

Appendix A

Transport Strategy background and current progress

Increasing Sustainable Travel

Increasing the number of journeys made by sustainable means is an overarching objective of the Local Transport Plan and is fundamental to the delivery of a sustainable and integrated transport system for the County. Increasing the number of journeys made by sustainable means contributes directly to reducing the level of road congestion.

Rail and walking journeys remove travellers from the road network completely, while bus travel, car sharing and cycling all deliver greater efficiency on the network. Increases in journey times, driven by traffic congestion are a recognised reality for most travellers. The avoidance of delay and the resultant 'time saving' is a core motivator for commuters in particular and therefore the Council will continue to focus on that benefit in our promotion of more sustainable means of travel and challenge the perception that car travel is quickest.

In delivering its strategy the Council will work to achieve:

A general shift towards more sustainable and healthy modes of travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport, and away from single occupancy car use. This overall objective contributes directly to the delivery of the four shared outcomes.

Tackling Congestion –

Hereford City has been identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands region as one of five sub-regional foci for development confirming it as the key location in the County for future housing and employment growth. However, the City's transport network is severely constrained by its historic street pattern and densely developed residential areas immediately adjacent to the central area. Congestion occurs particularly on the radial routes that converge on the central area and the inner ring road.

Tackling traffic congestion is the top priority for the Hereford Transport Strategy. In addition to local people identifying congestion as a key priority in response to specific consultation on the LTP, the Council's General Household Survey conducted in December 2003 found that 'level of traffic congestion' was the quality of life indicator perceived to have deteriorated the most since the previous survey in 2000.

Congestion at peak times leads to a wide range of detrimental impacts on people, the local economy and the environment. The worst effects of congestion include:

- Community severance which affects vulnerable road users such as children, pedestrians and cyclists in particular and reduces their ability to travel safely;
- Traffic intrusion in residential areas due to rat running;
- Traffic intrusion in the historic central area which reduces its attractiveness as an important conservation area and as the County's key destination for shopping, tourism and social visits;
- Poor air quality resulting from queuing vehicles which has led to the designation of an air quality management area along the A49(T); and
- An inefficient local economy as time is lost in stationary traffic affecting Hereford's ability to compete in the wider economy and reducing its attractiveness as a location for future investment.

All of these impacts combine to undermine the Hereford's many qualities and ultimately reduce its ability to perform the function of a sub regional centre within the west midlands region.

Our current Strategy for tackling congestion in Hereford has two key elements:

- Measures to manage demand and improve efficiency of the network:
 - A targeted strategy to effect behavioural change.
 - Parking strategy.
 - Hereford Intelligent Transport System including bus priority.
 - Network management plan.
 - Rotherwas Access Road.
 - Hereford Outer Distributor Road - development of the A49(T) Ross Road to A465(T) Abergavenny Road Link Road.
- Measures to provide attractive alternatives to single occupancy car travel:
 - Park and ride.
 - Public transport improvements.
 - Cycle network development.
 - Pedestrianisation and pedestrian access improvements in Hereford's city centre; and safer routes to school.

Our current Strategy for tackling congestion in the rural area of Herefordshire is:

- Targeted behavioural change initiatives to encourage the use of sustainable modes through initiatives that have particular relevance to rural residents, such as our 'Twoshare' car sharing system;

- Continued improvement of facilities for bus users at stops, including the provision of timetable information by means of SMS text messaging on an individual stop basis;
- Rural footway and public rights of way improvements to provide better access to local facilities in rural areas;
- Improved cycle facilities in the market towns to encourage further increases in cycling;
- Traffic management improvements in north west Herefordshire to reduce impacts of freight movements on sensitive rural communities; and
- Safer Routes to Schools projects to improve safety and reduce car use.

Network Management Duty

The Council's commitment to effective management of the road network is illustrated by the decision to designate the statutory role of Traffic Manager in the post of Head of Highways and Transportation, a senior management position with the ability to influence and drive corporate policy development.

The requirements of the Traffic Management Act 2004 are being discharged through the following actions:

- The engagement of the Transport Ambition Group in policy development and the use of extensive stakeholder and public engagement in highways and transport projects.
- Routine policy and operational engagement with the Highways Agency, including quarterly liaison meetings chaired by the Traffic Manager.
- Participation in the formation of the West Midlands Shires/Unitaries Traffic Managers Liaison Group.
- Participation in the West Midlands Traffic Officers Regional Group (TORG)
- The establishment of a Network Management Team headed by the Highways Network Manager.
- Development of a network hierarchy, consistent with Local Transport Plan and Highway Maintenance Plan priorities.
- Implementation, through the Local Transport Plan, of the recommendations of the Hereford Transport Review
- Integration of network management for special events and road works with the Joined Up Programme of maintenance and new schemes.
- Annual review of progress in delivering the Local Transport Plan and development of the Hereford Intelligent Transport System to manage the growth in traffic on key routes.
- Integration of highways management systems to ensure parity of treatment and monitoring for local authority and statutory undertakers works.
- Promoting the role of the Traffic Manager and the responsibilities of the Traffic Management Act 2004 across the Council.