local community groups of the opportunities and barriers for improved community and public transport. In principle the development of LSPs offers a valuable opportunity to bring co-ordination into this area, but so far progress has been limited.

92. In two-tier areas (and this includes county councils and the PTEs) the opportunities for agreement seem to be better in smaller areas, with three or four districts, but less good in larger ones. In fact, because the transport field is so complex, involving multiple agencies and affecting all other sectors, it forms a prime candidate for being addressed by an LSP. This includes the now well recognised tension between economic and environmental well-being of a locality. At the same time, because transport forms a high profile topic, it is also the most challenging and is something that is likely to demand a degree of maturity of the LSP in question before effective progress can be made.

93. Community strategies address the community interests and aspirations of their area but at a broader level there is a need to address development (economic, housing and transport) at a sub-regional level, and partnership working is occurring in many cases for this purpose. There is little evidence, however, of joint working by LSPs at a sub-regional level. For accessibility planning there are many cross-boundary issues that need to be addressed (public transport services, provision of services).

*Box 9.3*

The Bristol Community Strategy says very little about the transport problems of the (former Avon) sub-region, and there are four LSPs for each of the unitary authority areas. A Joint Committee, together with a Joint Strategic Planning and Transport Unit supports cross-boundary issues, and until recently the West of England Strategic Partnership (WESP) provided a forum for discussion of broader strategic issues. WESP ceased to exist at the end of March 2004, and is to be succeeded by a new partnership to be formed to fulfill new planning responsibilities. The Greater Bristol Strategic Transport study involves all four councils, but there is little evidence of LSP engagement within this long term agenda. The existence of four separate transport authorities is a matter of deep concern to local business interests. Nevertheless, despite anxiety about the absence of a strategic forum for the sub-region, the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative contributes constructively to LSP work in Bristol.

The Solent Transport Partnership launched in March 2003 aims to strengthen transport co-ordination through partnership working of all those who have a responsibility or interest in transport planning and provision in South Hampshire. It brings together Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council and a range of transport operators, business interests and infrastructure providers to work together to address congestion through providing a wider choice of transport. The three local authorities responsible for highways (Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton) are considering submitting a joint LTP submission in 2005 covering the whole South Hampshire area. They have also worked jointly in developing an accessibility model. At present, LSPs are not engaged in the Solent Transport Partnership.

⇒ *Recommendations 3, 4, 6, 8*

## *Issue 10 Transport Proposals in the Community Strategy*

94. The transport proposals included in community strategies are often aligned with those in LTPs (e.g. Bristol - see Box 7.1; Southampton - see Box 1.1); but those outside the main urban areas tend to concentrate on local community issues such as bus services and air quality. The contribution of accessibility initiatives to neighbourhood renewal currently remains limited. Whilst local transport projects are identified (e.g. Home Zones, Safe Routes to School, pedestrian safety schemes), few neighbourhood strategies appear to offer an accessibility strategy (e.g. explicit strategy to exploit Urban Bus Challenge).
95. Too often this leads community strategies to focus on improved bus services, without always identifying the nature and purpose of these. In principle these are aimed at improving access, and sometimes the context is clear. However, too often the proposal may simply reflect a weakness in understanding the dynamics of changing behaviour by people and service providers and the potential for transport systems within this. While bus service improvements are

welcome, it begs the question as to whether it requires an LSP to reach such conclusions. Focusing exclusively on bus service improvements may divert attention from considering the other solutions to accessibility, either in principle or for specific local problems. Furthermore, it is not apparent that there is clear evidence that when service improvements are delivered that they actually achieve a positive contribution to community development.

96. In some cases, as indicated earlier (see Issue 3), proposals in the community strategy may already have been identified by the LTA's passenger transport interests or by a local bus operator but rejected as not feasible within the current administrative and operating regime. The value of such proposals in addressing the principle of 'well-being', which community planning is intended to achieve, cannot count in these circumstances. However, this does indicate the importance of linking performance measures for the LSP and LTA much more closely, with the possible aim of providing fuller justification for bus service development.
97. Because they reflect the results of widely held community views and aspirations, the transport proposals in some community strategies tend to be outside the mainstream of transport, focusing on provision of 'alternative' services, such as minibus links to places deemed in need. Such policy outcomes may of course be very relevant to local communities, within the context of a sound strategy. They are likely to be driven by environmental and community interests, which often concentrate on the very local. These bodies are also likely to promote development of cycling. In contrast, business interests are likely to push for more expansive infrastructure proposals, usually road based. These might also have come out of consultation.
98. However, if these various aspirations are not filtered through expert guidance, from the LSP board or theme group, or supporting officers, they may involve popular ideas which are unlikely to be implemented. More significantly, they fail to pick up the deficiencies in existing transport systems which also affect people's accessibility; e.g. poor stop access and environment, lack of information, and poor customer care on local buses; poor maintenance, poor or even dangerous conditions and perception of insecurity on footways and walk routes. These aspects concern local public transport which is likely to be used by large numbers of people, many of them from disadvantaged groups, and form a substantial element of transport provision in many urban areas. Failure to understand their significance, their weaknesses and their potential for improvement by the LSP diminishes the opportunity for broader support for improvement in these aspects. Potentially there might be bigger gains in accessibility and social benefit from doing this as compared, for example, to providing a highly subsidised local community transport service, a cycleway used by few people or spending time pressing for a new or improved road.
99. LTA officers in some of the case studies (e.g. Leeds, Southampton) have noted the value of LSPs in legitimising LTP policies. This can happen where LSPs adopt already published LTP policies or where LSPs establish new policies which can subsequently be incorporated into LTPs. In essence the LSP can provide a more effective medium for consultation than has previously been possible.

⇒ *Recommendation 6*

## *Issue 11 Implementing LSP's Priorities for Accessibility and Transport*

100. The LSP is a partnership and not an executive body. Thus it can achieve results only if the partners adopt complementary approaches focused on the agreed priorities and actions. For improving accessibility there are principally three possible avenues for action:
- The LTP and programmes developed from it, the responsibility of the LTA, are the primary basis for transport initiatives. This is especially the case for those led by the LTA or requiring its serious involvement. In principle, transport measures initiated by other parties may not necessarily relate closely to the LTP, but in practice they are likely to be covered by LTP policies and thus more effectively developed with support from the LTP. It is at present unclear how the LTP will be managed once the new planning framework, with abolition of Structure Plans/Unitary Development Plans, comes into force.
  - Spatial planning initiatives, including many aspects of regeneration, are currently covered by the Development Plan, and in future will be part of the LDF. In principle this will offer a wider form of guidance for land use planning at local level, incorporating transport and other key areas. The LDF will be the responsibility of the district council or unitary authority.
  - Service delivery initiatives, which are the responsibility of various organisations, e.g. health authorities.
101. Many accessibility problems are likely to be addressed effectively only through a combination of measures. Within these, understanding the opportunities and problems with transport will remain very important, to offset the tendency of many LSPs to assume all accessibility needs will be met by provision of improved (public) transport. Thus effective action is most likely if community strategies and LTPs have matching policies and are agreed on the approach to implementation. This requires close links, formal and informal, between the LSP - or at least its relevant theme group - and the LTA.
102. Examples of this are in place. They can take various forms:
- Transport partnerships which serve both as LTP forums for the LTA and as theme group for the LSP - especially in unitary authorities (e.g. Leeds, Medway, Southampton - see Box 1.1).
  - Strong formal links between the district authority and upper tier authorities through county-wide LSPs, in which the transport theme is a significant factor.
  - Good working links between district LSPs administered by district councils and the transport functions of upper tier authorities (e.g. Malvern Hills and Worcestershire - see Box 3.1).
103. Two-way links are particularly important here. If LSPs are properly informed of transport opportunities and problems, then these should be reflected in those parts of the community strategy concerned with accessibility and transport: priorities and actions will therefore be related to real possibilities, and the LTA is likely to include measures related to the community strategy in its actions. Equally they enable the LSP to inform the LTA of wider issues where transport

remains a key problem and perhaps the only solution, thus enabling the LTA to consider adopting appropriate additional measures in its LTP.

104. This linkage can be strongly supported by development of matching aims and performance measures for appropriate parts of the LSP's priorities and the LTP. Some examples exist of protocols between LTAs and LSPs to adopt this approach. These will primarily address transport aspects, but should also take in the implications in terms of accessibility; LTAs' responsibilities range beyond purely transport matters. Government guidance on LTPs and APRs stresses that objectives and monitoring should be consistent with wider Government policies, including social inclusion. In the second round of LTPs it will be necessary for LTAs to show how they are contributing towards improvements for seven shared priorities for local government (agreed by the Government and Local Government Association) which include access to jobs and services<sup>4</sup>.
105. Although many LSPs have now published community strategies, these are subject to on-going revision. Meanwhile, LTAs are starting to prepare new LTPs which must be complete in 2005 and will then cover a five-year period. The timescale in which LSP-LTA relationships can be developed and matured sufficiently to yield added-value input to the LTP on accessibility planning and transport is therefore very tight. It is questionable whether progress can be sufficient in this short period to make a worthwhile contribution. Nevertheless, the resulting LTPs will prove crucial in determining or constraining the way in which transport, and hence accessibility, can realistically be actioned in the LSPs' programmes. The on-going inter-dependency between the community strategy and the LTP demands that LSPs and LTAs recognise the risks associated with not working together now on accessibility planning and in turn commit to the task of joint working to realise the opportunity for a virtuous circle of priorities, plans and strategies and actions.

⇒ *Recommendations 3, 7, 9, 10*

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<sup>4</sup> DfT (2004). *Guidance on LTP Annual Progress Reports*. DfT, London.

## *Issue 12 Do LSPs Add Value for Transport and Accessibility?*

106. LSPs have a potentially valuable role to play in providing an holistic approach to improvement of communities. However, they can only achieve this if they bring improvements in the quality of social, economic and physical environment that would not otherwise have been achieved. Looking at the issue of accessibility and transport, some questions remain:
- Can LSPs establish new insights on and priorities for effective ways forward for addressing accessibility needs? This requires them to provide new information and set valid directions; and also to establish where means other than transport measures may be more effective for improving accessibility. As discussed earlier, the extent to which this is being achieved is unclear.
  - Should the LSPs seek a firm lead on transport and related matters from the LTA or not? As discussed above, the LSP is much more likely to achieve feasible priorities for transport if its processes involve input from the LTA or an expert partnership. In principle this cuts across the aim of LSPs as community based bodies. Certainly, if they reiterate existing LTA policies and programmes without valid reason, then they are not effective. Equally, however, they need informed guidance to produce valid policies.
  - How far can LSPs' priorities be taken up if they imply increased resources on transport? The UK has a smaller budget on transport and public structures than its western European neighbours, and also limits the planning powers of regional and local authorities much more. This is a factor (perhaps a strong one) in accessibility problems being experienced. The more dispersed settlement pattern and lower settlement densities in Great Britain mean that non-transport solutions may be difficult to implement in the short term (indeed, spatial planning solutions are often judged as long term ones only), and transport solutions are far more expensive. It follows that, for LSPs to achieve real change in accessibility, and thus provide value for money in their activities, there will need to be significant increases in public funding and powers, for local transport and spatial planning. (Many transport professionals would argue that this is essential anyway if Great Britain is to achieve the quality of transport provision to which its policies aspire.)
  - Are LSPs and the community strategies an obligation or an opportunity for local communities? If they form an obligation, then their processes and activities must be developed to ensure that they provide an effective and realistic input to partners' policies, including LTPs. If they are an opportunity, then LTAs reserve the right to incorporate their findings unless they add insights.

⇒ *Recommendations 3, 4*

## 6 Recommendations on Accessibility Planning Guidance

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107. These recommendations are intended to influence guidance to LTAs. However, the recommendations will require the co-operation of the LSPs, which are voluntary organisations and not predisposed to being dealt obligations or given stringent guidance. It will be crucial that LSPs are as equally persuaded to co-operate for mutual benefit as the LTAs in response to the DfT guidance. Therefore, it is suggested that LSPs should be informed about the accessibility planning process and the importance of collaboration between LSPs and LTAs in the development of an approach which engages a wide range of organisations and agencies in accessibility planning.

### *Recommendation 1*

108. LTAs will need good partnership working to effectively address accessibility planning. Such working should contribute strongly to all four steps in the accessibility planning process: needs audit; resources audit; action plans; and monitoring. While current LTA partnership arrangements may exist, LSPs represent a mechanism for potentially effective partnership working that can help rationalise the process of information gathering and consulting and engaging in discussion with multiple bodies.

*(with reference to issues 1 and 2)*

### *Recommendation 2*

109. If LSPs are to make an added-value contribution to accessibility planning then a clear, positive and timely commitment is needed by both the LTA and the LSP (and in turn other bodies that influence accessibility). Partial commitment and delay on either side will seriously compromise any role for LSPs in the LTP process of activity planning and damage prospects for mutually beneficial partnership working in the longer term.

*(with reference to issue 3)*

### *Recommendation 3*

110. Early agreement needs to be reached between the LTA and the LSP that they will commit to the two-way process of ensuring the informed integration of transport issues into the community strategy and neighbourhood renewal strategy and the informed integration of community access needs into the LTP. If it is decided to utilise LSPs in the accessibility planning process accessibility should be an explicit linking theme between the LTP, community strategy and neighbourhood renewal strategy, and a common accessibility planning document could be included in all three strategy documents. There should be neighbourhood targets in the new LTP, and accessibility targets in the community strategy and neighbourhood renewal strategy.

*(with reference to issues 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12)*

### **Recommendation 4**

111. The LSP board needs to recognise and explicitly account for accessibility in determining its priorities and strategy development and to do so with an informed understanding of the role of transport. As the responsible authority for accessibility planning, the LTA needs to ensure that the LSP board is aware of the accessibility planning agenda and the benefits and responsibilities it brings to partners. A senior representative of the LTA should be involved in the LSP (for example, on the board or on an accessibility theme group or sub-group). (This should be easier in unitary authorities and for LSPs in two-tier authorities (including PTA areas) where the number of district councils is small. Where the number of district councils is larger, then there will be a more substantial demand on resources.)

*(with reference to issues 3, 4, 9 and 12)*

### **Recommendation 5**

112. LSPs should explicitly address accessibility in their work (development of community strategies and neighbourhood renewal strategies) but different models can be used for this purpose. These include: (i) establishing an accessibility theme group; (ii) if accessibility is already explicitly or implicitly addressed by another theme group (e.g. environment or transport), establishing an accessibility sub-group instead of a separate theme group if this can provide sufficient informed feedback to the main group and the LSP board; or (iii) treating accessibility as a cross-cutting theme (in a similar way to sustainability, for example) which all groups need to address and for which 'proofing' should be carried out. The LTA and LSP need to make sure that in addressing accessibility transport expertise is involved together with representation from other main bodies engaged within the LSP that influence accessibility.

*(with reference to issues 3, 4, 5 and 6)*

### **Recommendation 6**

113. Those tasked with addressing accessibility on the LSP should critically appraise the factors governing accessibility, in which they should be guided by the LTA (perhaps supported by commissioning modest pieces of research). To be successful this will require a degree of creative and open-minded thinking (not limited to review of bus services). It must consider and compare: (i) transport, including public and community transport; (ii) spatial planning; and (iii) service delivery, within the LSP's evolution of priorities.

*(with reference to issues 5, 9 and 10)*

### **Recommendation 7**

114. Those tasked with addressing accessibility on the LSP should draw upon and (help to) guide other exercises that the LTA is engaged in - notably the LTP consultation. In order to secure participation from, in particular, bus operators, it may be appropriate for the LTA to consider whether it could slim down one or more existing transport-related stakeholder forums.

*(with reference to issues 1, 4, 6 and 11)*

### **Recommendation 8**

115. There is a need to ensure that LSPs in districts which lie within a sub-regional functional transport area adopt preferably joint, but at least consistent, approaches to improving accessibility, and appropriate LSPs should collaborate in this. Regional organisations (Regional Assemblies, Regional Development Agencies and other regional bodies) should have regard to accessibility planning both to enhance accessibility to employment opportunities and also to link accessibility to the development of wider regional or sub-regional infrastructure investment plans.

*(with reference to issue 9)*

### **Recommendation 9**

116. Both the LTA and LSP should work to ensure that any newly established working partnership arrangements stemming from recommendations 1-8 are maintained and further developed beyond completion of the 2005 LTP.

*(with reference to issue 11)*

### **Recommendation 10**

117. All documents related to accessibility planning should be written in a clear, readable way, avoiding jargon. This will allow all relevant partners to contribute effectively and to adopt common policies and priorities. It will also allow the community as a whole to understand the significance of accessibility planning.

*(with reference to issues 8 and 11)*

## 7 Glossary

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APR	Annual Progress Report
LDF	Local Development Framework
LNRS	Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LTA	Local Transport Authority
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NDC	New Deal for Communities
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Funding
PTA	Passenger Transport Authority
PTE	Passenger Transport Executive
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
TPP	Transport Policies and Programmes
UDP	Unitary Development Plan

## APPENDIX 1 - CASE STUDY SELECTION

### *Selection of case studies - objectives and approach*

The major part of the research focused around the case studies, and therefore selection of these formed an important stage in the work. The objective for each case study was to include both the LSP and the LTA for each area selected. It was agreed with the client that the number of case studies should be 'about 10 to 12': sufficient to give a range of types and experiences but manageable within the resources for the project. It was appreciated that this number forms a very small proportion of the total, in a large and complex field where there is a great deal of activity but also many unknowns. This placed more emphasis on the need for making the selection in a disciplined and transparent fashion.

In establishing the list, the team drew on material from several sources:

- Lists of current case study work under ODPM and DfT auspices;
- Suggestions made by ODPM and DfT officers in discussion meetings;
- Surveys by CSS and other organisations;
- LSPs and LTAs with which research team members were familiar through existing research or consultancy work in transport planning and/or community strategies; and
- LSPs and LTAs identified by research team members for specific reasons.

In order to ensure that the case studies represented a wide range of circumstances and experiences, the selection was informed by a number of criteria, including:

- Region;
- Local authority administrative structure;
- Settlement type(s);
- Coverage by other recent research studies;
- Transport status (including rating for 2003 LTP); and
- Other factors.

It was also accepted that no *a priori* list, however well established, would offer a complete basis for defining the case study selection, given the range of unknowns. Therefore three principles were also agreed:

- The extent and style of LSPs and LTAs would vary widely and thus the scale and nature of work for each case study might well differ.
- Carrying out the case studies required agreement of the case study bodies and organisation of the study resources within the timescales agreed. Any problems with these could mean that the final list could look rather different to the original one. The key focus would be on achieving the target number of main case studies.
- In addition to the main case studies, information on other areas with something to contribute would be gathered as available from a mix of *ad hoc* information and contacts, telephone discussions, and references (defined as 'mini' case studies).

### *Carrying out the case studies*

An initial list was submitted to the client for agreement in early January 2004. Some of the proposals were agreed, so that work on contacting them could start at once. Further discussions took place over the rest of the list, agreement being reached a fortnight later, enabling work to begin on the remainder of the selection. Some flexibility was left to vary the selection where necessary.

Contacts for the case study bodies were obtained from various sources, including the research team's own links, the main LSPs research team, DfT and the ODPM. In some cases these were the most appropriate people; in other cases they were not, but were able to advise on the appropriate people to deal with the approach.

In all cases, the initial approach involved a telephone call to the contact. Where necessary, the call was then repeated to other people in the organisation, or calls were received from them. This allowed the team member to briefly explain the research and to request the organisation's co-operation in the work. This was followed by an email message setting out the background and requirements in full, supported by a note on the aims, context and work of the project. The aim of the call and email was threefold:

- To obtain some broad background information about the organisation and about the contactee's role in either community strategy (for LSPs) or transport planning (for LTAs);
- To obtain documentation about the community strategy and/or the LTP/APR, from the Web and/or in hard copy; and
- To set up arrangements for a meeting with the contactee and perhaps with other appropriate people within the organisation.

After agreement to co-operate in the case study had been obtained, documentation and/or references were supplied, and arrangements made for a member of the team to visit the organisation and meet for a structured discussion. In some cases this took a little time to arrange to mutual convenience. In some of these cases the research team received generous support from a contactee agreeing to arrange two or three meetings

in an area from their own and other nearby organisations. In a minority of cases it proved not possible to arrange meetings with the contactee in the time-scale available for the study.

The case studies primarily concerned assessing the relevant policies and actions of both an LSP and its complementary LTA. This was done through review of policy and other documents (especially community strategies, LTPs and APRs) and through meetings for structured discussion with key officers from both. For two-tier areas (English counties and PTE areas), the review and meetings usually involved LSPs at both levels. The documentation covered included background references as well as actual policy documents. For the interviews, which usually lasted for about one to two hours, a set of questions was sent in advance; this was used largely as a framework and *aide-memoir*, to ensure that no key area was missed. The actual discussions tended to focus particularly on whichever aspects were of most importance to the organisations in question.

Subsequently the case studies were written up to form a reference for the main findings; they are all appended to this report (Appendix 3). In total 10 area case studies were carried out, covering 15 LSPs or similar partnerships, 9 unitary or district councils, 4 county councils, and 2 PTEs. The structure and style of write-up is similar for most case studies, but with variations in emphasis and coverage of particular aspects, depending on the nature and priorities of the organisations studied and the material obtained.

The organisations covered are listed below. This includes all the case studies carried out, together with the organisations selected but which were unable to contribute. The list shows the main characteristics of the organisations, to indicate the range included.

The work was not without its complications, primarily from the logistical side; especially as it involved the research team arranging and attending several interviews in an often distant area at mutually convenient times. In the circumstances, the co-operation of most contactees was very professional and in some cases generous, and the team appreciate this.

### *'Mini' case studies*

As indicated above, it was deemed important to use other available sources of information. During the work a handful emerged. Brief reviews of the points raised from these were prepared, as 'mini' case studies. They are set out in Appendix 4.

### List of case study authorities/areas

<i>Authority / Area</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Administrative structure</i>	<i>Settlement type(s) *</i>	<i>Current research?</i>	<i>Transport status (2003 APR rating)</i>
<b>CASE STUDY CARRIED OUT</b>					
Blackburn with Darwen	North West	UA	FC		Blackburn with Darwen LTP - average
Bristol	South West	UA	FC		Bristol CoE ITP Bristol LTP - average
Broxbourne, East Herts and Hertfordshire	East	Two-tier area (districts/county)	U + MT Home counties		Herts CoE ITP Herts LTP - average
Easington and Durham	North East	Two-tier area (districts/county)	MT	LSPs evaluation (Easington) LTPs evaluation (Durham)	Durham LTP - above average
Eastleigh and Hampshire	South East	Two-tier area (districts/county)	MT / R Edge of city	LSPs evaluation (Hampshire) Integrated Transport	Hants CoE ITP Hants LTP - average
Leeds and West Yorkshire	Yorkshire & Humberside	Metropolitan BC and PTE	U Conurbation	LSPs evaluation (Leeds) LTPs evaluation (W. Yorks)	W. Yorks CoE ITP W. Yorks LTP - average
Malvern Hills and Worcestershire	West Midlands	Two-tier area (districts/county)	MT / R		Worcs LTP - above average
Medway	South East	UA	U Thames Gateway	Civilising Cities DfT project	Medway LTP - average
Southampton	South East	UA	FC	LSPs evaluation (Hampshire incl. Soton) LTPs evaluation	Soton LTP - average
Tameside and Greater Manchester	North West	Metropolitan BC and PTE	U Conurbation	Accessibility planning pilot LSPs evaluation (Tameside)	GMPTA CoE ITP GMPTA LTP - average

<i>Authority / Area</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Administrative structure</i>	<i>Settlement type(s) *</i>	<i>Current research?</i>	<i>Transport status (2003 APR rating)</i>
<b>SELECTED BUT NOT CARRIED OUT [Note 1]</b>					
Cambridgeshire [Note 1]	East	Two-tier area (districts/county)	FC + MT / R		Cambs LTP - above average
Nottingham and Broxstowe	East Midlands	UA + adjacent DC	FC + MT	LSPs evaluation (Nottingham) Accessibility planning pilot (Nottinghamshire) Civilising Cities DfT project (Nottinghamshire)	Joint CC-UA LTP Greater Nottingham CoE ITP Greater Nottingham LTP - well above average Tramway Innovative approach and projects
Leicester [Note 1]	East Midlands	UA	FC		Joint CC-UA LTP Central Leicestershire LTP - average Innovative Urban Bus Challenge bus routes
Reading	South East	UA	FC		Reading LTP - well above average
Stoke	West Midlands	UA	FC	LTPs evaluation	Stoke LTP - well above average

U = urban, R = rural, FC = free-standing (large) city, MT = medium size / market town

Note 1 - Some useful material was obtained from Cambridgeshire and Leicester and incorporated in the 'mini' case studies

## APPENDIX 2 - STAKEHOLDER SEMINAR PROGRAMME

Time	Room	Who?	What?
10.30 - 11.00	LG1	All	Arrive and reception: refreshments available
11.00 - 11.10	LG1	Murray Stewart, University of the West of England (Chair)	Welcome and introduction to the day
11.10 - 11.30	LG1	Dave Buttery, DfT Local Transport Policy	Presentation on Local Transport Plans and accessibility planning. Brief question and answer session
11.30 - 12.00	LG1	Reg Harman and Kiron Chatterjee, University of the West of England	Presentation of initial study findings
12.00 - 12.30	LG1	All	Questions and discussion
12.30 - 13.30	LG1	All	Buffet lunch
13.30 - 14.45	LG 4	All	<u>Workshop 1 (LG 4)</u>
	and LG 5		<u>Workshop 2 (LG 5)</u>
14.45 - 14.50	LG1		Return to LG1. Refreshments available
14.50 - 15.10	LG1	All	Report back from each workshop
15.10 - 15.40	LG1	All	Group discussion on workshop reports
15.40 - 15.50	LG1	Glenn Lyons, University of the West of England	Review of conclusions from day
Close			

## APPENDIX 3 - CASE STUDY REPORTS

## Blackburn with Darwen

*This review is based on:*

- *A meeting held in Blackburn on 10 March 2004 with officers of Blackburn with Darwen Partnership and Blackburn with Darwen Council.*
- *Information on the websites of Blackburn with Darwen Partnership ([www.blwdlsp.org.uk](http://www.blwdlsp.org.uk)) and Blackburn with Darwen Council ([www.blackburn.gov.uk](http://www.blackburn.gov.uk)).*
- *Published documents as referenced.*
- *Other material as supplied.*

### Context

Blackburn with Darwen is a unitary authority created five years ago. The population is 137,000 (2001), with 53,000 households. The district does not have access or similar problems of the scale faced by large cities. Most of the urban areas remain compact, and for most of the disadvantaged areas many facilities can be reached on foot, nonetheless access to jobs remains a key objective. The town can still be seen as a 'big village'. Taxis are now also used quite a lot by people from all walks of life where need be. Traffic flow is generally good, and any measures to constrain car use (other than the widely accepted pedestrianisation of the town centre) would meet fierce opposition, as substantial car ownership has only appeared in the last decade or so.

In addition, the Council still retains ownership, at 'arms length' of Blackburn Transport, the former municipal bus company, whose board includes councillors and directors of the Council. Where problems with transport do arise, these can often be addressed through changing existing bus services or adding some form of new service; members are keen to provide resource support for these needs. However revenue support for bus services is subject to the significant pressures placed upon Council service budgets. Blackburn Transport operates the main quality corridor service between Accrington, Blackburn and Darwen, with modern buses, but the company also has a substantial number of older buses. The Council has recently had a review of the bus company and are considering its future position.

### Partnerships in Blackburn with Darwen

The Blackburn with Darwen Partnership is long established, having been founded in 1988, as an initiative in collaboration with Prince Charles' Business in the Community Trust. It built up strong co-operative relationships between the Council and local business interests, and has enabled the area to obtain general interest and funding support for various development and community initiatives that have benefited the area. In 2001 the Council set up the Strategic Partnership, the area's LSP, with a wide membership to include community representatives, and established formal processes and protocols to meet the principles of Government guidance (set out in a published *Guidance to Members*<sup>5</sup>). It includes ten members of the Council and its chief executive. The LSP Board, responsible for overseeing the Community Plan and its delivery, has 48 members, and is chaired by the Chairman of the Blackburn with Darwen Partnership; the LSP Executive, chaired by the Leader of the Borough Council, has 15 members.

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<sup>5</sup> Blackburn with Darwen Strategic Partnership (2003). *Guidance to Members*. Blackburn with Darwen Strategic Partnership, Blackburn.

The Blackburn with Darwen Community Plan<sup>6</sup> was produced under the joint auspices of the Borough Council and the Blackburn with Darwen Partnership. It reflects consultation through local groups, citizens' panels, other meetings and the local media. This has seven priority themes:

- Decrease crime and improve community safety
- Improving the local economy
- Building stronger and more involved communities
- Enhance cultural harmony
- Improving health and social well being
- Improve and promote learning opportunities and achievements
- Improve the neighbourhood and environment

For developing and delivering each of these themes there is a Sub Group of the LSP, responsible for ensuring delivery of the objectives for that theme, with a specific organisation designated as the leader. The Blackburn with Darwen Partnership leads on one (Improving the local economy). Most of the Sub Group chairmen are members or senior managers of the Borough Council, and all of the lead officers responsible for Sub Group management are Council officers from relevant divisions. Overall management of LSP matters is in the hands of the Council's Executive Director for Corporate Resources, while the Blackburn with Darwen Partnership is identified as the main focus for the business sector. The Sub Groups establish task groups to take on specific projects.

### Transport in the Community Plan

Transport was not seen as a major issue in the consultation that led to the preparation of the Community Plan. This primarily reflects the geographical and cultural factors outlined above. Accessibility was not formally identified as a real problem in achieving the Community Plan's priorities, but some of the aims (better access to work and learning) are recognised as relying on accessibility. There are some transport aims, including the specific one of improving public transport and encouraging more people to use it with a target to control the emission of harmful fumes from cars by increasing the number of people who travel into the town centres by bus by 12% in the next five years. There are also targets for improving road maintenance and air quality. The issue of accessibility will be addressed in the emerging LTP 2006-2011.

These form an important input to the aims and programmes in the current LTP<sup>7</sup>, which sets out the significance of the Community Plans commitments. The LTP reviews a range of projects to improve all forms of transport, including public transport, in the area. The LTP process itself includes consultation through area organisations and main stakeholders. The Blackburn with Darwen Partnership provides the business input to the LTP, through its area forums. Because it reflects a well established network, the Blackburn with Darwen Partnership enables local issues for transport improvement to be quickly raised with relevant Borough Council officers, and Blackburn Transport where necessary, and solutions to local problems can often be achieved rapidly.

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<sup>6</sup> Blackburn with Darwen Council (2003). *Blackburn with Darwen Community Plan - The 2020 Vision*. Blackburn with Darwen Council, Blackburn.

<sup>7</sup> Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (2003). *Local Transport Plan 2001-2006 - Progress Report 2003*. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Blackburn.

There is no transport representative on either the Blackburn with Darwen Partnership or the LSP. This is not thought necessary, as Blackburn Transport has senior Council representatives on its Board, and Council officers with responsibility for transport are involved in the task groups as necessary. More involvement of Network Rail would be welcomed, but it appears very difficult to contact them.

The Borough Council receives a significant amount of funding from NRF grants, and from other Government funding sources, with the LSP Sub Groups contributing to their achievement; the Blackburn with Darwen Partnership has also helped secure funding, sometimes from business sources. The Borough Council has tried to see that these are allocated reasonably across all the disadvantaged areas over time. The NRF projects focus on four main headings:

- Area-based initiatives
- Vulnerable children
- People with disabilities
- Vulnerable older people

Some of the projects developed with these funds have covered transport initiatives geared to the four aims, including taxi vouchers (people with disabilities, vulnerable older people), dial-a-ride (people with disabilities) and improved taxi ranks.

Spatial planning for the area currently focuses on renewal of the housing market, through selective demolition of some houses and widespread upgrading of areas. Neighbourhood co-ordinators are being appointed for the five main neighbourhoods. These policies will be developed within the Local Development Framework when the new planning regime comes into force. The community planning process will play an important role: it is intended that the Local Development Framework will be 'owned by the community'.

## Bristol

*The Bristol case study has been undertaken both for the LSPs, Transport and Accessibility project and for the 'mainstreaming' strand of work in the ODPM national evaluation of New Deal for Communities project.*

*This review is based on:*

- *Meetings held with officers of Bristol Partnership, Bristol City Council, Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative, Community at Heart New Deal for Communities and Bristol Community Transport.*
- *Published documents as referenced.*
- *Other material as supplied.*

## Context

The city and county of Bristol lies at the heart of a functional urban region with a total population of around one million (the former county of Avon now with four unitary authorities). The urban core - the local authority area of Bristol - lost population throughout the decades of the late 1990s. By contrast the three surrounding unitary authorities - Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire - experienced rapid population growth through the late twentieth century with population in the whole of the city region up by 56,000 (six per cent) in the period 1981-2001 (as opposed to the urban core loss of 20,000 - five per cent down). Household growth, however, far exceeded population growth with the number of households in the city region increasing by nearly 14% between 1981 and 1991 and by almost as much in the following decade. Even in Bristol, with falling population, household formation remained strong with growth approaching 20 per cent. Stimulated by a relaxed planning regime, and combined with rapid employment growth, the city region faced - and faces - major challenges in terms of growth management, provision of affordable housing and the pursuit of sustainable development.

Bristol has a high level of car ownership - 20% of households had two cars at the time of the 1991 Census, 46% one car - and these cars are used heavily. There are 500,000 car movements every day in and out of the city centre. Traffic speeds have fallen, air pollution has risen, noise is a major problem in some parts of the city and traffic casualties are increasing. Addressing the transport problem is therefore a key concern with implications for health, safety, and sustainability.

There are, however, extreme differentials in car ownership between different parts of the city, creating different patterns of travel and offering different levels of access - to work, to services, to leisure. Car ownership is much lower in some wards than others, and often public transport fails to compensate for the lack of private means of transport. For example in the inner east city over 40% of mothers never drive; in inner north west Bristol the comparable figure is less than 10%. The Council's current transport plan recognises that the pattern of low car ownership and the pressure of congestion and the popularity of the car means that the transport system is making problems of social exclusion worse.

## Strategic planning and the LSP

Bristol has often been characterised as having fragmented governance and weak civic leadership, with the four unitary authorities formed after the demise of Avon County often finding it difficult politically and technically to work together<sup>8</sup>. The city itself has experienced three leaders in as many years, and now operates a 'shared administration' (more commonly known as a hung council).

Since the early 1990s partnership working has been pushed forward by the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative (BCCI) as much as by the city council, but for much of the 1990s Bristol lacked the ability to generate 'collaborative capacity'. In transport terms this has meant that a number of issues relating to accessibility within the city region remain outstanding, with transport widely seen as one of the major problems confronting an otherwise successful city. At the same time the city council has built a reputation as a forward looking transport authority with major initiatives on cycling, sustainability and park and ride. The VIVALDI (European funded) project looks to take forward a range of initiatives.

Given this history of fragmentation and lack of joined up working the new LSP faced major challenges at the outset. The early days of the LSP were fraught with difficulty, therefore, as a 75 strong Partnership Council sought to agree priorities and establish vision. Learning from experience, however, the Bristol Partnership has been rationalised into a 25 member body. The partnership, with its own (small) staff is supported by an Equalities Action Group and a Sustainable Development Action Group, and works through a Neighbourhood Renewal Working Group, a Regeneration Programme Management Group, and a Community Network (C-Net).

The Bristol Partnership's strategic objectives are expressed in the two complementary strategy documents of the Community Strategy and the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

The Community Strategy has five long term aims - achieving lifelong learning; building a thriving economy; strengthening local communities; promoting health and well being; and investing in a sustainable environment. There are in addition five shorter-term priorities for action - young people; the local economy; the environment; community safety; and transport.

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<sup>8</sup> Boddy M. *et al* (2003). *Urban Transportation and Urban Governance: Shaping the Competitive City of the Future*. The Policy Press, Bristol.

The transport priority element of the Strategy contains five actions.

Priority	Goal	ACTION	Objective	Target
Transport	To develop a sustainable transport system	Reliable, affordable, accessible and safe	Support the improvement of local bus services and promote their use (involving communities, negotiating with operators, lobbying government)	Increased bus reliability and accessibility Increase % of users satisfied from 40% in 2000/01 to 56% in 2006/07 15% increase in trips by local bus by 2006.
		Travel plans	Promote and support the adoption of Travel Plans by all LSP partners and other employers to reduce traffic congestion	Further 50 employers Increased use of Park and Ride Increase cycle use x 4 over 1988 levels by 2012 Reduce car traffic in the central area by 2005 and by 30% by 2015
		Air quality	LSP partners to support Don't Choke Bristol and other events	Achieve national Air Quality Strategy targets
	To create and develop attractive well designed safe streets, buildings and neighbourhoods	Home Zones	Support Home Zones promotion and consultation and implementation	Establish six Home Zones by 2006
		Accident reduction	LSP partners to take part in casualty reduction initiatives and campaigns	Reduce number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents to 126

All the actions have an action delivery plan, led by a relevant agency. All five transport actions are led by Bristol City Council Traffic and Transport, with a named officer taking the lead in putting together a response to the LSP on progress with the action delivery (by May 2004). There are good working links between the LSP co-ordinating staff and the action leaders in Traffic and Transport, and these leaders attend the relevant LSP meetings.

The **Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy** focuses on ten neighbourhoods, aiming to narrow the gap with national standards and to contribute to floor targets. Two of the latter are to reduce the number of killed or seriously injured (KSI) by 40%, to reduce the number of KSI children by 50%, and to tackle the higher incidence of accidents in disadvantaged communities. Reducing accidents is also a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target. Whilst there has been a drop overall in casualties, by March 2004 KSI numbers including children have risen from 14 to 17.

The 2003 Annual Progress Report<sup>9</sup> discusses road safety and social exclusion (pp. 27-28) pointing to a number of initiatives which are being piloted or developed in the priority neighbourhood wards. In addition The Dings (within the New Deal for Communities area) is a Home Zone whilst there is also financial support from Bristol City Council for Community Transport (from Urban Bus Challenge) and Dial a Ride.

Both strategic planning documents reflect issues identified in the Local Transport Plan 2003-06, and that plan addressed issues of social exclusion at a number of points. It identified a wide range of improvements for walking, cycling, and public transport which would make work, shopping, leisure and home more accessible but would also support safety and health. The Plan looked to extend accessibility through improved bus services, park and ride, community transport, light and traditional rail, and railbus. Walking and cycling would be assisted; Safe Routes to schools would be enhanced; access to employment opportunities developed.

The Annual Progress Report points to a number of ways in which transport is contributing to the social inclusion and neighbourhood agendas (e.g. Home Zones; Safer Routes to School; Community Transport). In addition the report identifies linkages with the then Health Authority in relation to access to health facilities (for which there are two targets in the LTP). The need to make linkages with the Crime and Disorder Partnership over safety issues is also noted in the review.

In a different strategic arena a Best Value Review of Integrated Transport, now (March 2004) in its early stages, is addressing four themes - staffing structures and partnerships, integrated funding and service delivery, equalities and transport accessibility, sustainable transport. The equalities and accessibility theme is chaired by a voluntary sector representative and supported by the City Council's Equalities unit.

### Organisational culture and joined up working

On paper then, transport is reflected in LSP owned strategic documentation - the Community Strategy and the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy - whilst accessibility issues are developed in the Local Transport Plan. Transport planners are engaged with the translation of the Community Strategy into Action and Delivery.

Interviews suggest a less direct relationship, however, between transport planning, accessibility and the LSP. The LSP has never explicitly discussed transport issues (including the controversial but crucial light rail project), and there is no transport representation on the LSP. Within Bristol City Council the focus of transport working is on the achievement of the targets in the Transport Plan, and with scarce resources, time spent on partnership working is seen as time subtracted from primary transport tasks.

In the last three years Bristol appears to have slipped from what was a strong position as a transport authority to one which must fight to maintain its position. This is attributed by two interviewees to the loss of political visibility following a change of control in the council and the shift from her cabinet position of a leading (and nationally known) champion of transport and planning issues. In part change in political control may have relegated transport in terms of council priorities. In part it may be the consequence of long-drawn out - and ultimately unsuccessful -

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<sup>9</sup> Bristol City Council (2003). *Bristol Local Transport Plan: Annual Progress Report 2003* Bristol City Council, Bristol.

negotiations on a light rail scheme; in part it may be the failure to achieve some of the transport targets in the Plan. Whatever the explanation some interviewees suggested that transport working was isolated from and disengaged from the wider web of Bristol's partnerships of community and neighbourhood; others described this as a focused approach on the priorities facing transport planners whose resources are stretched. The Director of Traffic and Transport was clear in his determination to maintain Bristol's strength as a transport authority and to improve performance in the terms in which transportation Bristol is judged - achievement of Transport Plan objectives and maximisation of transport grant to the city.

## Accessibility

The majority of the most disadvantaged wards in Bristol are in the south of the city but it is possible to identify a crescent of disadvantage covering the southern, eastern inner area and some northern wards. Data is available about the relative inaccessibility of wards in Bristol using the DTLR Index of Deprivation Accessibility data<sup>10</sup>. This relates primarily to access to services, and in national terms suggests relatively high accessibility as compared to rural areas in South Gloucestershire or North Somerset. Lawrence Hill, the most highly deprived ward in overall terms ranks low in inaccessibility.

Barton Hill was one of the areas covered by the TraC study of social exclusion and the provision and availability of public transport<sup>11</sup>. The study identifies the relatively cut off nature of the area in general and of the Dings in particular and points to the limiting nature of public transport and the considerable inconvenience caused to local residents. Interestingly the study mentions courtesy buses as possible competition to public transport, an issue also raised in a local transport discussion group. Public transport was the main focus for this group with observations about frequency, regularity, reliability and connections with other services. All these were linked to issues of bus shelters, of safety and of late night travel - for all age groups. It seemed that there was no particular priority to public transport in disadvantaged wards with the bus shelter programme for example related to number of elderly people rather than to issues of exclusion.

Southmead (and Westbury on Trym as a neighbouring 'control' area) was studied within the Rowntree project, reportedly as an example of 'hidden deprivation within a relatively affluent suburb<sup>12</sup>. With respect to access to services, all of the Southmead respondents either used public transport or walked for the majority of their trips. The adequacy of public transport was cited as a major problem but also the cost of transport and the absence of late night/early morning services. In Hartcliffe the Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership is to benefit from two new community buses (out of Urban Bus Challenge) whilst the first showcase bus route also serves Hartcliffe - an example of mainstream activities in transport assisting disadvantaged areas.

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<sup>10</sup> DfT and ONS are currently working on improved accessibility data for small areas (Wards) to supercede the current data used for the Deprivation Index and to support the development of accessibility planning.

<sup>11</sup> DETR (2000). *Social Exclusion and the Provision and Availability of Public Transport*. TraC at the University of North London for DETR. Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, London.

<sup>12</sup> Lucas K., Grosvenor T., and Simpson R. (2001). *Transport, the Environment and Social Exclusion*. York Publishing Services, York.

Some of this work has moved forward. Community at Heart (the Barton Hill NDC) is engaged with/has supported a number of transport projects.

- The Dings neighbourhood is benefiting from a liveability initiative that started up independently of the partnership, but which the partnership is now part funding. The sustainable transport organisation, Sustrans, is implementing a Home Zone scheme as part of an EU-funded transport project of which Bristol City Council is a partner. Sustrans have conducted extensive consultation for a plan that will reshape the Dings' streets to minimise the impact of cars and create more space for walking, cycling and recreation. Externally funded this contributes to one of the city council's transport targets in the Community Strategy.
- Improvements to kerbs, footpaths, potholes, road crossings, school routes through main programme highways budgets.
- Cycling - extension of the Bath/Bristol cycle track using Section 106 funding from the castle park development.
- Community Transport - the NDC had employed a community transport development officer for a short period, but despite this appointment community transport initiatives in the NDC area had not moved forward as much as had been hoped. In addition the purchase of a community bus (mainly for the older persons' group) was less effective than it might be and illustrates the problems of communities owning,/running/maintaining/managing their own community transport. There is now a new arrangement with Bristol Community Transport (BCT), with the NDC paying for driver and maintenance services from BCT.
- Urban Bus Challenge is funding a new bus service which links the NDC wards to the city centre.

There are few explicit links, however, between the LTA and the New Deal, other than over the Dings Home Zone, where staff from the council are providing important support to the initiative, although the project is facilitated/managed by Sustrans on behalf of the council. A number of the council's city wide schemes, however, benefit directly or indirectly either the NDC area or other neighbourhood renewal priority areas (e.g. a further Showcase bus route may follow Church Road in the NDC area). The City Council's bus strategy<sup>13</sup> highlights the importance of Dial a Ride and Community bus services and also points to its Integrated Equalities policy and the work currently being done on accessibility modelling.

BCT (18 vehicles, 2200 trips per annum, over 50,000 passengers, annual budget £300,000, 50% of which is provided by the city council), is involved with a number of community groups and community bus projects across the city. With over 200 member groups, BCT provides mini bus hire, drivers where needed, driver training (MiDAS), and vehicle purchase and maintenance support. It also helps to support and extend community bus services in a number of parts of the city, and through Urban Bus Challenge (channelled through the city council) has initiated a new service linking inner east Bristol to the city centre. Bristol Dial a Ride, also supported by the council, provides a bookable door to door service and is now extended throughout the city using both VIVALDI resources and Urban Bus Challenge.

In a paper addressing the response to the SEU report and the need for accessibility planning in the next Local Transport Plan, the City Council Traffic and Transport

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<sup>13</sup> Bristol City Council (2003). *Bus Strategy 2003-2006*. Dept. of Environment, Transport and Leisure, Bristol City Council, Bristol.

point to the current accessibility mapping analyses carried out with ACCMAP software linked through GIS to other socio-economic data. The potential for applying this to accessibility planning includes the production of accessibility based LTP targets, the use of ACCMAP in setting planning obligations, public transport accessibility indices, walking and cycling access, social exclusion and links with the 2001 census. Exemplars of data include mapping of public transport journey time contours, ward based car availability, walking to school accessibility contours, journey times to healthcare facilities, comparison of bus and car journey times and many more.

Accessibility, however, is about much more than movement and the provision of transport facilities, crucial as these are to the achievement of accessibility goals. The former Bristol Regeneration Partnership (the functions of which are now held by The Bristol Partnership) identified 'the accessible city' within its 2000 Community Regeneration Framework - looking to access to aid and advice, to e-information, and to the legible city to improve accessibility as well as to the more familiar improvements to public and private transport.

### The sub-regional issue

The Community Strategy says very little about the transport problems of the (former Avon) sub-region, and there are of course four LSPs for each of the unitary authority areas. A Joint Committee, together with a Joint Strategic Planning and Transport Unit supports cross-boundary issues, and until recently the West of England Strategic Partnership (WESP) provided a forum for discussion of broader strategic issues. WESP ceased to exist at the end of March 2004, and is to be succeeded by a new partnership to be formed to fulfill new planning responsibilities. But political differences dominate the sub-regional agenda to the north and south of Bristol, even if there are extensive operational links between officers (see table 8.2 of the Local Transport Plan 2003 Annual Progress Report). The Greater Bristol Strategic Transport study involves all four councils, but there is little evidence of LSP engagement with this long term agenda. The existence of four separate transport authorities is a matter of deep concern to local business interests who, through BCCI have stimulated the transport debate, linking the needs of economic growth within the city to wider sub-regional issues and aiming to address the needs of a transport 'banana' stretching from Weston super Mare through South Bristol to the Keynsham Bath corridor. Deeply concerned about the absence of a strategic forum for the sub-region, BCCI nevertheless contributes to LSP work in Bristol and leads one of the Best Value review groups.

## Broxbourne, East Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire

*This review is based on:*

- *A meeting held in Broxbourne on 27 January 2004 with officers of Broxbourne LSP*
- *Meetings held in Hertford on 12 January and 2 February 2004 with officers of Hertfordshire LSP and Hertfordshire County Council.*
- *Information on the websites of Broxbourne Borough Council, East Hertfordshire District Council ([www.eastherts.gov.uk](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk)) and Hertfordshire County Council ([www.hertsdirect.org.uk](http://www.hertsdirect.org.uk)).*
- *Published documents as referenced.*
- *Other material as supplied.*

### Context

Hertfordshire lies to the north of London, and includes a significant number of medium and small towns, none of which dominates the county. Its position means that commuting to central London jobs heavily influences its economy and society, with high average incomes overall and high levels of mobility. It is crossed by a number of trunk road and rail routes linking London with the Midlands and the North, with the M25 along the southern border. Administratively it lies within the Government's Eastern Region (it was part of the former SERPLAN area for regional planning purposes). Total population is 1,034,000 (2001), with 421,000 households.

Hertfordshire has a county council and ten district councils (a few of which have the status of borough councils). The County Council is the local transport and highway authority, and the strategic planning (Structure Plan) authority for the (current) Development Plan scheme.

There are eleven Local Strategic Partnerships within the county: one for the whole County, Herts Together, administered by the County Council; and one each for the ten district council areas. The latter are administered by the respective district councils, but the County Council works closely with them.

### Hertfordshire's Community Strategy and transport

Within the County Council, responsibility for community strategy work lies with the Assistant Chief Executives. The postholder recently moved from Corporate Services to the Environment Department, where she also acts as Assistant Director Strategy. As Assistant Chief Executive, she retains responsibility for the Economic and Community Development Unit which provides support for community strategy work across the districts and leads on Herts Together.

Herts Together was launched in October 2000, with a meeting to which approximately 70 identified stakeholders were invited. This identified five key issues, which were adopted as themes for development of the strategy. Over the following two years a Herts Together seminar for invited stakeholders was held on each of these five themes, the final one in late 2002. The results of these meetings together with key issues identified by the district LSPs have informed the county-wide Community Strategy which is due to be adopted at the end of May 2004. Work on the Action Plan will begin in June and be completed by December.

The draft strategy has five themes, each with a number of key priorities:

- Maintaining a sustainable environment
- Promoting healthy communities
- Creating safe communities
- Investing in children and young people
- Building a prosperous, inclusive society

Transport is included only within the first of these, as one of the six key priorities:

*"3. Encourage more sustainable modes of transport.*

*With a scattered settlement pattern, a buoyant economy and proximity to London, travel and transport are significant issues affecting the quality of life in Hertfordshire. Good transport links can improve choice for residents and businesses alike. They can also have negative impacts through accidents, pollution and noise as well as direct effects on landscape and natural habitats. In recent years, the emphasis has moved away from meeting the demand for travel by building new roads to widening choice and encouraging more sustainable forms of transport, especially for shorter journeys. Cycling and walking can bring added health benefits including those for children, and reduce traffic congestion at peak times. Encouraging more sustainable forms of transport as well as reducing the need to travel long distances will be key in helping to reduce the environmental impacts of new development throughout the county.*

*Objectives:*<sup>14</sup>

- *Work with partners to reduce the need for travel where ever possible particularly in new developments*
- *Increase numbers of children walking or cycling to school*
- *Decrease the isolation of more rural communities by improving passenger transport*
- *Encourage the adoption of Green Travel Plans by all major employers and schools across the county.*
- *Continue to improve road safety to reduce deaths and injury from road traffic accidents"*

The final theme, 'Building a prosperous, inclusive society' has as its first key priority:

*"Increasing Hertfordshire's economic competitiveness to grow a world class Hertfordshire" and includes within its objectives:*

- *"Develop strategic working arrangements with the Greater London Assembly and London Mayor on major issues such as transport and housing"*

The need for accessibility to facilities and services is implied within some of the other priorities but it is not specifically addressed. There is a long list of supporting documents, but this does not include any reference to Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan.

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<sup>14</sup> Also see Creating safer communities, priority 1, road safety

The strategy has been prepared by a group which consists of one representative each from the district council LSPs (10), one representative each from the countywide partnerships dealing with prosperity, children and young people, environment, and community safety, and representatives from the strategic health authority, police authority, business and community and voluntary groups. Information and issues developed by each theme group have been copied to a contact in relevant County Council department, who have referred them to relevant units and passed back comments. The County Council has responsibilities (powers and budgets) in a number of areas, and effectively is a key resource. However, it is also essential to accept that the Community Strategy belongs to the Herts Together partnership rather than the County Council. Thus certain balances (compromises) have had to be agreed.

This approach has also been taken for the information, issues and draft policies raised in the community planning by the ten district LSPs. Every draft section received has been passed round the departments for comment and the responses have been fed back to the LSP (or its topic group) in question. The County Council's approach to the district council LSPs however is one of maintaining a light touch and recognising the local ownership of them. Thus no attempt has been made to press changes to information or strategy. It is seen as important for county and district LSPs to inform and influence each other.

### Developing accessibility and transport

Accessibility issues are not directly identified in the Herts Together strategic work, or in most of the district council LSPs. The SEU report on transport was not specifically referred to in the development of issues. However, the topic of access is very important: examples exist of the need for improved access, e.g. for old people to essential facilities, for young people to leisure activities. Highway issues, including highway and footpath maintenance, clearance of overhanging trees, speed of traffic and maintenance of structure, have also come up frequently at local level. This accounts for the coverage of transport in the draft Herts Together Community Strategy; there is an awareness of their role within the two main cross-cutting themes of social inclusion and of sustainability. Measures to tackle them are likely to feature more fully in the Action Plan.

It is intended that a representative each from the Hertfordshire Highways and the County Council's Passenger Transport Unit will contribute to the development of relevant Action Plans, for both Herts Together and the districts' Community Strategies. The Transport Policies & Planning Unit will be involved, as the County Council's contribution should be made through its Local Transport Plan. At present the move towards specific actions is only in its early stages, and thus no specific experience has been gained in doing this work. Given the pressures on staff in transport delivery, it remains unclear how effectively this will be progressed.

There is concern that the main transport providers, especially of public transport, do not attend LSP groups. It has been the case for many years, e.g. requests were made for their involvement in the early days of the former Whole Settlement Strategy work, but they very rarely attended meetings or took any active involvement.

Management of the LSPs does involve staff resources, sometimes to a significant level. For example, East Hertfordshire has 5 area forums for its community planning, originally each with 6 or 7 topic groups. For the District Council to provide a member of staff for every meeting would be impossible; however, without this, groups are on occasions tending to cease activity.

## Developing Hertfordshire's Community Strategies

A view was expressed by Hertfordshire County Council officers that community strategies are most effective if they can produce recommendations which are firmly based in relation to the powers, resources and abilities of the local authorities (both county and district councils). This means that local people have to understand how local authorities work and what they can and cannot do. To achieve this requires a learning curve of perhaps several years. If this is done, then they may be empowered to bring forward achievable schemes. Often however the citizen elements of groups are dominated by the 'usual suspects', and this risks popular but unrealistic ideas gaining dominance.

Spatial (land use) planning is not really being involved in LSPs. For example, the East Hertfordshire LSP has seen attendance of the District Council's Assistant Director Strategy on a couple of occasions; however, the LSP's only strategic policies are opposition to expansion related to Stansted Airport and the M11 corridor. With the expected demise of the County Structure Plan, it is possible that Herts Together could become an important body for influencing the Regional Strategy, which will take on greater significance. In which direction however is uncertain. This can be affected by tensions between business interests, who may want to promote expansion of development and infrastructure, and environmental interests, who wish to oppose them. Even proposing to optimize development through seeking gain from it can be rejected.

Hertfordshire LSPs and Community Strategies are not affected by Neighbourhood Renewal Fund obligations. Therefore they do not have to gain accreditation or subsequently work to a performance management framework.

## Broxbourne and East Hertfordshire

The two districts of Broxbourne BC and East Hertfordshire DC cover the eastern edge of the County: the Lea Valley Corridor and the rural area to the north of that. This corridor features as a defined policy and action area in the Hertfordshire LTP. Both district councils have published community strategies: the Broxbourne Community Plan<sup>15</sup> and East Herts Together<sup>16</sup>. Membership of both district LSPs is very similar: the district council itself, the County Council, primary care trusts and housing associations active in the respective districts, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertford Regional College (which has sites in both districts), business interests, and a voluntary sector umbrella body.

Broxbourne is a primarily urban area, most of the population living along the built-up Lea Valley corridor. The Community Plan points towards a wide range of partnerships already in existence: although a good number of these concern small items. The policies included were drawn from a range of consultation exercises, which brought out nine main topics of concern, with development pressures/overbuilding, problems with young people and litter/dirty streets as the top three concerns; traffic congestion rated fourth, lack/poor quality of public transport rated eighth. The analysis of resources for public transport included useful maps showing the areas within and outside 200 metres of a main bus route, identifying 40% of people as living in property more than 200 metres from a bus route. However, the resource analysis

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<sup>15</sup> Broxbourne BC (2003). *Community Plan 2003-2006*. Broxbourne BC, Cheshunt.

<sup>16</sup> East Hertfordshire DC (2003). *East Herts Together*. East Hertfordshire DC, Hertford.

was rather less precise in identifying levels of service or how service provision might be addressed (its inaccuracies proved a matter of concern to the County Council's Passenger Transport Unit).

The Community Plan set out its policies in seven broad themes:

- Keeping the Borough healthy
- Maintaining a safe Borough
- Striving for a learning Borough
- Sustaining an economically prosperous Borough
- Meeting the need for homes
- Improving Transport and the Environment
- Maintaining Social Facilities

Access to hospitals is an issue raised in the first theme, otherwise transport gets little attention, except in the sixth theme. Even here the attention to it is combined with environmental management. The only issue mentioned is the growing number of elderly leading to higher concessionary spending by the Council; the only action identified is, in order to support more disadvantaged people, to support the Integrated Transport Partnership (ITP). The ITP is a project jointly between the County Council and local NHS to co-ordinate information on and development of community transport services.

East Herts Together establishes its policies on the basis of reviewing key issues drawn from public consultation, through a number of area forums. These include economy and employment, health, the needs of children and young people, and also traffic and transport. The main issue seen here is the rising levels of population and car ownership and the proximity of motorways, leading to rising car use, requiring alternatives; current initiatives are briefly mentioned. The Community Strategy sets out ten priorities:

- Protecting Our High Quality Environment
- Improving Transport and Traffic
- Providing Affordable Housing
- Safeguarding Our Neighbourhoods
- Combating Drug And Alcohol Use
- Supporting Parents And Families
- Supporting Vulnerable Children And Young People
- Supporting Vulnerable Adults
- Providing Opportunities For Older People
- Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

The priorities set out tend not to be cross-referenced. The first priority includes challenging airport expansion at Stansted and any consequent transport and development. Other than this, only the specifically transport priority focuses on transport. This focuses on innovative public transport for rural areas, safer routes to school, encouraging cycling, and better rail services to London; it too supports the Integrated Transport Partnership. It does identify the importance of transport for healthy living. The strategy points to the County Council's various transport policy and action documents, including the LTP, as the focus for addressing the priorities.

Examples exist in Hertfordshire of schemes which have been proposed by local groups within the LSP framework which have been taken forward and also which have not. For example East Hertfordshire LSP forums suggested:

- Improvement to the planting, etc. of roundabouts at the end of the bypass which had not been adopted by local companies (Buntingford). These were adopted by local people in groups, with the agreement of the Highways Agency.
- A bus link directly to Bishops Stortford (Buntingford). This was achieved through the 700 Bishops Stortford - Buntingford - Stevenage, funded by the Rural Bus Challenge, organised by the Passenger Transport Unit.
- A lorry ban in the Hertford area (Hertford). This is proposed for submission to the Hertford Transport Forum, which only meets once a year, and seems doubtful.

LSP THEMES - HERTS TOGETHER AND DISTRICT BASED COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

	<b>Building a prosperous inclusive society</b>	<b>Promoting healthy communities</b>	<b>Creating safer communities</b>	<b>Maintaining a sustainable environment</b>	<b>Investing in children and young people</b>
<b>East Herts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing</li> <li>• Supporting vulnerable adults</li> <li>• Older people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime prevention</li> <li>• Combating drugs</li> <li>• Promoting healthy lifestyles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe and secure homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High quality environment</li> <li>• Traffic and transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable young people</li> <li>• Parenting</li> </ul>
<b>Broxbourne</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Striving for a learning borough</li> <li>• Maintaining social facilities</li> <li>• Sustaining economic prosperity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping the borough healthy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining a safe borough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving liveability</li> </ul>	
<b>Welwyn Hatfield</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning throughout life</li> <li>• Prospering businesses</li> <li>• Decent homes for all</li> <li>• Enjoying life in Welwyn Hatfield</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing healthy living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safer community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the environment</li> <li>• Getting about in Welwyn Hatfield</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing young people's potential</li> </ul>
<b>North Herts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Education and lifelong learning</li> <li>• Community development and leisure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning, environment and town centres</li> <li>• Transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people</li> </ul>
<b>Stevenage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong communities and opportunities for all</li> <li>• Prosperous town</li> <li>• Learning and creative town</li> <li>• Affordable housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy and caring town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern town centre and thriving neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Sustainable environment and excellent transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investing in young people</li> </ul>

	<b>Building a prosperous inclusive society</b>	<b>Promoting healthy communities</b>	<b>Creating safer communities</b>	<b>Maintaining a sustainable environment</b>	<b>Investing in children and young people</b>
<b>St Albans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning, leisure and the arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A healthy well, housed and caring community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safer St Albans and District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the move; working and travelling in St Albans and District</li> <li>• Safeguarding the environment and heritage</li> </ul>	
<b>Dacorum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible local employment</li> <li>• Lifelong learning</li> <li>• Meeting housing need</li> <li>• Community involvement</li> <li>• Culture, arts and leisure opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving health and social care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing crime, feeling safe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A cleaner, healthier environment</li> <li>• Effective and sustainable transportation</li> </ul>	
<b>Watford</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing</li> <li>• Better place to work and do business</li> <li>• Building stronger communities</li> <li>• Learning chances for everyone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping everyone to better health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer place to be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaner, greener, less congested town</li> <li>• Making Watford a nicer place to visit</li> <li>• Lively, friendly town centre</li> </ul>	
<b>Hertsmere</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving accessibility of services</li> <li>• Addressing inequalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing health inequalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a safer environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving and sustaining the quality of the environment</li> </ul>	
<b>Three Rivers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prosperous communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthier communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable communities</li> </ul>	

## Easington and Durham

*This review is based on:*

- *A meeting held in Durham on 16 March 2004 with officers of Durham County Council*
- *A meeting held in Easington on 16 March 2004 with officers of East Durham LSP and Easington District Council*
- *Information on the websites of Easington District Council ([www.easington.gov.uk](http://www.easington.gov.uk)) and Durham County Council ([www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)).*
- *Published documents as referenced.*
- *Other material as supplied.*

### Durham County - context and partnerships

The County of Durham lies in the North East, just to the south of Tyne & Wear. Its population is 493,000 (2001), with 207,000 households. It includes the city of Durham, reputed for its cathedral and university, and five other district council areas, some of which face severe economic and environmental problems from heavy loss of industry and coal mining over the last two decades. The main transport axis is north - south (A1(M) and main line railway through the west side, A19 and coastal railway on the east side). Administratively it lies within the North East Region.

There are eight Local Strategic Partnerships within the county. For the whole County there is the County Durham Strategic Partnership, administered by the County Council; and there is one LSP in five of the six district council areas, and two in one. The latter are administered by the respective district councils, but the County Council works closely with them.

The County Partnership has representatives on it from all seven local LSPs, the County Council and six district councils, the five Primary Health Trusts in the county, and 28 other bodies, including NHS trusts, Durham Constabulary, the fire service, and various business, economic, environmental and public service organisations.

Within the County Council, responsibility for managing the LSPs lies within the Chief Executive's department, directed by the Deputy Chief Executive (Policy), and managed by the Head of Corporate Policy and her team. They liaise with the managers of the district level LSPs but they also focus strongly on linking up with the main regional bodies to promote the county's overall interests.

Durham County Council recognises the need to work with district councils (they also sit on the LTP Partnership Forum) and to reflect the needs of the various districts. For this reason there are Area Member Panels, where local members can deal with local issues, in co-operation with district and parish councils.

### County Community Strategy and transport

The County draft Community Strategy 'A Clearer Vision for the future' was published in July 2003<sup>17</sup> for widespread consultation. Work is now in hand to finalise the strategy in the light of consultation responses: it is intended that this will be completed in April 2004. The draft strategy is essentially a sub-regional one, led by business interests, rather than community-based. Its 12 challenges (policy priorities)

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<sup>17</sup> County Durham Strategic Partnership (2003). *A Clearer Vision for the future*. County Durham Strategic Partnership, Durham.

have been developed primarily from the various business policies of the member bodies, pulled together through the Partnership's work.

Transport is a challenge in its own right, and the exact title is Integrated Transport Network. This reflects concerns over access drawn from the other policy areas adopted as challenges by the Partnership. In the light of these, it is also the one challenge that is deemed to have significant links with all other challenges. The main policies in the transport challenge reflect those of the LTP, input by the County Council as LTP authority. However, those in the draft strategy focus on sub-regional movement, as the basis of improving accessibility of areas rather than people locally; the public transport components include proposals for extensions to the Tyne & Wear Metro and upgrading of other strategic corridors. Thus the focus is largely on movement to reach places, and by implication this is neither sustainable nor equitable. Work on drafting the final version of the strategy has incorporated possible revisions to this, to give a much stronger place for local and sustainable transport policies and projects.

The County Council had developed a Local Transport Plan Partnership Forum as part of its work on the first LTP and the APRs. This remains in existence, but now also forms the transport theme group for the County Partnership. It will play an important role in the new LTP, for which workshops are already being held. The district LSPs will be consulted as part of this process.

The district LSPs do invite transport representatives to specific meetings. These include both the County Council's Community Transport team and the main bus operators in the area. The Durham County Council and Easington District Council officers note that bus operators rarely attend, as they consider discussion too general to make it worthwhile giving time to it (they do attend the LTP Partnership Forum meetings). The Community Transport team, who are part of the Passenger Transport Unit, do attend where invited.

One of this team's functions is to educate local community groups in the real opportunities and barriers of community and public transport. Educating other functions and interests in the realities of transport is an important role for the Durham County Council transport function; this they see as very important, as they consider that there remains a widespread ignorance and hence opportunities are being lost and new problems created. In principle the development of LSPs offers a valuable opportunity to bring co-ordination into this area, but so far it has not really happened.

The co-ordination established by partnerships, and its implications for accessibility planning, also needs to apply to spatial planning and location of facilities. For example, Durham County Council transport functions are now pressing their education colleagues to consider very fully the transport implications of relocating schools, and similarly trying to have this importance of access written into the management and location policies of their economic development colleagues. The intention is that this approach should feature in the new LTP. So far progress is slow.

The district LSPs are closely linked to the district councils, who have no transport responsibilities, and thus consideration of transport is not always based on informed understanding of the issues and opportunities (but all the district councils are members of the LTP Partnership Forum and so they are informed through that). Local LSPs' thinking tends to be parochial. Examples exist even at County Council level, e.g. the transport implications of relocating schools are rarely considered. This is

likely to have particularly important implications if accessibility planning is to be used successfully. There are signs of change, but they are slow. At least one example in the county is led by the chief executive of a Primary Care Trust, who wishes to improve community transport as an important element of improving access to health facilities and services.

### Resources for community strategy projects

A crucial issue is that of funding, both for staffing and for projects. Contributing to LSPs and developing good accessibility planning both put pressure on existing staff resources, especially with the strong focus on delivering projects. Accessibility planning will probably throw up additional needs for local provision of services and/or additional community and public transport. Some might be met by existing services, and one or two opportunities may exist for reducing existing services. But for the most part extra funding is likely to be needed. From the transport end, some could usefully go to development of existing mainstream services, some to improving people's knowledge about existing services (which is often very weak indeed), and other funds might be needed to develop local community transport (support payments to existing taxi/minibus operators, or purchase of vehicles and provision of advice to community groups). All of these will be less efficient than the existing main bus services, and thus will require a higher level of funding per passenger.

NRF and other complementary funds are useful, but relatively small. This year the total LTP spending by Durham County Council amounts to about £17 million, whereas, for example, NRF has contributed £65,000 for a dropped kerbs programme in Easington, and similar for Sedgefield. It has also part-funded a Home Zone in Thornley, Durham, through Groundwork Trust. The County Council intends to carry out a five year 'urban renaissance' programme, in line with the ODPM 'liveability' principles, with funding partly from its own sources (land sales), but this requires complementary funding too; the hope is that match funding will be secured from other sources including the NRF. However, all this runs in parallel with a decline in funding for existing transport facilities and services; providing for new initiatives becomes very difficult when existing bus services are being reduced, adding to the deprivation for those groups relying on them. NRF funds for community transport are normally granted only for new services: they cannot be secured for services to replace bus routes withdrawn due to reduction in subsidies.

This also applies to road schemes, especially beyond pure construction. For example, work is due to start soon on a bypass at Chilton, with major scheme funding through the LTP; the County Council is seeking to assemble complementary funds to improve conditions on the local roads thus relieved of through traffic, but only limited amounts will be able to be drawn from the integrated block of the LTP and most of it needs to be found from other non-LTP sources.

### East Durham - context and LSP

Easington forms one of the more heavily deprived local authority areas in Great Britain. Its population is 94,000 (2001) with 39,000 households. A good proportion of its residents live in former colliery villages. These were heavily reliant on mining for employment, while many activities were strictly local; but all coal mining has now ceased. A proportion live in the new town of Peterlee. Its population is now stable after some years of decline, and one-third are over 60. Average incomes are low, one third of the population are dependent on public benefits, and car ownership is thus relatively low.

The East Durham LSP is managed by the District Council's Regeneration and Partnerships Team. The LSP has produced both a Community Strategy<sup>18</sup> and a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS)<sup>19</sup>. The former sets out aspirations for the well being of the area, in terms of its economy, environment and society; the latter forms a vision and plan for positive change in those areas in need of renewal. When seeking a first round of EU funding, the Council identified 17 out of 26 wards as falling within the category of serious need; for a second round, the number had risen to 22 out of 26. For this reason, appraisal of needs was carried out throughout the district. The LNRS fed into the Community Strategy.

The target date for the Community Strategy is 2010. It is intended to be reviewed regularly. It contains four main themes, for each of which the issues are spelt out, and actions and success measures listed. These are at present set out in general terms, but the LSP is now working on developing specific programmes and taking them forward through the member bodies. Transport coverage is relatively limited, mentioned within only two themes: the issues and actions are listed for each of the themes, which are:

- Economy
  - Transport provision poor
    - Subsidise travel to/from employment centres
    - Better transport infrastructure for employment opportunities
- Environment
  - Some communities are isolated - facilities are difficult to reach - car ownership is low
    - Improve rail provision
    - Introduce user-friendly bus services
    - Improve traffic flows
    - Link roads to local cycle network
    - Build new roads to improve access
- Learning Culture
- Community

Within the Community Strategy there are two main cross-cutting issues: young people, and transport. It is intended to focus on these within the actions being progressed. So far actions have involved individual projects where these have been possible within current resources and programmes of the member bodies. Work is now in hand by the LSP to establish the necessary programmes to implement the Community Strategy, with resources being sought to meet needs. The Community Strategy priorities now drive the Council's corporate strategies.

Transport has been seen as important from the start. This reflects the abrupt change from the very local lifestyles of people in the colliery villages to the need to travel to find work and services. The Council is focusing heavily on creating new employment, much of it in new employment sites located where land is available. New link roads have been seen as important in this, in order to open up these sites and encourage employers to take them up. There has been moderate success, although some of the premises have been taken up for call centres rather than manufacturing and distribution. In seeking to boost employment, and also training, the question of how

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<sup>18</sup> East Durham Local Strategic Partnership (2002). *Community Strategy - 'East Durham 2010 - a great place for everyone'*. East Durham Local Strategic Partnership, Easington.

<sup>19</sup> East Durham Local Strategic Partnership (2002). *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy for the District of Easington*. East Durham Local Strategic Partnership, Easington.

people reach locations has rather been left to one side. Of the new sites, a good proportion is not on any current public transport. Workers at them, especially those used for call centres or similar service activities, are mostly younger people, and many of them work shifts. So most travel to these new sites is by car; reaching them by any other means is usually very difficult.

There is a good range of mainstream bus services, but these are often circuitous. To meet the identified needs, major changes in services would be needed. For this reason local bus, minibuses and taxi services have been put on in some places to get people to jobs. In some cases new bus services have started well but then have faded, because the steady employment which people gained through being able to reach new employment centres enabled them to buy a car and travel to work by that instead.

There are links with the County Local Transport Plan Partnership Forum but this is a wide group and covers mainly strategic transport matters. It is reactive rather than proactive over district level issues. Thus the main links with the County Council are over specific projects. In the District Council's view, regeneration and related factors should be far more strongly weighed in transport decisions and priorities, especially for public transport.

The main transport priorities for the District Council are the east west road link between the A19 and the A1 (a joint interest with Sunderland), upgrading of the coastal railway to higher frequencies and modern trains with stops at all settlements, and bus routes to key developments. A link to the Tyne & Wear Metro at Sunderland is also deemed important.

Review of the Local Plan, to become the Local Development Framework, will be carried out, with the Community Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy as the main source of policies. This may also see rather more focus on location of employment, services and homes related to transport patterns and provision.

## Eastleigh and Hampshire

*This review is based on:*

- *A meeting held in Winchester on 30 March 2004 with officers of Eastleigh LSP, Hampshire LSP and Hampshire County Council*
- *Information on the websites of Eastleigh Borough Council ([www.eastleigh.gov.uk](http://www.eastleigh.gov.uk)), Hampshire Partnership ([www.hampshirestrategicpartnership.org.uk](http://www.hampshirestrategicpartnership.org.uk)) and Hampshire County Council ([www.hants.gov.uk](http://www.hants.gov.uk)).*
- *Published documents as referenced.*
- *Other material as supplied.*

*Eastleigh/Hampshire has been selected jointly as a case study with Southampton. The joint case studies are intended to enable examination of strategic working in South-West Hampshire which is a relatively affluent mixed urban/rural growth area (although with pockets of deprivation).*

### Geographical context

Hampshire is the third largest shire county in the UK and has a population of some 1.25 million. Most of the county is rural in nature but 87% of the population live in urban areas. Hampshire is administered by the county council, 11 district or borough councils and 251 parish councils. The cities of Southampton and Portsmouth have their own, separate administrations.

The Borough of Eastleigh is located in the south of Hampshire and has a population of 115,000 people. It is located immediately to the north and east of Southampton. Apart from the main town of Eastleigh, it includes Chandlers Ford and the parishes of Bishopstoke, Fair Oak, West End, Hedge End, Botley, Bursledon, Netley and Hamble-le-Rice.

Eastleigh has a relatively prosperous local economy with low unemployment. It has experienced a shift from transport and manufacturing industries to high-tech manufacturing and service industries. It has an expanding small business sector. A problem it faces is the recruitment and retention of staff, particularly key workers. Lack of affordable housing is a factor in this. Future growth in the Borough is focused on major proposals for redevelopment and change within the existing urban areas.

Eastleigh is part of an axis of urban development along the M27 motorway corridor stretching from Totton in the west to Havant in the east and including Southampton and Portsmouth. It comprises a population of some one million people. The growth in development and travel along the corridor (particularly in car commuting) has resulted in congestion problems on the M27.

### Hampshire LTP

The Hampshire LTP for 2001 - 2006<sup>20</sup> emphasises that transport needs to be considered with respect to wider policies, including social inclusion, and requires joint working between transport bodies and other organisations. Hampshire adopts the Government's five overarching objectives (integration, environment, safety, accessibility and economy) as strategic themes but also states that it tests its plans

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<sup>20</sup> Hampshire County Council (2000). *Local Transport Plan 2001 - 2006*. Hampshire County Council, Winchester.

against other themes (health, schools, optimising the network, sustainable development, social inclusion, crime and fear of crime).

The LTP acknowledges that accessibility 'is the means to access facilities with or without travel'. In terms of plans to address accessibility the LTP concentrates on mobility-enabled access. In particular it focuses on the needs of elderly and disabled people for which it has developed an Accessible Transport Strategy. Hampshire has jointly developed with its districts and Southampton and Portsmouth an accessibility model (ACCMAP) for Hampshire which can be used for measuring the level of accessibility by car and public transport to new and potential developments and determining car parking standards and developer contributions to transport improvements.

The LTP acknowledges that social inclusion is strongly linked to accessibility and when considering social inclusion considers measures to avoid groups of the community being excluded from the transport system (community transport, Rural Transport Partnership Fund bids). Targets for accessibility and social inclusion include use of Accessibility Indices in development decisions and introduction of multi-purpose bus services and hail and ride services.

Hampshire's approach to transport is based on joint working with district councils and unitary authorities through Joint Member Panels for the ten Area Transport Strategies which cover the county. These Local Area Transport Panels invite up to three members of the LSP to act as representatives and ensure effective communication takes place. Partnership working with businesses, transport operators and local communities also plays an important part in developing the Area Transport Strategies. Eastleigh is a partner in the Southampton Area Transport Strategy (SATS). This covers the travel-to-work area of Southampton. Cooperation took place to develop consistent strategies for Southampton in its 2001/2 - 2005/6 LTP and for Hampshire's Southampton Area Transport Strategy in Hampshire's 2001/2 - 2005/6 LTP.

The Southampton Area Transport Strategy (SATS) has been developed and refined by the county council, district councils of Eastleigh, Test Valley and New Forest and Southampton city council since 1992. It sets out a vision, aims, objectives, targets and key indicators. It identifies stakeholders whose involvement is necessary to successfully deliver the strategy. Initiatives proposed for the Borough of Eastleigh include improvements to the Eastleigh town centre public transport interchange, town centre strategies to improve access by non-car modes, a Quality Bus Partnership in conjunction with Southampton and Winchester local authorities to cover three routes which link settlements across the Borough with Eastleigh town centre, Southampton and Winchester, a public transport investment programme, Green Travel Plans, School Travel Plans and further development of cycling and pedestrian networks.

SATS identifies that funding has been obtained to reopen Chandlers Ford railway station and provide a service connecting it to Eastleigh and Southampton. Other longer term rail projects being considered are the South Hampshire Rapid Transit and the Eastleigh Chord.

It notes that Southampton City Council wishes to introduce Park and Ride sites in the medium term for people to access Southampton city centre and that these are likely to be outside its boundary, requiring joint working with Hampshire and relevant districts (Eastleigh is the most likely to be affected).

The LTP refers to the draft Borough of Eastleigh Transport Strategy (BETS) which is consistent with SATS and is to be incorporated in the Local Plan for Eastleigh in 2000. The LTP notes that a study published in 1997 showed that residents in the south of the Borough have difficulty in accessing a range of services (e.g. doctors, leisure facilities) and made recommendations to address this, many of which are included in the LTP. One measure to be considered was a 'Hamble Hopper' linking the parishes of Netley, Hamble and Bursledon to provide access to local medical, retail and leisure facilities.

In the latest annual progress report<sup>21</sup> (2003 APR) Hampshire reports general progress in delivering its LTP and highlights the reopening of the rail line to Chandlers Ford and increasing investment in bus quality partnerships. It describes work being carried out to address accessibility. It states that it is widening its initiatives to address all individuals, rather than concentrate on the mobility impaired. It notes that Hampshire is a member of the DfT Working Group on Accessibility Planning and is helping to develop pilot approaches. The use of the ACCMAP accessibility model is now planned to be extended for identifying accessibility to health, education, employment and food outlets and will consider walking and cycling access as well as car and public transport access. Hampshire has worked with Eastleigh to make sure ACCMAP is useful to Eastleigh's needs.

The role of LSPs is discussed in the annual progress report. Hampshire is taking an active role in 'nurturing' the district LSPs so that they can 'deliver the plans, strategies and projects contained in the LTP'. The report notes that initially the district-level LSPs have tended to focus on immediate solutions to local issues and that they could provide more value by broadening their scope of deliberation. Hampshire County Council has a role to play in helping to build the capacity of the LSPs and actively support them in fulfilling this role. In order for the County Council to be able to be more responsive to the requests for support from LSPs, a more flexible approach to the LTP from central government is needed.

### Sub-regional transport partnerships

The Solent Transport Partnership launched in March 2003 aims to strengthen transport co-ordination through partnership working of all those who have a responsibility or interest in transport planning and provision in South Hampshire. It brings together Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council and a range of transport operators, business interests and infrastructure providers to work together to address congestion through providing a wider choice of transport. A variety of initiatives are being undertaken with the most notable being the recent launch of a Solent Travelcard. Other initiatives being considered jointly are the South Hampshire Rapid Transit (SHRT), Quality Bus Partnerships and a study of the development of Southampton Airport as a regional transport hub.

The three local authorities responsible for highways (Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton) are considering submitting a joint LTP submission in 2005 covering the whole South Hampshire area. A common section on the Solent Transport Partnership was included in the 2003 APRs.

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<sup>21</sup> Hampshire County Council (2003). *Local Transport Plan 2001 - 2006. Annual Progress Report July 2003*. Hampshire County Council, Winchester.

A sub-regional approach to economic development is also being pursued through, Promoting Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), a South-East Economic Development Agency (SEEDA) initiative including representation from the Chief Executives of the local authorities of Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and districts.

### Hampshire Strategic Partnership

The LSP for Hampshire, the Hampshire Strategic Partnership, has 32 steering group members from organisations and partnerships across the county. It is administered by the county council and three county councillors represent the county council on the steering group. Two members of the steering group represent transport interests (the Strategic Rail Authority and Stagecoach). Hampshire Coalition of Disabled People and Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils also have particular interest in the accessibility and rural exclusion agendas.

The Hampshire Strategic Partnership adopted the Community Strategy for Hampshire<sup>22</sup> in May 2004. It notes that the 11 district level LSPs are also developing community strategies but that the county one differs from these in taking a strategic and cross cutting approach and identifying 'where working together on a larger scale can provide a better solution'. It also notes that the LSPs in Hampshire, including those in Portsmouth and Southampton, will work closely together to achieve the best outcomes and avoid duplication in efforts, as well as facilitating cross-boundary working where possible.

In preparing the Community Strategy use has been made of information from surveys, consultations and other information. The vision is that 'Hampshire will be a prosperous and attractive county for all, where economic, social and environmental needs are met in the most sustainable way and the quality of life and sense of community of present and future generations is improved'. Four cross-cutting themes with associated outcomes for the next 10-15 years are identified. The four cross-cutting themes are:

- Strong and safe communities
- Health and well-being
- Economic prosperity and lifelong learning
- Environment, infrastructure and transport

Providing access to services is a recurring issue across all four themes. This applies to existing communities and new communities. Reducing congestion and providing sustainable alternatives to the car are identified as key issues for the third and fourth theme.

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<sup>22</sup> Hampshire Strategic Partnership (2003). *Hampshire Today, Hampshire Tomorrow - a Community Strategy for Hampshire: Draft*. Hampshire Strategic Partnership.

A Development Plan for 2004-2007 is outlined which includes six areas for priority action. These are:

- Tackling deprivation
- Promoting a common understanding of the development needs of Hampshire communities over the next 20 years
- Improving accessibility
- Reducing inequalities
- Protecting and enhancing the Hampshire environment
- Supporting the Hampshire economy

In addressing these six areas key issues are affordable housing (it is recommended that the spatial strategy should consider what is set out in community strategies in respect of this), scrutinising and influencing the plans of existing partnerships and a joint approach to access to services (investigating factors that affect access to services and issues relating to taking services to people).

### Eastleigh Strategic Partnership

The LSP for Eastleigh, the Eastleigh Strategic Partnership, has published a Community Plan Consultation document<sup>23</sup> in 2003 for comment by the end of January 2004. The LSP is administered by the Borough Council and receives support from Hampshire County Council. Contributors to the Community Plan Consultation document include officers and councillors from the Borough and County and representatives from other organisations (e.g. The Environment Agency, Hampshire Children's and Family Forum). The document contains a vision for 'a confident and vibrant Borough, with new leisure facilities and shops in Eastleigh town, better facilities and support for our parishes, with access for all to services both close to home and "on-line", a place where people can have pride in their community'. Four cross-cutting themes are identified which are sustainability, access, partnerships and sharing information. For access it is identified that 'all partners need to consider accessibility as they develop projects and services' and barriers can include:

- Finance
- Mobility
- Level of education/understanding
- Language
- Disability
- Time or location of service delivery
- Physical arrangements

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<sup>23</sup> Eastleigh Strategic Partnership (2003). *Eastleigh Borough Community Plan Consultation*. Eastleigh Strategic Partnership.

Eight topic areas are identified with specific priorities identified for the period (i) up to 2007; (ii) 2015; and (iii) beyond 2015:

- Community safety
- Employment
- Environment
- Health and wellbeing
- Housing
- Leisure
- Life long learning
- Transport

The transport topic area has been co-ordinated by a local councillor for Hampshire County Council and Eastleigh Borough Council. It includes a range of ideas for transport system improvements and some other ideas (e.g. concessionary fares for all young people in full-time education, links with Youth Forum and Elderly Care agencies).

### Current issues

Eastleigh is an exception to other district councils in Hampshire in considering accessibility as a cross-cutting issue and considering non-mobility solutions to access problems. In other districts access has been considered at a service level (e.g. access to hospitals) and normally public transport solutions have been proposed without realistic consideration of funding availability and of the alternative of bringing services to people. A greater comprehension of the accessibility planning approach is required at a district level and there may be a role in the county providing educational support on this.

Transport is usually the subject of a theme group in the district LSPs and there usually is district officer representation (usually officer with public transport responsibility). Often however, the proposals that emerge are unrealistic. Hampshire County Council is not able to provide sufficient specialist transport officer support for all LSPs to help to ensure realistic proposals are put forward. A greater emphasis by the district LSPs on strategic thinking as opposed to detailed action plans would be welcomed by Hampshire and efforts have been made in this direction.

It is envisaged that the LSPs will have an input into the LTP development process, especially since county officers have been involved with supporting the district LSPs. The LSP work will help in producing a shared vision for the county and transport strategies for the county and for particular areas. The LSPs also offer excellent fora for consultation and co-ordinating policy delivery and will be integral to LTP development.

Progress on the next LTP is at an early stage at present. Hampshire County Council is keen to see the next LTP as a continually developing plan which can accommodate a gradually more sophisticated treatment of accessibility planning as it evolves. It is foreseen that priority will need to be given to access to particular services such as hospitals and further education, rather than tackling all services from the start. A specific approach to accessibility planning is not determined yet and is dependent on DfT guidance. For example, it is unclear whether a top-down county-led approach or bottom-up district/LSP-led approach will be adopted. It is considered likely that analysis will be undertaken by the county but that districts/LSPs will be involved in

advising on actions and assessing consistency with the district Community Strategy and in co-ordinating delivery of actions.

Addressing cross-boundary issues is not considered to be too great a problem for district LSPs in Hampshire, given support from the county and the fact that many partners on LSPs represent a larger area than the district. The existence of other cross-boundary partnerships (e.g. Hampshire Economic Partnership, Solent Partnership) is also helpful to cross-boundary working in Hampshire.

It is the view that the framework for the next round of LTPs needs to be carefully designed to be able to accommodate accessibility planning implications. For example, the use of performance indicators needs to be flexible enough to accommodate accessibility objectives as well as other objectives.

## Leeds and West Yorkshire

*This review is based on:*

- *Meetings held in Leeds on 26 February 2004 with officers of Leeds Initiative and West Yorkshire PTE*
- *Information on the websites of Leeds Initiative ([www.leedsinitiative.org](http://www.leedsinitiative.org)) and West Yorkshire PTE ([www.wypte.gov.uk](http://www.wypte.gov.uk)).*
- *Published documents as referenced.*
- *Other material as supplied.*

### The Leeds Initiative

The Leeds Initiative was created in 1990, as a basis for partnership between the local authority, Leeds City Council, and other organisations, notably business interests. Leeds is a major city, the largest in West Yorkshire, with a population of 715,000 (2001), with 302,000 households, but it lacks the strategic structure of similar cities in mainland Europe. The initiative was intended as a basis for more co-operation over matters of common interest, and operated with a very small secretariat. It was expanded into a full community planning organisation in 1997, holding its first public consultation on issues in 1998. This led to the first Vision<sup>24</sup> being published in 1999. This had six main themes, and theme groups were established to address these.

The Initiative now has an office of nine staff. It has a non-executive Board of 36 organisations, and an Executive of 15. There are now three elements to the membership, with community and voluntary sector representatives added to the Council and business interests. Members are selected to contribute to the Initiative's discussions and work, which generally concerns high levels economic and social issues, thus some very valuable organisations may be excluded because their role is inappropriate; but liaison is maintained with such organisations so as to use/support any contribution they may make to the city. Overall the Initiative does retain a strong business focus, unlike some LSPs (e.g. Bradford has a much stronger community focus, reflecting its recent history of social unrest). Most of the staffing and related costs are met by Leeds City Council; in principle the Initiative remains an independent body, in practice it has to recognise that the City Council is the formal representative body for people in Leeds.

### The Vision for Leeds

A further period of public consultation was carried out in 2003. This led to development of a new Vision<sup>25</sup>, due for publication in 2004. This forms a more comprehensive strategy for the city, with the main themes being inter-related, and significant advances in thinking on some areas. It defines the current trends and achievements under two main headings:

- A dynamic city - thriving economy, vibrant city centre, a leading centre of learning, a modern transport system, a recognised regional capital.
- A diverse city - a place of many parts, safe and secure places, regeneration and renewal, a diverse economy, a reputation for environmental excellence, a wide range of cultural facilities.

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<sup>24</sup> Leeds Initiative (1999). *Vision for Leeds 1999-2009*. Leeds Initiative, Leeds.

<sup>25</sup> Leeds Initiative (2004). *Vision for Leeds 2004-2020*. Leeds Initiative, Leeds.

It has three main aims:

- Going up a league as a city - making Leeds an internationally competitive city - the best place in the country to live, work and learn, with a high quality of life for everyone.
- Narrowing the gap between the most disadvantaged people and communities and the rest of the city.
- Developing Leeds' role as the regional capital, contributing to the national economy as a competitive European city, supporting and supported by a region that is becoming increasingly prosperous.

To achieve these, it sets out priorities in terms of major programmes. The first of these is 'Improve public transport': it stresses the importance of building the Leeds Supertram system as a key part of an improved transport system which is deemed 'essential to helping us achieve the aims and ambitions of Vision for Leeds'.

The second Vision has eight main themes:

- Cultural life
- Enterprise and the economy
- Environment city
- Harmonious communities
- Health and wellbeing
- Learning
- Transport system
- Thriving places

The transport theme is defined as 'A modern transport system - Safe, sustainable and effective transport'. Its aims are to:

- Provide a safe, sustainable and modern transport system;
- Improve regional, national and international transport connections;
- Reduce the need to travel; and
- Create a sustainable travel culture.

The revised Vision concludes with a section on implementation, 'How we will make it happen'. The emphasis is on partnership working, with the theme group structure being revised to take account of the current eight themes. However, consideration is being given to merging the two groups concerned with regeneration (Harmonious communities and Thriving places) and defining them as a Regeneration Executive, with the existing Executive refocused on the other 2 aims.

The Vision is written in plain English. This makes clear what the Initiative's views and policies are, and are not. This is valuable in making it clear what actions need to be in member bodies' plans and hence what steps might be taken to implement them. Using popular phraseology and jargon can allow policies to become vague and hence not valid as a basis for action by partners on an agreed basis.

### Developing the Leeds Vision

Leeds is a Neighbourhood Renewal Fund area. While there is a specific neighbourhood and renewal partnership, the main leadership remains with Leeds City Council. There is a robust strategy for this, and a number of good schemes have been delivered, with more to come. The strategy is based on analysis through GIS related statistics,

and this offers potential for further analysis, not so far used. Largely the neighbourhood renewal work concentrates on the most obvious area, with multiple deprivation (reflecting e.g. ethnic minorities, low income, etc.) However, the Leeds Initiative needs to look much more widely at social issues, and the Vision indicates the integral approach to this.

In the early phases of the Initiative's existence it took a strongly business approach. Commercial organisations retain a strong interest in it, because they see it as a forum for linking up with the Council and other public services. Because it has proved successful at establishing commonality of interests, and hence results in securing benefits for Leeds, business organisations interests have come to take a more positive interest in community and environmental matters, and have become better educated on these. They are thus prepared to discuss and even support issues which a few years ago they would have rejected. The Vision has changed too; topics like charging for road space were not even mentioned in the 1999 consultation, but by 2003 it was receiving serious discussion.

The Leeds Initiative is not an executive body; it remains a forum for discussion and agreement. It should influence the plans of the various partners. This includes Leeds City Council, who should use it in their Local Plan (and Local Development Framework when it comes into force); it seems probable that the City Council has indeed been heavily influenced by the Initiative's discussions and work. It is probable, though less clear, that the plans of other bodies, and hence their actions, have been changed. As a forum the Initiative remains a valuable reference for high level agreements over matters of policy and practice, and this offers considerable benefits for guiding co-operative action at more practical levels: e.g. managers from bus operators and the PTEs can meet and work closely with managers from commercial and social welfare bodies to develop and implement local initiatives.

The main responsibility for development lies with the theme groups. Although the Initiative has been in existence since 1990, and has been very active since 1997, it is only now starting to become focused on addressing problems seriously. As indicated, much of this will happen through bringing together partners' plans and actions within the auspices of the theme groups. The theme groups have also generated task groups to act on particular problem areas or topics, and these have provided some useful results.

### Transport in the Leeds Vision

Transport emerged as the most important topic in the 1998 consultation and again in the 2003 one. It was not seen as the major problem *per se* (that was crime) but was clearly identified by the public and other consultees as something about which steps needed to be taken to improve business and social conditions in Leeds. Transport is seen in the Vision as strongly related to several other themes: especially enterprise and economy, and health and well-being. Thinking on it has moved on substantially in recent years. The transport theme in the Vision does support major projects, including the East Leeds Link Road and the Supertram, and looks for improved national and international connections, all of which are seen as fundamental to improving the city's economy and quality of life. But it also emphasises the role of management measures, such as improving bus services' quality and operation, providing better facilities for cycling and walking, and restraining road traffic and parking. It aims to reduce the need to travel by ensuring that all transport is well connected, and that land use planning supports this, and by promoting a sustainable travel culture through various programmes and initiatives.

The theme group for transport is the Integrated Transport Partnership. This has three dozen members, drawn from education, health, business, environmental groups, the City Council, the PTE and transport providers. It is chaired at present by the Managing Director of the Airport (who is also a former President of the Chamber of Commerce); this is the only theme group chaired by an independent member, all the other groups are chaired by Leeds City Council executive Councillors. At present the ITP meets about 3/4 times a year, with some flexibility: meetings may be called or cancelled depending on business available and current events. The ITP may deal with matters through email communications at any time. West Yorkshire PTE is represented by its Director General, indicating the importance placed on the Initiative. (The PTE has similar links with the LSPs for the other four district councils in West Yorkshire.)

The transport policies in the first (1998) Vision fed into the first West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan and helped define some of its policy directions. In turn the new Vision incorporates a lot of the thinking and measures set out in the LTP. This has helped to produce a more comprehensive approach, and means that the same set of policies for transport are established through all elements of Leeds public authorities, businesses and society<sup>26</sup>. The ITP will be seeking to develop transport further, in relation to health services and to schools, and addressing the key issue of transport behaviour, e.g. through promoting Green Travel Plans widely.

It is however unclear how far the Vision's policies influence development planning in Leeds. Development interests do not always follow the implications through in their proposals; e.g. some major proposals have not reflected the best use in relation to transport opportunities and policies. Nor has Leeds City Council always challenged these. However, the close liaison through the Initiative has allowed the PTE or other bodies to raise this as an issue at top level, enabling other solutions to be brought on to the agenda and developed.

Transport remains a lively topic of debate in the city, through the media and within the regional BBC Web discussion page, as well as in more informal circles. Many of the public know what they want but do not appreciate the position and roles of various bodies; e.g. there remains a widely held view that the Council is responsible for buses and should therefore take steps to improve them. The main concerns over buses are over their volume, punctuality and fares; for the most part the service network is satisfactory, covering the city quite thoroughly.

A feature of the recent past has been the growth in car use and congestion in the city, with particularly serious delays along main roads in the peak periods. The negative impacts of this have helped to push the common interest in more comprehensive transport policies.

Improvement to bus services, especially along some key corridors, remains an important target for the PTE and the ITP. However, the Vision follows the LTP in identifying the appropriate system for different corridors. The three lines of the Leeds Supertram are aimed at addressing the issues in the Vision for those particular corridors, and the Supertram is thus integral to achievement of the Vision. If its costs are set against the costs of the various elements which other programmes address (e.g. securing jobs, bringing disused land back into development, etc), then the

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<sup>26</sup> Leeds Integrated Transport Partnership (2001). *Integrated Local Transport for Leeds*. Leeds Integrated Transport Partnership, Leeds.

system remains good value; however, these factors are not used in financial assessments. If the Supertram was not built, then the integral nature of the Vision would be seriously weakened. Furthermore some of the key business partners in the Initiative would lose their confidence in the value of the Initiative as a strong common voice, and thus partnership in Leeds would be seriously weakened. Perhaps some confidence might be retained if Leeds were to regain full control of its bus services, but this is not certain.

### Improving accessibility

The proposals for accessibility planning are as yet little understood. However, the Initiative has already formed the basis for widespread improvements in local accessibility. Broader concerns over access to jobs and facilities have been raised at the ITP, as part of its work on starting to address transport issues, and this has resulted in close working between managers at local level of the PTE and transport providers and of business, health and local authority bodies. This has guided both development of conventional transport services, and also of some specific local initiatives: e.g. mini/midi-bus services directly between remote residential and/or employment sites. The PTE and main bus operators are concentrating on upgrading the quality and performance of the core bus services, and more local services can also be used to connect fringe areas to these main routes. It is likely that the same principle will be used by the PTE and Leeds City Council transport planners: the Initiative itself does not offer any specific role in accessibility planning, but the common policy directions and goodwill in the partnership working will enable transport planning managers to liaise readily over information and views with their opposite numbers in other organisations.

## Malvern Hills and Worcestershire

*This review is based on:*

- *A meeting held in Worcester on 10 February 2004 with officers of Malvern Hills LSP, Worcestershire LSP and Worcestershire County Council*
- *Information on the website of Malvern Hills District Council ([www.malvern hills.gov.uk](http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk)) and Worcestershire County Council ([www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk)).*
- *Published documents as referenced.*
- *Other material as supplied.*

### Worcestershire - context and partnerships

Worcestershire lies between Birmingham and Bristol, some distance from both, but with some influence from the West Midlands. The county has a population of 542,000 (2001), with 223,000 households. It includes the city of Worcester and a number of other mostly small towns, with significant rural areas. The main transport axis is north - south, between West Midlands and Avon (rail and M5 motorway). Administratively it lies within the West Midlands Region.

Worcestershire has a county council and six district councils. The County Council is the local transport and highway authority, and the strategic planning (Structure Plan) authority for the (current) Development Plan scheme.

There are eight Local Strategic Partnerships within the county: one for the whole County, administered by the County Council; and one each for five district council areas. One District Council area has sub-divided into three separate LSPs. The latter are administered by the respective district councils, but the County Council works closely with them.

Within the County Council, responsibility for managing the LSP lies within the Chief Executive's department. A Partnership Co-ordinator for Worcestershire Partnership has recently been appointed. Amongst other duties he will be looking at linking Parish Plans and District Community Strategies. The County Council aims for a free flowing relationship between community planning at all three levels.

The County strategy **Partnership towards Excellence** was published in March 2003<sup>27</sup>. The County LSP consists of about 40 members. The work is now moving on to development of action plans, with theme groups established to take these forward. At present these are at an early stage in the learning curve. County Council officers currently act as 'gatekeepers' for the theme groups, to co-ordinate their development; it is intended that, as the groups become established, a convenor for each group will be established from the various members.

The themes emerged from public consultations. Transport appeared as a major area of concern in its own right, covered in the theme 'Connecting Worcestershire'. It is also reflected in 'A better environment'. For the County strategy, targets are set in terms of improving satisfaction with public transport and these are set out in the Bus and Information Strategy.

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<sup>27</sup> The Worcestershire Partnership (2003). Partnership Towards Excellence. The Worcestershire Partnership, Worcester.

The County Council's transport strategy manager, responsible for the Public Transport Unit, is involved with the County LSP and has links to all the district council LSPs. However, transport operators do not attend, even though they are always invited. Rail operators never attend. The County Council officers note that the small bus operators cannot see a value in attending, while the major operator (First) does attend specific project partnerships (Bus Quality Partnerships and Rural and Urban Bus Challenge working groups) but not the LSPs.

### Malvern Hills - LSP and Community Strategy

Malvern Hills is a predominately rural district lying to the south of Worcester. It has a population of 72,000 with 30,000 households. The Malvern Hills **Community Strategy**, published in November 2002<sup>28</sup>, was developed on the basis of a heavily publicised three month consultation process. The issues and directions in it were drawn out from the views expressed, without any attempt to filter them. The Malvern Hills LSP has 92 delegates drawn from 51 organisations. Theme groups are being established from June 2004 to take forward the various themes as action plans.

Transport formed the dominant issue to emerge in the Malvern Hills consultation, and this is reflected in the Community Strategy. The first theme is 'An effective transport system that offers choice'. The main components for this are 'improved levels of affordable passenger transport, offering a higher level of quality, operating reliably and more frequently' and better conditions for cyclists. Calls for this came not only from the public but also from employers (for access to jobs), from the health sector (access to health facilities) and parish councils.

No targets have yet been defined for the Malvern Hills strategy. However, this is seen as an important task for the theme groups in developing action plans, and indeed is considered vital to maintaining their interest in taking forward the findings.

### The Malvern Hills Strategic Transport Action Plan

The Malvern Hills strategy has already led to the commissioning of a consultant's report **Malvern Hills Strategic Transport Action Plan**, published in 2003<sup>29</sup>. This study, commissioned by a Partnership of the County Council, the District Council and other local agencies, undertook a comprehensive assessment of passenger transport needs, demand patterns and opportunities within the Malvern Hills area. It included both collection of data and discussions with stakeholders, making heavy use of existing networks and currently available information. It set out a strategy for developing bus services in three tiers: principal core services (main inter-urban routes and urban areas running at minimum hourly frequency or half hourly for urban areas); secondary core services (major links between smaller urban areas on a minimum daytime frequency of every two hours) and complementary services (shuttle and feeder and Demand Responsive Transport for isolated communities). It also assessed fully both the issues raised by stakeholders and the opportunities and problems inherent in its proposals. Some of its proposals are now being carried forward through Rural Bus Challenge funding. The remainder will form part of the action plan initiatives on transport to be taken forward through the partners' own plans, including the County Council's Local Transport Plan and the Malvern Hills Local Plan and the Malvern Hills Rural Transport Partnership.

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<sup>28</sup> Vision 21 Malvern Hills Partnership (2002). *Malvern Hills Community Strategy 2003-2006*. Vision 21 Malvern Hills Partnership, Great Malvern.

<sup>29</sup> JMP Consultants Ltd (2003). *Malvern Hills Strategic Transport Action Plan*. JMP Consultants Ltd, Lichfield.

Clearly the commissioning of work that led to this Strategic Transport Action Plan might have been carried out without any community strategy and thus could in principle be seen as implying that the LSPs' work is irrelevant. Since it has been effectively adopted by the LSPs, it does rate as an outcome of the Community Strategy.

The transport requirements identified by the Malvern Hills Community Strategy pick up on the need for access to education and to social and leisure needs (especially for young people and from the villages). Health access is a major aspect, with closure of local hospitals bringing into relief the need for better access to the main hospital in Worcester, which is located off-centre, leading to requests for new or diverted bus services to reach it. There is strong support for a new local hospital in Great Malvern. The particular geography of the Malvern Hills district raises specific problems, e.g. the town of Tenbury has direct links to Worcester and Kidderminster but not Great Malvern, and wants the former link improved.

### Accessibility planning in Worcestershire

The SEU report's call for accessibility planning is very important for Worcestershire County Council's transport planning division, which aims to link into each district council's LSP network to develop its understanding of needs. Currently the LTP has no local focus, but it is intended to create a separate area plan for each district council area. As it seems very likely that the region - district axis will become more important, and that transport planning will fall more into overall spatial planning, it is envisaged that eventually the district sections of the LTP could become the transport chapter of the Local Development Framework under the intended new planning regime, and current work aims to fit them for that. Currently Malvern Hills District Council has a revised Local Plan on deposit, following work over recent years. It is not expected that further revision will be done in the near future, and thus this could become the initial LDF.

There are differing views on accessibility issues among different groups within the LSP. Environmental and some community interests want to design places and transport for sustainability. There are strong pressures for better public transport and cycling within Great Malvern. This overlaps with some rural interests, which call for more small business units, affordable housing for young people, and support for local community facilities. At the same time rural communities would be happy to see green belt land used for local commercial and residential development, while business interests are keen to support any development, including promotion of more road links to attract business for economic growth.

Experience across Worcestershire and in Malvern Hills suggests that a vital role for LSPs must be to share attitudes and understanding. This is as much an education role as anything.

## Medway

*This review is based on:*

- *A meeting held in Medway on 22 March 2004 with officers of Medway LSP and Medway Council*
- *Information on the website of Medway Council ([www.medway.gov.uk](http://www.medway.gov.uk)).*
- *Published documents as referenced.*
- *Other material as supplied.*

## Context

Medway is a unitary authority created six years ago, based on the previous district council areas of Chatham, Gillingham, Rochester, Strood and Rainham. It has a population of 249,000 (2001), with 100,000 households, and lies to the east of the London on the Thames estuary, at the mouth of the Medway. Although within rail commuting distance of central London, it faces serious economic and social problems through the loss of the former Navy dockyard and other related industries. It lies within the defined Thames Gateway region, and as such is the focus for both regeneration and considerable expansion of housing. There has been significant population growth in recent decades due to major residential development, mostly southwards over the hills south of the existing centres along the Medway waterfront.

## The Medway LSP

The Medway Local Strategic Partnership was founded in 2001. It incorporated some existing partnerships, largely established by Medway Council; these now form lead partnerships for some theme areas. The initial Community Plan<sup>30</sup> was drafted primarily under the guidance of Medway Council; it particularly reflected the priorities of the existing partnerships, including programmes of their principal partner bodies, and was rather focused on individual policy areas. The intention was to have a Partnership and Plan set up on which to build. This helped bring together the partners into a true partnership, including the appointment of a Co-ordinator in 2003. Following this, revision of the Community Plan was set in hand, primarily through consultation with the citizens' panels on the contents of the first Plan and development of links between the various elements. The revised Community Plan has just been published<sup>31</sup>.

The Medway LSP actually has about 300 organisations on it. There is also a Board of 15 representatives: the chairman (or representative) of each lead partnership; the Leader, Opposition Leader and Chief Executive of Medway Council; representatives of the Ethnic Minorities Forum and the Council for Voluntary Service. Currently the Leader of Medway Council acts as Chairman of the Board. There are also observers from GoSE, SEEDA and the Learning Skills Council. The Board is the executive body for the LSP. The three principal organisations for the LSP are Medway Council, the local NHS Trust and Kent Constabulary; the latter two have very senior managers on the LSP Board as chairmen of their respective theme groups. The Council, NHS Trust and Police jointly provide funding for administration: primarily the salary and expenses for the Co-ordinator.

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<sup>30</sup> Medway Council (2002). *More to Medway - Medway's Community Plan 2002-2005*. Medway Council, Chatham.

<sup>31</sup> Medway Local Strategic Partnership (2002). *Medway's Community Plan 2004-2007*. Medway Local Strategic Partnership, Chatham.

Meetings of the full LSP, involving 300 people, have proved difficult to manage, especially over any attempt to reach agreed priorities. Starting in 2004 the meetings for all partners will be in the style of a conference, each one considering all aspects of a particular topic. Both the full LSP and the Board meet quarterly. The theme partnerships also meet quarterly.

## The Community Strategies

The first Community Plan set out seven main themes:

- A Community Informed and Involved
- A Safe and Secure Medway
- A Healthy Medway
- Learning for Life in Medway
- A Prosperous Medway
- Transport
- A Place Built for the Future

The second Community Plan added one to these:

- A Young Medway

As indicated, there has been little cross-reference between these, though this is slightly improved in the second Community Plan. For example, references to transport are limited in the three main socio-economic areas:

- For health, reduction in road casualties is an important target.
- For learning there is no mention of transport or of getting to education sites.
- For the economy, the importance of a '21<sup>st</sup> century transport system' and good transport infrastructure is stated in relation to the development of employment sites.

Transport has been primarily confined to the transport theme. The section on this in the second Community Plan reviews the achievements over the previous two years, notably in the fields of traffic casualty reduction and development of cycling. It sets out as its revised priorities and targets for the next three years:

- To encourage investment in the north Kent line and ensure that the new services being developed for this route and that the CTRL domestic service meet the needs of Medway.
- Encourage the railway industry to improve stations, accessibility and provide improvements in the service on existing lines, particularly on the Strood/Maidstone West line.
- Oversee the implementation of the council's Public Transport Information Strategy.
- Maintain, support and enhance the concessionary fares scheme operated by the council.
- Contribute to an air quality action plan for Medway.
- Actively participate in the Transport for Medway (TfM) project.
- Support Medway Council's safer routes to school programme and initiatives.
- In partnership develop a strategy to address the fear of crime associated with travelling in and around the area.

## Implementing Community Plan transport priorities

These policies match those of the Local Transport Plan<sup>32</sup>, from which they were largely drawn. Medway Council had established the Medway Transport Partnership (MTP) at the beginning of the LTP process. This acts as the prime focus for stakeholder engagement in preparing its LTP (in accord with Government guidance). MTP's membership includes representatives of bus and rail transport providers, transport users, environmental and community groups, business interests, and Medway Council (members and officers). It is administered by the Integrated Transport Unit of Medway Council; this unit is responsible for the LTP production and monitoring, major transport studies, providing advice on planning applications, workplace travel plans and some other programmes (such as walking and cycling) not the responsibility of other units. MTP thus brings together the main bodies with transport interests, including community representatives, and those responsible for both planning and provision of transport facilities and services. In consequence it enables a well informed discussion on all aspects of transport, in principles and in detail, and also feeds directly into particular action programmes.

The MTP meets quarterly. Due to concerns over the capacity of the MTP to deal with the significant amount of transport issues affecting Medway, three sub-groups have now been established covering:

- Rail issues
- Transport Planning issues
- Regeneration issues

Transport is also considered by the Local Agenda 21 Forum, which forms the community partnership for the environment theme. This too was an established group before the LSP was set up.

For all the themes, there is a lead public authority officer, who is able to build liaison between partners and project development, by informal means on occasions as well as through formal processes. The LSP Co-ordinator regularly holds a meeting with all the theme lead officers, which enables a common approach and links between partnerships to be built effectively. There is always a risk that experienced (and busy) officers regard an additional partnership type organisation as a threat to their skills and interest, and it is important to build the working structures and personal relationships to make such engagements positive rather than negative.

The second Community Plan has been strongly influenced by the community voice. In consequence its policies are rather more aspirational and perhaps less well informed. However, this Plan is still seen as part of a process of development. Cross-cutting approaches are being developed, and this means that links between policy areas - e.g. the importance of transport to child health (obesity) and regeneration - are now becoming important. Ultimately the community discussions need to be informed by expert guidance, so that priorities can be meaningful in terms of community needs and wishes but also soundly based.

Development of the transport priorities and actions will stay with the MTP. They will be expanded and implemented during 2004 and 2005 in parallel with preparation of the second LTP, as well as through a major transport study for the area (Transport

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<sup>32</sup> Medway Council (2000). *Medway's local transport plan 2000-2005*. Medway Council, Chatham

for Medway, TfM). At the same time the results and emerging issues will be fed back through MTP to the Board and other partnerships within the LSP, so that evolution of effective working and achievement continues to be built up.

Most funding for actions comes from the partners' funds, in particular those of Medway Council. The Council itself gains financing from various Government grant sources (ODPM through the Thames Gateway, SRB, etc.) Consideration is now being given to look for additional funds from such grant sources, perhaps with guidance from Medway Council officers with expertise in the field.

## Southampton

*This review is based on:*

- *A meeting held in Southampton on 29 March 2004 with officers of Southampton Partnership and Southampton City Council*
- *Information on the website of Southampton Partnership ([www.southampton-partnership.com](http://www.southampton-partnership.com)) and Southampton City Council ([www.southampton.gov.uk](http://www.southampton.gov.uk)).*
- *Published documents as referenced.*
- *Other material as supplied.*

*Southampton has been selected jointly as a case study with Eastleigh/Hampshire. The joint case studies are intended to enable examination of strategic working in South-West Hampshire which is a relatively affluent mixed urban/rural growth area (although with pockets of deprivation).*

### Geographical context

Southampton is a city situated on the south coast of England with a population of 221,200 and travel to work catchment population estimated to be 650,000. Southampton is the largest port in the South of England and has a mixed economy involving business and financial services, broad-based manufacturing and education and learning. It is a regional and national transport hub with international air and sea links and a regional centre for road and rail networks. The city became a unitary authority in April 1997 and took over responsibility for services formerly undertaken by Hampshire County Council.

In recent years there has been substantial development in the immediate hinterland of Southampton within the New Forest and Test Valley districts and the Borough of Eastleigh (which are two-tier administrative areas also receiving services from Hampshire County Council). A lot of this development has been concentrated along the M27 corridor (Southampton International Airport south of Eastleigh, Hampshire County Cricket Ground at West End, Hedge End retail park, Swanwick employment development, Whiteley residential development).

The city of Portsmouth and its urban hinterland (including Fareham, Gosport and Havant) lies within 20 miles of Southampton to the east. Portsmouth has a unitary authority, while areas adjacent to the city fall under the two-tier administration of Hampshire County Council and local district councils.

The axis of urban development along the M27 motorway corridor stretching from Totton in the west to Havant in the east and including Southampton and Portsmouth comprises a population of some one million people and is being coined by some as 'Solent City'. The growth in development and travel along the corridor (particularly in car commuting) has resulted in congestion problems on the M27.

South Hampshire is a relatively prosperous sub-region but has pockets of relative and absolute deprivation. These lie principally in urban areas in Southampton, Portsmouth and Havant. Additionally, in rural settlements citizens can experience isolation, social exclusion and a lack of affordable housing. Southampton has a number of areas of multiple deprivation. 11 priority neighbourhoods have been identified. Two of these neighbourhoods (Central/Portswood & St. Denys) were subject to SRB2 funding in the past (West Itchen SRB2), another (Thornhill) is receiving NDC funding and a fourth (Outer Shirley) is receiving SRB6 funding.

Thornhill and Outer Shirley involve peripheral estates and proposals have been included to enhance and improve communications to, from and within these areas.

### Southampton LTP

The Southampton LTP for 2001/2 - 2005/6<sup>33</sup> adopted six objectives of which one directly relates to accessibility and another directly to social inclusion:

- Accessibility - the ability for people to gain access to opportunities to meet their needs and aspirations for work, education, shopping, leisure, recreation and social activities;
- Best value - to provide best value in terms of the costs and resources employed, both public and private, to achieve accessibility and other aims, and to be responsive to citizen's needs;
- City safety - to ensure physical safety and personal security, both real and perceived, when traveling;
- Economy, enterprise and jobs - to support employment and wealth creation through transport policies;
- Health, environment and sustainability - to reduce noise and pollution created by transport and to promote healthy and sustainable lifestyles; and
- Social inclusion - to support the City's aim for social cohesion and promote equality through transport policies.

In the latest Annual Progress Report<sup>34</sup> (2003 APR) progress towards improving accessibility is reported, amongst other ways, in terms of pedestrian crossings with disabled facilities and replacement of subways/overbridges with surface-level pedestrian crossings. In terms of projects delivered in 2002/03 examples of those that can contribute to improved accessibility and reduced social exclusion include safety schemes, traffic calming, cycling/bus infrastructure improvement and continued support for concessionary fares, Dial-a-Ride and Southampton Shopmobility. The overall aim of city public transport spending is to bring about an increase in ridership, rather than address specific groups of the population.

A notable major scheme delivered in 2003/04 is the Charlotte Place Improvement Scheme which has improved access to the city centre for public transport and pedestrians and is intended to assist regeneration by reducing severance of the Newtown/Nicholstown priority neighbourhood. Funding for the scheme included a contribution from the SRB2 project for West Itchen.

A successful Urban Bus Challenge bid has been made and is scheduled to be introduced in June 2004. This is the Bridge Link Bus Service which will provide a service to three areas of deprivation (Northam, Outer Shirley, Thornhill) to fill gaps in mainstream public transport by linking the areas to key locations (superstores, hospitals, city centre). It is noted that a re-lighting scheme bid is being proposed in Thornhill as part of the NDC project. This shows that NDC funding is being used as a source to propose and take forward transport projects in priority neighbourhoods.

Existing consultation for the LTP takes place through the Hampshire Economic Partnership (HEP), Southampton Area Public Transport Association (SAPTA), the Southampton Bus Users Group (SBUG), the Southampton Freight Liaison Group and

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<sup>33</sup> Southampton City Council (2000). *Local Transport Plan 2001/2 to 2005/6*. Southampton City Council, Southampton.

<sup>34</sup> Southampton City Council (2003). *Southampton Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report 2003*. Southampton City Council, Southampton.

Southampton Cycling Forum. The Hampshire Economic Partnership through a transport sub-group provides business input on transport policy and investment decisions for the local authorities in Hampshire and also for the Solent Transport Partnership (outlined below).

The APR highlights the aim to improve consultation through the Southampton Partnership and its Transport Forum and through Neighbourhood Partnerships. It is noted in relation to accessibility that Southampton City Council is 'working with community transport providers and others to improve coordination and service provision and the Southampton Partnership and Neighbourhood Partnerships will help to provide strategic and local direction'. The City Council transport officers consider that the Partnerships can help to legitimise LTP policy proposals.

It is also noted in the APR that a GIS system is being developed 'to bring together data on deprivation, car ownership, public transport routes and other community transport provision and the location of services, etc. to start to identify gaps and to consult with others to start to identify solutions to enable us to develop an action plan to improve accessibility'.

### Sub-regional transport partnerships

Formerly, Southampton City Council worked with Hampshire County Council and neighbouring district councils under the Southampton Area Transport Strategy (SATS) banner. This covered the travel-to-work area of Southampton. SATS included a Joint Members Panel and Officers Working Group and was instrumental in developing consistent strategies for Southampton that formed the basis of its 2001/2 - 2005/6 LTP and Hampshire's Southampton Area Transport Strategy in Hampshire's 2001/2 - 2005/6 LTP.

The Solent Transport Partnership launched in March 2003 aims to strengthen transport co-ordination through partnership working of all those who have a responsibility or interest in transport planning and provision in South Hampshire. It brings together Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council and a range of transport operators, business interests and infrastructure providers to work together to address congestion through providing a wider choice of transport. A variety of initiatives are being undertaken with the most notable being the recent launch of a Solent Travelcard. Other initiatives being considered jointly are the South Hampshire Rapid Transit (SHRT), Quality Bus Partnerships and a study of the development of Southampton Airport as a regional transport hub.

The three local authorities responsible for highways (Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton) are considering a joint LTP submission in 2005 covering the whole South Hampshire area. As a minimum, it is expected that there will be a common strategic issues section within the LTPs. A common section on the Solent Transport Partnership was included in the 2003 APRs.

At present, LSPs are not engaged in the Solent Transport Partnership.

A joint initiative to develop an accessibility model (ACCMAP) for Hampshire, involving Southampton with Hampshire and its districts and Portsmouth, pre-dates the Solent Partnership. This model can be used to identify Accessibility Indices which measure the level of accessibility by car and public transport to new and potential developments.

A sub-regional approach to economic development is being pursued through the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), a South-East England Development Agency (SEEDA) initiative which includes representation from local authorities in the sub-region.

### Southampton Partnership

The LSP for Southampton, the Southampton Partnership, was established in January 2002 and has 31 members from organisations and partnerships across the city. It is administered by the city council and the council has 3 representatives (Leader, one opposition councillor and the chief executive) on the board. One member is drawn from the Southampton Transport Forum which was established shortly after the LSP formed. Transport officials from the city council attend the Transport Forum and advise it. The current member of the Forum sitting on the Partnership Board is from Sustrans and replaces the former member from First Bus.

The Southampton Partnership has approved the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS)<sup>35</sup>, which was prepared by Southampton City Council and the Southampton Regeneration Executive. It identifies improving access to jobs, education and health services as elements to tackle in neighbourhood action plans. Neighbourhood action plans are yet to be published for the 11 priority neighbourhoods. The approach adopted has been to pilot the development of an action plan for one of the neighbourhoods (Weston) before tackling the other neighbourhoods in 2004/05.

The Southampton Partnership launched its first Community Strategy<sup>36</sup> in April 2004. It followed from (i) a 2020 Vision debated at a stakeholder conference; (ii) a draft Strategy which was put through a rigorous 'golden threading' sustainability impact proofing exercise; (iii) a consultation exercise which received 1,600 comments. Transport was the topic raising the most consultation responses.

The Strategy presents a vision for the city for 2020 where it is the capital city of the South and everyone has opportunity to participate in its success. It identifies 11 key challenges outlined below within which there are 177 long-term targets for 2020 and 161 medium-term targets for 2007.

1. Raising aspirations within the priority neighbourhoods.
2. Raising competitiveness and increasing prosperity.
3. Improving educational attainment, skills and overcoming barriers to employment.
4. Strengthening the involvement of children and young people.
5. Reducing crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour.
6. Improving health and social care.
7. Providing sufficient decent and affordable homes.
8. Improving and enhancing the cultural experience.
9. Improving the city's environment.
10. Improving the city's transport provision.
11. Promoting involvement and voluntary action.

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<sup>35</sup> Southampton City Council (2002). *Southampton Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Part 1 - the Neighbourhood Renewal Vision for Southampton*. Southampton City Council, Southampton.

<sup>36</sup> Southampton Partnership (2004). *Community Strategy*. Southampton Partnership, Southampton.

Criticism that the targets are organised into professional silos and do not readily relate to the overall vision has meant the Partnership has also identified outcomes outlined below which in 2004/05 will be integrated with the targets.

1. Realising individual potential.
2. Vibrant communities.
3. Competitive businesses.
4. Effective citywide services.
5. Sustainable environment.

The role of access for these outcomes can be appreciated from the objective for vibrant communities being 'creating an inclusive society characterised by safe, strong, diverse and healthy communities with ready access to culture, recreation and work' and the objective for effective citywide services being 'creating a dynamic infrastructure for transport, education, housing and health to improve quality of life for all'.

In the Community Strategy it is noted that due to the city's 'position at the heart of the sub-region the Southampton Partnership is well placed to provide leadership and co-ordination for a range of neighbouring LSPs. At present there has been dialogue between the Hampshire Partnership and the neighbouring LSPs but no attempt at co-ordination. One reason for this is that district-level community strategies have not been produced yet in Hampshire.

One of the 11 key challenges in the Strategy is 'improving the city's transport provision'. The preparation of this part of the Strategy was led by the representative from the Transport Forum with significant input from City Council transport officials (representing transport policy, highways and public transport). For this key challenge the following improvement areas are identified (actions are also identified for each improvement area but space limitations prevent their mention):

Improvement area	Lead delivery agent
Integrated public transport	Bus operators, Solent Transport, SCC
Park & Ride	SCC
Quality Bus Partnerships	Bus operators, Solent Transport, SCC
Demand responsive bus services	Bus operators, SCC & Soton Care Association Community Transport
Improved infrastructure maintenance	SCC
Travel Plans and personalised travel planning	Southampton Transport Forum,
Walking and cycling	SCC
Increased national investment	Solent Transport
Central station	SCC, SRA, rail operators & Network Rail

The only improvement area explicitly mentioned to relate to accessibility is demand responsive bus services which are expected to 'reduce social exclusion'.

Elsewhere in the other 10 key challenges, there are improvements related to transport (reducing road accidents, improving air quality through reduced car use) and access (better access to key services for socially excluded citizens and disabled people, better and fairer access to health services). Although recognition is given to the issue of lack of access in the Strategy, it is evident that no analysis across the relevant partners has been undertaken of the factors causing lack of access. The main solution identified (under the transport key challenge) is bus services 'covering

all areas of the city and particular district centres, health and educational facilities'. Under other key challenges, overcoming accessibility problems is identified as a target (for employment, childcare, healthcare) but specific solutions are not identified.

To implement the actions the Community Strategy notes that an AIF (Area Investment Framework) has been developed to support the Partnership in its resource allocation. This will help in managing use of existing 'mainstream' resources and in seeking additional 'external' funding. It is envisaged that future community strategies will contain a high-level budget plan.

In many cases the actions identified require a joint approach with neighbouring areas. This is apparent for transport where Solent Transport is identified as a lead delivery agent in three of the nine areas. Some frustration has been noted by members of the Southampton Partnership (especially from the business and housing partners) that they have only been able to consider Southampton within its administrative boundary rather than the wider sub-region.

### Current issues

The meeting highlighted a number of current issues about the role of the Southampton Partnership and the Community Strategy.

Many major stakeholders in transport in the Southampton area have become engaged in Solent Transport but not as yet in the Southampton Partnership. (As mentioned earlier, LSPs in the sub-region, including the Southampton Partnership, are not engaged in Solent Transport.) There is uncertainty in some quarters about the role of the Southampton Partnership. Some consider it is responsible for tackling deprivation while others tackling economic development. From the point of view of the meeting attendees at least, it should seek to engage local groups (e.g. priority neighbourhoods) while working with partners to address the sub-regional agenda.

At present the Southampton Partnership is not engaged with the strategic planning process (the Local Plan). It is uncertain at this stage how it could be engaged but it is recognised that important decisions about Southampton's future development (which affect access amongst other issues) are being made in the planning process.

The Community Strategy is an evolving document and with respect to access it expresses desires and aspirations but further work is required to develop strategies and action plans. This will require more time to build relationships and trust between partners. Part of this process is getting a good understanding of local needs and circumstances. This is illustrated for the Weston priority neighbourhood where it has been found valuable to involve the community in discussing issues and considering the contribution that might be made by the city-wide Southampton Partnership.

Initiatives are currently being taken to address access problems outside of the LTP and Community Strategy processes, for example, the introduction of drop-in centres by the Southampton City Primary Care Trust.

It is considered that the Community Strategy and its development have been very useful for on-going development of the LTP. Its long-term vision for 2020, consultation findings and objectives (with respect to sustainability, for example) provide an important context for development of the next LTP.

The value of the Southampton Partnership as a networking forum has been demonstrated in the case of a retail employer establishing itself in the city and being made aware of the parts of the city where they might look to recruit staff and the access issues to enable staff from those parts of the city to get to them. Another example is the development of a Travel Plan for the Southampton Airport employment area. Southampton Airport has a representative on the Southampton Transport Forum and has been able to discuss employee access issues with members of the Transport Forum.

For the future requirements of accessibility planning, it is considered that the Southampton Partnership has potential to play an important role. One way in which it can contribute is in providing research and information. In preparing the Community Strategy baseline statistical information was collected and a Research and Information Unit established (run by the City Council). Another way in which it can contribute is in identifying appropriate funding sources for implementing access plans.

A general point is that transport and access is just one area to be addressed for LSPs and that to effectively address this area requires a realisation that transport and access is relevant to all LSP partners.

## Tameside and Greater Manchester

*This review is based on:*

- *A meeting held in Ashton-under-Lyne on 9 March 2004 with officers of Tameside LSP and Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council*
- *A meeting held in Manchester on 10 March 2004 with an officer of Greater Manchester PTE*
- *Information on the website of Tameside MBC ([www.tameside.gov.uk](http://www.tameside.gov.uk)) and Greater Manchester PTE ([www.gmppte.gov.uk](http://www.gmppte.gov.uk)).*
- *Published documents as referenced.*
- *Other material as supplied.*

*Tameside has also featured as a case study for the national LSPs evaluation research, and a particular review was made of its approach to transport in relation to the Community Strategy.*

### Tameside - LSP and Community Strategy

Tameside MBC is one of the ten metropolitan boroughs within Greater Manchester. The conurbation itself has a total population of 2,482,000 (2001), with 1,040,000 households. Tameside lies on the east side of the conurbation, has a total population of 213,000 (2001), 90,000 households, and has significant areas of deprivation and disadvantage (resulting from major loss of industry over recent decades). The Tameside Strategic Partnership was established in 1999, under the auspices of the Borough Council, who provides the administrative staffing. The partnership board has 29 representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. It is supported by eight strategic partnerships (forums) responsible for taking forward the actions developed from the strategy; there is a formal partnership agreement between the Board and each forum.

The first Community Strategy<sup>37</sup> was produced in 2000, following consultation with citizen groups. This established eight main priority areas for action:

- Lifelong learning
- Local Economy
- Transport
- Environment
- Health and Social Care
- Homes
- Crime and Disorder
- Community

For each of these a programme of actions was defined. The results of actions in these priority areas were set out in the monitoring report *Two Years On*<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Tameside MBC (2000). *Community Strategy 2000-2003*. Tameside MBC, Ashton-under-Lyne.

<sup>38</sup> Tameside MBC (2002). *Community Strategy 2000-2003 'Two Years On'*. Tameside MBC, Ashton-under-Lyne.

To move forward the strategy a widespread community consultation<sup>39</sup> was carried out in 2002 (carried out by MORI). This led to a new Community Strategy<sup>40</sup>. This has six main themes:

- Supportive Communities
- A Safe Environment
- A Prosperous Society
- A Learning Community
- A Healthy Population
- An Attractive Borough

For these six themes there are 25 key measures, reflecting topics raised in the consultation. These are defined in the partnership agreements between the Partnership Board and the strategic partnerships, and form the basis for actions by the partners.

### Transport in the Community Strategy

The main focus of the 2002 consultation (which was recognised as a good practice model) was to rank the existing eight priority themes. In this transport was rated as the lowest in order of concern. Nonetheless, it was widely seen as an issue of widespread importance to all the other themes, and thus it was decided to treat it as a cross-cutting theme. Transport has emerged from business surveys as a significant problem area which needs attention. It has also emerged as an issue from various local citizens' panels.

The two defined policy aims are:

- To halve the number of people who are killed or seriously injured on Tameside's roads by 2007/8 (A Safe Environment)
- To increase bus use within Tameside (An Attractive Borough)

However, transport policy within the Community Strategy is not just about more buses (important though these are). Tameside has a generally good bus network offering wide coverage of most urban areas. The principal objective is 'to produce a quality alternative to the car', which is linked to specific targets in three aspects:

- Improve highway safety
- Improve road conditions
- Reduce the impact of traffic in town centres and residential areas

### Implementing transport priorities

These targets are fed into the business plan of Tameside's transport division, and thus form an important factor in determining their work programme for the year; including work on joint activities with the PTE over public transport. In this way the Community Strategy does have an important role in determining action on transport (and other fields), in terms of action at several levels: Greater Manchester, Tameside, local neighbourhoods. The Borough Council management has established firm processes for ensuring this. It is backed up by the strong involvement of Borough

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<sup>39</sup> MORI (2003). *Tameside Community Strategy 2003-2006: 2002 Consultation Results*. Tameside MBC, Ashton-under-Lyne.

<sup>40</sup> Tameside MBC (2003). *Community Strategy 2003-2006*. Tameside MBC, Ashton-under-Lyne.

Council members on the Tameside Partnership. Relevant Borough Council officers are in this closely involved with the Partnership's activities.

These aims relate closely to the principles in the Greater Manchester LTP and thus achieving them ties in with preparation of the next LTP. There are in fact two main strands of action in ensuring they are properly recognised and acted on in the next LTP.

- There already exists a Greater Manchester Steering Group for the LTP, representing the PTE and all the metropolitan borough councils. This co-ordinates the input from all of these and guides a joint action team within the PTE which does the actual work (this team includes staff on permanent secondment from the boroughs). The Steering Group will continue to have a key role.
- A joint Greater Manchester Strategic Forum is now being established, representing all the boroughs and other agencies. This will receive input from the ten borough partnerships and establish theme groups. This is likely to include a transport theme group. The chairman of the LTP Steering Group will play an important role on this.

The PTE has a seat on the main Tameside Partnership Board but is often not represented at meetings. This is of concern to Tameside MBC, especially as some important transport topics are sometimes raised; the Board includes some senior Council members and four representatives of borough businesses, who are also sometimes interested in addressing transport. However, the PTE's view is that it sends a representative when it can (e.g. GMPTE did attend, and help at a public meeting on the Community Strategy) and would certainly attend if there was a specific relevant item on the agenda. There are 10 districts in Greater Manchester, and it can be difficult to staff all such meetings. GMPTE already works closely with Tameside officers on the LTP Steering Group and in relation to bus issues, including Quality Bus Corridors and Urban Bus Challenge Bids. This increases the importance for Tameside Partnership of feeding its priorities and policies into the Greater Manchester Strategic Forum, where the PTE will be involved. The PTE similarly considers this Forum to have a vital role in bringing community planning and transport development together, and hopes to play an important role on the transport theme group at least.

### Resources and planning

Funding for transport action in the borough comes from a number of sources, some of them determined by definition of a number of Neighbourhood Renewal areas, and hence the availability of NRF grants. Some other grant sources, e.g. Dealing with disadvantage (DaD), have also been used primarily for NRF areas, and the Borough has also gained from the South East Manchester Multi-Modal Study (SEMMS), funding for whose urban projects is now emerging, and from a Home Zones grant. The total resource from all of these amounts to about £5 million in a year (SEMMS £2.6 million annually for three years, one Home Zone grant £¾ million, DaD £1 million). The PTE is able to provide far larger funds for main public transport projects in the borough, which currently include bus and rail station upgrading and a quality bus corridor. Tameside MBC also place considerable importance on the intended Metrolink extension, which is assessed as likely to enable the priorities of the Community Strategy to be more effectively met.

Both transport and environmental policies within the Community Strategy relate to development planning: currently the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), in future the Local Development Framework. The Tameside Partnership Board is looking to establish a sustainable development forum to take forward environmental issues. The LTP reflects the current UDP aims of sustainability.

There is recognition by the Tameside Partnership that partnerships continue to change. The previous LSPs research has itself had benefits, in drawing to the Partnership's attention aspects where it should change, including in terms of how it handles transport: This led to a Transport Audit<sup>41</sup> in mid 2003 (carried out by consultants Faber Maunsell). This had five key objectives, focused around establishing transport need (for travel within Tameside and to centres outside), defining the existing transport supply, considering best practice and issues, and recommending solutions. The results of this substantial study amplify the transport needs within the Community Strategy's six key priorities and are being taken forward within the context of the LTP (in the processes indicated above).

### Greater Manchester PTE and community planning

For Greater Manchester PTE the LSPs in its ten boroughs are very important. However, although most LSPs invite the PTE to be represented, not all do so. The form of invitation varies: some present an invitation to be on the board, others on the transport theme group. The PTE faces serious pressures on officers' time, and thus prefers to be involved with the transport theme groups; the widely ranging discussions of the LSP boards means that for a director or senior manager to attend them would be for the most part a waste of time. In any case there are many other partnerships and forums within Greater Manchester, quite a lot with significant transport coverage, and PTE management need to make the most effective use of what these bodies have to contribute to development of transport, at all levels. As it is, a lot of time is spent at local community meetings dealing with local issues.

All the Greater Manchester LSPs approach their priority themes and their activities in different ways. The priorities for transport are not all derived on the same basis. A lot depends which bodies are most engaged with an LSP over the period of developing the community strategy. Quite often active stakeholders and groups are also involved in other forums on transport, and thus the same issues and priorities are raised. On occasions these local groups have gained support for unrealistic proposals (e.g. levels and routings for bus services which are never likely to meet any real needs); this raises expectations and then creates loss of interest in the processes when the proposal is not implemented in any way.

The PTE considers that understanding needs at borough and local level is very important to carrying out its functions effectively. It seeks to maximise its co-operation with the boroughs over transport needs, to be proactive wherever possible, but also to recognise that the borough councils are jointly responsible for the LTP. This is done not only through the Steering Group for the LTP development but in having a jointly staffed LTP team. The bus strategy evolved in recent years has been developed in close liaison with the borough councils, with priority given to their more disadvantaged areas; that has led to various forms of service provision, primarily enhanced conventional routes, but also co-ordinated flexible minibuses and similar systems.

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<sup>41</sup> Faber Maunsell (2003). *Transport Audit for Tameside*. Tameside MBC, Ashton-under-Lyne.

The PTE expects to address accessibility planning for the next LTP in the same way, making full use of all the borough councils' issues and information, in which their LSPs play an important role. It considers that accessibility planning forms a valuable process, and the software designed for it is very useful. However, it does have one concern: the software reflects only bus routes in its resource base, whereas the PTE and borough councils make substantial use of supported taxis and similar initiatives in some disadvantaged areas off main routes, and the much improved accessibility created by these cannot be reflected in the model's results.

The PTE's planning division follows land use developments and other processes across Greater Manchester in order to identify in advance possible requirements for changes in services to meet new travel patterns. The PTE also works closely with boroughs over their UDPs, so that future spatial planning strategies can be structured to minimise the need to travel, especially through focusing development on those areas where it can best be served by public transport.

## APPENDIX 4 - SUMMARY OF 'MINI' CASE STUDIES

### *Summary of 'mini' case studies*

In addition to the main case studies, information on other areas with something to contribute was obtained from a mix of *ad hoc* information and contacts, telephone discussions, and references. These were defined as 'mini' case studies and are reviewed in brief below. They are intended to illustrate specific aspects of LSPs and transport.

#### *Bedfordshire - county LSP*

*Review based on information and short paper provided by a director (just retired) of Bedfordshire County Council.*

The County of Bedfordshire is relatively small, as it has a total population of 382,000, with 154,000 households, and only three district councils. (A fourth district, Luton, population 184,000 in 71,000 households, became a unitary authority in 1998.)

Separate LSPs have been set up for the county and each of its three districts. District representatives (members and officers) attend County LSP meetings, and county officers and members are allocated to and attend district LSP meetings. The Bedfordshire Local Strategic Forum, as the Countywide LSP, has a more strategic emphasis on cross-boundary issues, whilst the district based LSPs focus on local issues.

Early agreement was reached on the main themes, although this took a period of thorough discussion between all parties. The same themes/chapter headings are therefore being used for both county and district community strategies, ensuring coherence between areas. These themes are:

- Promoting community safety
- Providing housing and building communities
- Improving the Environment
- Improving Health
- Promoting Leisure
- Strengthening the Economy
- Developing Learning Opportunities and Skills
- Creating Better Transport
- Including Everyone

Sector teams have been set up to take forward each theme. These teams serve both county and district LSPs. Where possible, team leaders are chosen from outside local authorities. Each team has nominated County officer back-up.

Bedfordshire's Community Strategy was developed between December 2002 and November 2003 by the Bedfordshire Local Strategic Forum working together with the district LSPs. This involved wide-ranging consultation, through leaflets to every household, reflecting information and issues drawn from research. This was followed by publication of a draft consultative Strategy, which formed the focus for further community and stakeholder consultation, including several focus groups. The revised Strategy was agreed in December 2003. The three district LSPs contributed to the consultation processes and used the results in their own community strategies.

The County Community Strategy is 62 pages in length and appendices add a further 77 pages of supporting factual information. It has a 10 year time horizon to 2013. Implementation is through a separate Action Plan, for 3 years from 2004/05. Performance monitoring and review arrangements have been under development since October 2003. The overall aim of the Bedfordshire Local Strategic Forum is to work towards sustainable development by improving the quality of life for Bedfordshire's residents and businesses, now and for generations to come. The Forum recognises the inter-dependence of economic, environmental and social well-being, especially in view of the development pressure on the County. It will promote balanced change in response to the Government's Sub-Regional Strategy for Milton Keynes and the South Midlands.

### *Brighton and Hove - bus services and Community Strategy*

*Review based on information and documents provided by a senior officer of Brighton & Hove Council, following the ATCO request for information; also a review article in TRANSIT for 19 March 2004.*

Brighton and Hove is a unitary authority, with a population of 248,000, in 114,000 households. Lying on the South Coast, the two towns of Brighton and Hove are both major seaside resorts, providing between them a range of holiday and leisure activities. However, they also together form a significant city, with a range of other economic activities and also home to many London commuters. Like all cities, Brighton and Hove possesses a range of urban problems: strong growth in housing costs, areas of poverty and deprivation, concerns over safety and security, and difficulties in getting about locally. These are reflected in the Community Strategy, 'creating the city of opportunities', which looks forward to 2020; the LSP, which has 30 representatives from the Council, other public bodies, and the community and business sectors, is actually titled as the 2020 Community Partnership.

The strategy has eight priorities:

- An Enterprising City
- A Safer City
- A Healthy City
- An Inclusive City
- An Affordable City
- An Attractive City
- A Mobile City
- A Customer Focused City

In setting these out, it states that 'Each of these priorities is inter-related. Action in one area will almost certainly have an effect on others...'

The priority for a mobile city has as its aim 'A place with a co-ordinated transport system that balances the needs of all users and minimises damage to the environment'. It identifies the pressures from traffic congestion, the problems of a Victorian street network, and the importance of transport to business and the local economy. Its aims include increasing the number of people using bus services over the next ten years (the key targets for this sector include a 23% growth target in bus ridership), maximising the effectiveness of public transport, e.g. through bus lanes, and integration of transport services. The key plans for this include the LTP and the

Brighton and Hove Economic Strategy; key partnerships include the Economic Partnership and the Quality Bus Partnership.

As the section on this priority also identifies, one success for the city is the increasing level of bus use in the city in recent years, putting it above the national average. Growth in the year 2003/2004 amounted to 4.6%, the tenth year of growth, and the 2001 census found 12.4% of residents using the bus to reach their workplace, three times the proportion for the rest of the region. This reflects a very positive relationship over many years between the City Council and the main bus operator, Brighton & Hove, defined through a (non-statutory) Quality Bus Partnership. This has allowed the Council and the bus company to work closely together to upgrade the quality and level of services, and to develop them in ways which address local needs and aspirations. A key factor in this is the work of the bus company's managing director, who has led the company for over twenty years, and is actively involved in the economic and social development of the city, being a key member of the Economic Partnership and the LSP. The general approach of the media in the city is also positive towards public transport. In this way, the Community Strategy is building on an exceptional situation.

### *Cambridgeshire - district LSPs*

*Review based on the two tier working action learning set carried out as part of the National Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships project.*

Cambridgeshire is in the minority of localities which have decided not to have an LSP at county level. The County Council has supported the development of District Council LSP boards in each district area, and community planning has taken the form of the development of priorities within each district. District visions promote specific aims which vary from one district to another, but in all of the more rural districts surrounding Cambridge improved accessibility is identified as a priority.

Thus the Community Strategies for East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire have identified access to services as a key priority. Following this, the LSP Boards are beginning to develop an access model through:

- Electronic based transactions at home or community access points (forming a supported broadband network);
- Outreach services at community facilities; and
- Community transport to town based services.

This model has highlighted the importance of community transport to service providers seeking to promote the inclusion of people without access to a car or public transport.

Current investment in community transport has followed a patchwork of local community initiatives rather than a strategic framework developed by public agencies and service users. The Transport Act sets some restrictions on community transport schemes. Under section 19 service users need to be a member of the scheme and under section 22 scheduled services can only be run by volunteer drivers. The *status quo* established by the providers, and reinforced by legislation, tends to dominate. The Rural Transport Partnership (of local authorities, Association of Local Councils, PCTs, Countryside Agency, Help the Aged, Rural Community Council) has lacked political weight and capacity to make a strategic challenge and lead a change process.

However, the Fenland LSP's Access and Transport Group has commissioned Cambridgeshire ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) to carry out a study, 'Access for All'. Through the study, ACRE will: look at needs, map current public and community transport provision in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland and make recommendations for the more effective use of resources.

Against this background, the LSP Boards are well placed to build on the study and lead an organisation-wide approach to:

- Gaining an understanding of the access needs, and ability to pay, of all parts of the community without access to a car or public transport, for example, young people accessing further education, work, sport and leisure and others accessing health and social care services.
- Developing a shared approach to meeting these needs - by aligning policy and service priorities, concessionary fares, pooling resources, and challenging the *status quo* (for example, taxi cards may provide a better solution for users than an 'on demand' community bus service).
- Developing a shared approach to funding with a common contract, performance indicators, targets and reporting arrangements.
- Establishing a shared approach to building the strategic capacity and sustainability of the community transport providers.

### *Leicester - the Leicester Partnership*

*Review based on information provided by an officer of Leicester City Council, and on the following websites: [www.leicester.gov.uk](http://www.leicester.gov.uk), [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk), [www.leicesterpartnership.org.uk](http://www.leicesterpartnership.org.uk).*

Leicester is a city of 280,000 people, with a number of disadvantaged areas, designated as Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. Leicester City Council is a unitary authority. The LTP for the area is the Central Leicestershire LTP, drawn up jointly by the City and County Councils, and covering both the city and its surrounding catchment areas (the Outer Leicestershire LTP covers the rest of the county around it).

Leicester has a city wide LSP, the Leicester Partnership, which was formally established in June 2001. Leicester City Council is a key player in the Partnership, and also works closely with local area associations. The first Community Plan was published in 2000, with an updated Community Plan reflecting wide consultation emerging in 2003. This included a goal to 'reduce car travel to the city centre and to encourage and develop more journeys by cycling, walking and public transport'. This fell within the Environment theme. While there is no other specific reference to transport, the Jobs and Regeneration theme focuses on getting people into work through city-wide initiatives, implying the value of good accessibility. Six community partnerships have been created to take forward the various themes, leaving the Partnership to focus on strategy. The Environment Partnership is responsible for transport, amongst other elements of the theme.

The key policies of the 2003 Community Plan match those of the 2003 Central Leicester APR. In the circumstances, Leicester City Council's transport strategy team does not have any real working relationship with the Partnership, other than attending occasional meetings. The team does not have any working relationship with

LSPs in the neighbouring districts, even though parts of these fall within the Central Leicestershire LTP area.

### *Leicester - the Braunstone bus project*

*Review based on information and papers provided by a manager of Braunstone Community Association, and Web site [www.braunstone.com](http://www.braunstone.com).*

One of the most disadvantaged areas in Leicester is Braunstone, to the west of the city centre, comprising largely pre-war housing with a population of 13,000. It has a community development trust, the Braunstone Community Association (BCA), established in 1999. The area lies between two radial main roads, along which most bus services operate; there are effectively no orbital services. Research and consultation by BCA in developing its Community Strategy highlighted the difficulties these factors posed for residents in reaching work, retail and health facilities; though some of these were not far distant, their location in adjacent corridors meant that they were not directly accessible by existing public transport.

In its NDC Delivery Plan BCA included several transport projects, in its 'Making Braunstone United and Confident' theme. The main one was for a community minibus service able to provide flexible door to door travel for residents to reach necessary facilities. In 2001 a joint bid with Leicester City Council was made to the Urban Bus Challenge, resulting in an award of £1.13 million. In parallel BCA applied for NDC funding, obtaining £334,000. It was intended that the UBC grant would fund development of the bus services while the NDC grant would fund local infrastructure, information and project management.

BCA appointed an experienced transport manager to develop the services, but problems were encountered in developing the services originally planned. In consequence BCA changed the project to support two tendered bus services (301 and 317) operating through the area, with modern low floor buses, with routes, timetables and fares controlled by BCA. These started operation in January 2003. One is run by Arriva, the other by a local company (which has also recruited drivers locally). The UBC grant is to support the services for three years (2003 to 2005 inclusive), but after that they will need to become commercially viable, as the City Council will not subsidise them. Implementation required coordination between BCA, Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council (as LTA). Meanwhile, the NDC grant was spent on a minibus for local use, to complement the bus routes.

After a year's operation, surveys have shown that the bus services are successfully meeting the objectives for their establishment. However, they are not meeting all needs, as the community minibus is being used very heavily (in principle BCA could now use two). Traffic on the two routes is building up at a substantial rate. This is reflected in revenue, which exceeded budget for 2003 by over half: in addition, the services have received an allocation of concessionary fares income, proportional to their carrying of elderly and other concessionary pass holders. Even with this, income met less than two-fifths of operating costs. Traffic continues to grow, but the importance of achieving commercial viability before 2006 remains a central focus.

The main conclusions to date are:

- The problems for areas like Braunstone from commercial and non-integrated bus services in Leicester.
- The value of appointing an experienced bus project manager. This appointment provided an 'in house' capacity which allowed BCA to develop the original project, and, through co-operative working with the LTAs, secure rapid deployment of the mainstream bus tendering mechanism. Having one staff member dedicated to managing tenders for six buses is resource intensive but effective.
- BCA's involvement in the tendering process is innovatory in providing local scrutiny of the planning and operation of the services. It also ensures that management is focused on developing the services, with the aim of securing commercial viability beyond the life of BCA.
- There is evidence that the services overcome access barriers for some Braunstone residents, although there is no rigorous monitoring of the overall access problem in the NDC area. The increasing demand for use of the BCA community minibus shows that there are other transport needs which are not met by the tendered services or other public transport.
- Whereas the training and employment of local people as bus drivers has proved of limited success, there is evidence that local drivers deliver quality which is above the norm.
- The involvement of a small independent bus company has been a significant factor in the success of the 317 service.
- BCA is pursuing several projects which should lead to improvement in the walking environment which will also facilitate use of bus services. All these projects are within a single theme under one manager.
- Despite its supportive relationship, including its key role within the Leicester LSP, Leicester City Council faces budgetary pressures which mean that poor road and footpath surfaces and bus shelter problems are not being addressed. This highlights the continuing problems in securing a holistic approach in a situation where mainstream budgets are under pressure.

### *South Hams - rural accessibility*

*Review based on information and documents provided by Devon Rural Transport Partnership following the ATCO request for information.*

The South Hams district covers a wide rural area on the south coast of Devon, between the main cities, with a population of 82,000. It suffers from the problems now widely known for sparsely populated areas, with very limited facilities and also low levels of income among a good proportion of the population. This was brought out in the Community Strategy, published in 2003, covering the period 2003-2006. In developing this, local workshops were held in the small towns, and all district-wide organisations were asked to submit their views at a district level workshop. These generated a number of key issues, which were then assessed and developed into three priority areas for action:

- Accessible Services, Supporting Active and Caring Communities
- Affordable Housing
- Employment And Skills

Steps to implement these and monitor progress, through co-operation between relevant partners, are now being taken.

The first of the three priorities reflects some of the crucial issues widely raised in the consultation: two-thirds of the population live outside the towns, car availability among the population is actually low in practice, conventional bus services are relatively limited, and the narrow roads pose problems for delivery of goods and facilities. The actions for delivery focus on several strands, indicating the understanding that accessibility is concerned with more than just transport:

- Targeted support to the communities and residents most in need
- Community capacity to deliver sustainable solutions
- Information and advice to young people
- Affordable and appropriate transport solutions

The transport solutions are the responsibility of the Devon Rural Transport Partnership, managed by a team forming part of Devon County Council's Transport Co-ordination Services. They are thus in a position to take advantage both of understanding and influencing opportunities within mainstream public transport and to develop resources available through community and partnership working.