# Somerset County Council
## Transport Policies
# SCHEDULE OF POLICIES

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County Council

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# 1 Introduction

**1.1** This Document sets out Somerset County Council's transport policies which will come into force from 1 April 2011. Policies are grouped according to their role in delivering the aims of the Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy. Technical analysis supporting these policies has generally involved forecasting future traffic conditions to the year 2026 and testing possible solutions over that time frame. This document therefore sets out a long-term policy framework for the Council along with relevant extracts from the evidential base used to develop these policies which will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect changing circumstances.

# 2 Making a Positive Contribution

**Our Goal for 2026**

"People of all ages and walks of life are valued. They support others in their local communities and provide leadership on important issues. Communities are forward looking and determine what happens in their area. Organisations work well together in partnership and everyone is proud to live in Somerset and to promote its benefits to others."

**Our Transport Challenges to reach this Goal**

- To share and attract resources through partnerships and other external sources to achieve our goals; and
- To encourage local communities to meet their individual transport needs.

**2.1** Delivering good transport is all about having good partnerships. Without them, we simply would not be able to do many of the things we have already done to date. Whether it is formal partnerships, like our highly successful Road Safety Partnership or arrangements set up to seek solutions to specific problems such as the Voluntary Car Service (VCS)[1], success comes in many different shapes and sizes.

**POS 1 Community and Partnership involvement**

We will help our communities to help themselves. We will help them to make improvements to transport, allow them to shape our work and deliver improvements in partnership with other organisations.

**2.2** To do this we will:

- Engage the local community and other organisations who work with the community in discussions about the type of things we could do in their area;
- Look at ways to help communities help themselves by supporting and encouraging volunteering, providing advice and support for groups and communities to bring about changes;
- Build on our existing partnerships and develop new ones to help meet our goals and challenges;
- Help people understand the travel changes they can make to improve things for themselves and the local community;

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1    In partnership with NHS Somerset, we took over provision of the Voluntary Car Service (VCS) from South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust, providing a vital non-emergency patient transport service for those without private transport.

- Work with partners to help people understand that their travel choices contribute to their health and wellbeing (and that of those around them) [2];
- Seek opportunities to find the funding we need to fulfil our transport aspirations from public and private sources; and
- We will work with neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary issues set out in Figure 1.1 and Appendix A.

2    As set out in the White Paper *Healthy Lives Healthy People: our strategy for public health in England*(http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_121941) and the Department of Health's publication *Healthy Lives, Healthy People* (http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_123114.pdf)

Summary of Cross-Boundary Issues in Somerset.

# 3 Living Sustainably

**Our Goal for 2026**

"Everyone is aware of the impact of climate change on the county and of the importance of reducing and managing its effects. They use less energy and are proud of our local production. People walk and cycle more and take public and community transport whenever they can. Homes are of good quality, affordable and sustainable. Residents can reach jobs, shops, schools and medical care easily as new communities are planned in a way that reduces the need to travel. Transport, roads and new technology links are effective. Communities work well together, are forward looking and known for their self-reliance. Somerset's countryside is treasured and valued for what it adds to the quality of people's lives."

**Our Transport Challenges to reach this Goal**

- To seek innovative ways of making jobs, services and tourism more accessible to, from and for rural areas;
- To minimise the adverse impact of transport on quality of life and the natural environment;
- To maximise the potential for use of technology to support our goals; and
- To seek opportunities through transport to reduce carbon emissions and strengthen our ability to adapt to climate change, particularly where it supports or enhances the success of the other challenges.

**3.1**    The impact of Climate Change is an issue that is present now and for the future. This impact is uncertain but the scientific evidence shows us that our climate is changing and that the consequences are potentially severe.  Additionally, there are many people in Somerset who do not have a car and it is important for them to be able to get to all the places and services they need. Even for people who do have a car, driving is not always the best way to get around. For some journeys, particularly in urban areas, there are other methods of transport that are cheaper, healthier and quicker and which do not cause pollution, congestion or danger.  We therefore discuss our strategy to give people choices and opportunities to live 'greener' lifestyles. Clearly, living sustainably is not just about the mode of transport that people chose. Other factors include quality of life issues such as noise, light pollution, enhancing the natural and built environment and how communities can be divided by roads; known as severance.

**3.2**    Many of the policies that help deliver the aim of 'Living Sustainably' also deliver other aims. For instance providing people with cycling skills would also help with 'Staying Safe'.

## Climate Change

**3.3**  There will always be extreme weather events such as heat waves and floods. However, the indications are that the frequency of these could increase in the future. For Somerset, this is likely to mean:

- Warmer, wetter winters;
- Hotter, drier summers;
- Extreme rainfall events; and
- Rising sea levels and tidal surges.

**3.4**  Our Climate Change Strategy[3] sets out the County Council's plan to co-ordinate actions and to introduce further measures within Somerset to ensure that infrastructure and services are resilient to the effects of climate change and to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases.

### Community Leadership

**3.5**  As an organisation, we need to provide clear leadership by taking action to plan for the effects of climate change on delivery of services, and by reducing emissions from the management of the Council Estate, our operations and our vehicles.  We are committed to reducing the carbon emissions we generate and also to provide support to our communities if they are affected by the impacts of climate change.

### Adapting to Climate Change

**3.6**  The predicted effects of climate change in Somerset will produce significant changes to the environment of Somerset.  These will increase in intensity over time and start to significantly affect people's activities.

**3.7**  Transport is one of the key areas where adaptation to climate change is important, particularly with regard to the effect flooding, as well as other extremes of weather can have on the highway network.  Much of the work undertaken in our maintenance program looks at this and we will continue to seek out ways in which to adapt our network to climate change.

### Mitigating Climate Change

**3.8**  Mitigation, dealing with the emissions of greenhouse gases causing climate change, is the second main theme for action to respond to climate change in Somerset alongside Adaptation.  The case for action to mitigate climate change by reducing the level of emissions of greenhouse gases is clearly set out by the Stern Review[4] on the Economics of Climate Change. The simple conclusion of the Stern Review is that the benefits of decisive and early action on climate change far outweigh the costs we will incur if we do not act now.

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3   Somerset County Council (2008) Responding to Climate Change
4   Stern, N. (2006) Stern Review on The Economics of Climate Change, HM Treasury, London

**3.9**    Transport measures that help to mitigate the impacts of climate change include:

- Promoting sustainable transport choices by providing people with the information on the transport opportunities available to them and their benefits;
- Helping to improve the infrastructure and facilities available to encourage sustainable transport choices;
- Travel Plans in education, business and residential developments;
- Encouraging Alternative Fuels, such as electric vehicles, hybrid and biofuel;
- Reducing the need to travel by making it easier to access services virtually; and
- Encouraging shorter journeys (under 5 miles) to be made by cycle or on foot.

**The Somerset County Council Climate Change Action Plan**

**3.10**    The Climate Change Strategy for Somerset provides a framework for us to develop Action Plans each year. These will include assessment of the effectiveness of actions carried out in the previous year and recommend further improvements in performance.

> ### SUS 1 Climate Change
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> We will publish an annual action plan explaining how we will lead Somerset's response to climate change. Transport will have an important part to play in this.

**3.11**    To do this we will:

- Plan for the effects of climate change on the services we deliver to reduce emissions from our own activities. To make sure we are successful, where possible, we will engage with local communities, businesses, government agencies and other key stakeholders.
- Work to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions from local authority operations of 30% by 2015, relative to baseline emissions in 2008. Support the whole County in achieving a similar reduction in carbon emissions per capita.
- Examine actions in all service areas to find simple, measurable, achievable and realistic targets to deal with the causes and effects of climate change.
- We will support the inclusion of measures which make best use of the funding available to deliver improvements in the short term.

**3.12**    In addition to the threat of climate change, many scientists are now speculating we may reach "peak oil" within 10-20 years. This is a situation where oil resources diminish and become difficult to extract, leading to a dramatic worldwide rise in the price of oil. This may lead to a significant rise in the price of petrol, making it too expensive for people to be able to drive private cars as freely as before. It may also lead to eventual shortage and rationing of fuel for transport that would force us to cut back on our car travel. No one knows yet for sure when peak oil might be reached, or what exact effect it might have on our economy and travel opportunities, but in a

transport strategy spanning 15 years, we must give consideration to this possibility and prepare ourselves to manage the possible impacts by managing our resources more wisely[5]. Polices to provide alternatives to the car are set out below, not only to help those who currently do not have access to transport, to assist those who wish to travel more sustainably but also to make provision for more people being unable to travel by car in the future, if and when it becomes too costly to do so.

## Bus and Community Transport

**3.13**    The Bus Strategy is part of the Passenger Transport Strategy[6] (2011-2026). It covers all public bus transport in Somerset and other community–based accessible transport initiatives that utilise motorised vehicular transport on the public highway (usually bus, coach, minibus or some form of taxi). The Bus Strategy is closely aligned with the continued delivery of many of our accessibility aspirations.

**3.14**    The Bus Strategy covers several areas of public service provision including:

- Education (schools and post-16 education transport);
- Health (transport for non-emergency health provision);
- Social Care (transport for adults and children receiving social care); and
- Environment (supported public transport and community transport services).

**3.15**    Somerset is predominantly rural in character with a population widely dispersed across a number of medium sized town centres, smaller rural settlements, hamlets and farmsteads. Pockets of deprivation exist, within rural areas especially, and accessibility to essential services can be poor.

**3.16**    Benchmarking Somerset County Council's passenger transport expenditure against similar authorities in England through the National Highways and Transport Survey[7] demonstrates a significant improvement in the level of investment since implementation of the Passenger Transport Strategy began.  Previously the third lowest in the country, Somerset's overall passenger transport expenditure is now ranked in the top half of English shire counties and is on a par with other south west counties.   However, Somerset is the lowest spending county on passenger information, which may have contributed to a particularly low public satisfaction rating for public transport information provision.

**3.17**    Dissatisfaction with access opportunities amongst disabled people and those without a car is also significant in Somerset and enthusiasm for Somerset's bus services and community transport is generally lukewarm.

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5    Hanlon, P. McCartney, G. (2008) Peak oil: Will it be public health's greatest challenge? *Public Health*, 122: 647-652.

6    Somerset County Council (2010) Passenger Transport Strategy (2011-2026)

7    www.nhtsurvey.org

**3.18**    As a result it is clear that the amount and quality of fully accessible public and community transport for all users needs strengthening. Barriers to accessibility include lack of integration between different parts of the passenger transport system, poor information and unaffordable fares, particularly for those residents on low incomes living in rural parts who may have to travel long distances to access services.

**3.19**    A need for transport to address the more personalised needs of social service, education and other clients was identified. In the areas where new development is proposed it will be essential to ensure that the developments are fully served by accessible bus services and attractive facilities for bus users. These may include park and ride services supported, where appropriate, by bus priority schemes and parking restraint.

**3.20**    Better passenger transport also helps achieve the aim of 'Being Healthy', as journeys often involve an element of walking that people may otherwise not undertake; 'Enjoying and Achieving' through enabling access to learning opportunities, and 'Ensuring Economic Wellbeing' through serving new development areas.

## Integrating Passenger Transport

**3.21**    Other issues which we need to address in terms of developing strategy include integrating bus and rail services, integrating services between settlements (particularly in rural areas), bus priority and improving ticketing options for passengers. However, these are closely linked to the delivery of many other policies within this plan and should not be considered in isolation.

**3.22**    In 'Ensuring Economic Wellbeing', we discuss our strategies for addressing growth in housing and employment in the Taunton area[8] and Yeovil.  Although our strategy supports economic growth, it also helps to support people to live more sustainably by introducing measures to encourage them to make less single occupancy car trips and provide more opportunities for travel on foot, by bike or by bus or train.

## Bus and Community Transport Information

**3.23**    Alongside the need to improve services and facilities, we also need to think about the bus information that is provided as part of existing services.  It can be quite confusing for new bus users to know where to get bus information, where to catch a bus from or even when the next bus might turn up.  We also acknowledge that in terms of accessibility, information is just as important as the services themselves. We have already done a significant amount of development in this area in producing a Standard to determine what local bus information should be made available to the public and the way in which the information should be made available.  This includes:

- Telephone information through Somerset Direct, Traveline, bus operators and through our NHS partners;

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8    incorporating Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington

- Information has been provided to customers using a series of channels, including Somerset County Council website[9], Moving Somerset Forward website[10], Traveline website[11], Transport Direct website[12], bus operator websites and rail operator websites;
- One stop shop / enquiry offices / libraries to help provide local information and advice to residents and visitors to the Somerset area;
- Timetable booklets and leaflets, including area booklets, individual travel guides and rail information;
- Timetable map;
- Funding and provision of bus stop flags, poles and cases;
- SMS information via the Traveline text service allows passengers in Somerset to get the times of the next 3 scheduled services at a particular bus stop by mobile phone text;
- On-bus information;
- Information at transport interchanges; and
- Meeting the needs of particular users to provide equality in the provision of services.

**3.24**   As our aspirations grow and other elements of our society become more advanced, such as mobile phone technology, it is important that we improve our standards to keep pace with this.

### SUS 2 Bus and Community Transport Services

We will do what we can to maintain essential services in the early years of this plan and work to improve the way services work together and provide better bus information during its later years.

**3.25**   To do this we could:

- Maintain and, where possible, improve services provided by existing community transport organisations;
- Deliver an effective strategy to promote bus and community-based accessible transport. Offer business advice and travel surveying to help community organisations who provide community transport services;
- Work with the community voluntary sector so more of the local bus services they provide can carry the general public;
- Work with communities and partners, such as schools and colleges, (particularly in rural areas) to see how we can get the best out of existing services;

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9   www.somerset.gov.uk
10   www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk
11   www.traveline.org.uk
12   www.transportdirect.info

- Develop and expand district wide SLINKY[13] services;
- Assess the potential for providing more 'Somerset Accessible Transport' community transport schemes;
- Develop more community car schemes and work to understand how publicity and booking arrangements could be improved; and
- Improve the efficiency of community transport through partnerships and better co-operation. To do this we will:

  - Work with partners to reduce the need to travel by providing more services locally;
  - Ensure Local Development Frameworks and other planning documents tackle accessibility issues;
  - Carry out accessibility studies in partnership with the relevant district council; and
  - Work with the 'South West Community Transport Benchmarking Group' to improve the skills of community transport providers and the quality of their services.

- Improve the integration of rail and bus services at railway stations, through the actual facilities available and the way timetables fit together;
- Audit walking and cycling routes to railway stations and principal bus interchanges, major taxi ranks and car parks with a view to making them accessible for all and prioritising improvements;
- Continue our programme of high quality interchange improvements;
- Continue to implement the proposed programme of Quality Bus Partnership routes[14];

- Implement a 'limited stop' Quality Bus Partnership route between Taunton and Yeovil and investigate the feasibility of implementing others across the county;
- Consider measures such as bus priority and changes to parking charges to support the introduction of the new park and ride services;
- Work with operators to develop smartcard ticketing across the County, beginning by:

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13  SLINKY is an accessible bus service which is pre-booked by users so that services can respond to their needs (known as Demand Responsive Transport). It is designed to help local people make trips that they would otherwise find difficult to make (if there is no regular bus service, for example).

14  In a Quality Bus Partnership the Local Authority works with the bus company to improve the service on a particular route. This could include, for example, us helping buses get through junctions more quickly and the bus company providing new buses.

- Using smartcard technology for concessionary travel (for people who are disabled or aged over 60) and 'scholars' tickets' in partnership with other south-west authorities; and
- Introducing a smartcard 'CountyTicket' in parallel with the 'scholars' tickets' discussed above.

- Work undertaken to improve bus stops and interchanges will consider how it could contribute to climate change mitigation and adaption. By providing shade at bus stops, for example;

- Deliver a 'single point of contact' call centre for all bus and community transport needs in Somerset. This will include public transport, social needs transport, school transport and non-emergency health transport and offer an out of hours service;
- Create a website that provides electronic timetable and community transport information and is user friendly and easy to navigate;
- Produce all bus services booklets in the same format, making production quicker and the booklet cheaper to produce;
- Improve the use of SMS text messaging and audio technology for information provision;
- Introduction of 'smart points' that provide interactive real time information at key transport interchanges; and
- Compile an accurate list of all bus stops, poles, flags, bus shelters and low floor kerbs in Somerset. We will use appropriate GIS systems to help improve identification, monitoring and maintenance.

**3.26**    This policy also supports our policy on;

- Smarter choices, which aims to provide a 'One Stop Shop' for travel information; and
- Sustainable development, which includes using planning processes to provide bus priority measures (which allow buses to avoid congestion and delay).

## Accessibility

**3.27**    As part of our accessibility work during our last five year transport plan, we have looked at the areas of Somerset that have the lowest level of accessibility to key services, such as healthcare, employment and education. We have also identified the services that are the most inaccessible by public transport.

**3.28**    The results from our analysis indicate that acute hospitals, adult evening learning and Jobcentre Plus are the least accessible services in Somerset. West Somerset, Frome, Bridgwater and Castle Cary are among the areas have the lowest level of accessibility. However, some of these areas are currently covered by Demand Responsive Transport and Community Transport.

## Helping Individuals make Smarter Travel Choices

**3.29**    It has been found that some physical environments can actually discourage physical activity for instance by locating shops where people have no choice but to drive to them.

**3.30**    The latest figures suggest that 24.5% of adults in Somerset are now obese.[15] Evidence of a specific link between transport and obesity comes from a number of sources.[16] In sum, when people can walk or cycle to local facilities they spend less time in cars. Each additional kilometre walked per day is associated with a 4.8% reduction in the likelihood of obesity, whereas each additional hour spent in a car per day is associated with a 6% increase in the likelihood of obesity.[17] Conversely when landuse mix is low adults spend more time driving to shops and other facilities and so lose opportunities for routine physical activity which contributes to weight management and overall health.[18] Commuting by car to work is associated with overweight and obesity compared to active travel modes and use of public transport.[19]

**3.31**    As part of the Somerset Active Travel Strategy, we have developed a Smarter Choices Strategy, which will help to deliver lower cost ways of providing information to people about different travel choices, as well as practical advice and training to help people lead more active lifestyles.  We discuss the issues surrounding sedentary lifestyles further in 'Being Healthy'.

**3.32**    Our aims for our Smarter Travel Choices Strategy are to:

- Raise awareness of new and existing infrastructure, facilities and services that we provide; and
- Encourage the switch away from single occupancy car use to more sustainable modes to help ease congestion, improve health and protect our environment.

**3.33**    To date, we have concentrated most of out work on improving our means of communication, revolving principally around the Moving Forward website[20] and targeted printed information to support it, such as the Manual for Travel Plans for

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15  http://www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?QN=P_HEALTH_PROFILES.

16  Bell, C., Ge, K. and Popkin, B. (2002) The road to obesity or the path to prevention: Motorised transportation and obesity in China, Obesity Research, 10(4), pp. 277-283.

17  Frank, L., Andersen, M., Schmid, T. (2004) Obesity relationships with community design, physical activity, and time spent in cars, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 27(2), pp. 87-96

18  Frank, L., Andersen, M. and Schmid, T. (2004) Obesity relationships with community design, physical activity, and time spent in cars, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 27(2), pp. 87-96.

19  Wen, L., Orr, N., Rissel, C. (2006) Driving to work and overweight and obesity: findings from the 2003 New South Wales Health Survey, Australia. International Journal of Obesity, 30(5): 782-786.

20  www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk

businesses and walking and cycling maps. We have also undertaken a number of campaigns and continued to gather information and data to inform a review of our brand and communications approach.

**3.34** In summary, our current approach to Smarter Choices includes:

- Creating and developing the Moving Forward Campaign including a stand alone website to signpost users to the appropriate information;
- Promotional campaigns;
- Developing the 'Manual for Travel Plans' and draft Supplementary Planning Document on Travel Plans, which we are working with our District Partners to incorporate into their Local Development Frameworks;
- Engagement with schools to develop School Travel Plans;
- Working with businesses to develop individual and area Travel Plans;
- Working in partnership with other organisations, such as the NHS, to deliver joint campaigns, such as the Somerset Cycle Challenge;
- Practical engagement projects such as the Repair and Ride scheme and Bikeability; and
- Developing printed materials such as walk/cycle maps, leaflets and guidance documents.

**3.35** During this work, we have monitored the success of our activities as well as obtaining data on similar activities elsewhere in the country. To date, our activities have produced the following shifts in behaviour:

1. Reducing the proportion of children driven to school alone by car from 29.2% to 25.3%;
2. Reducing the proportion of people driving to work alone by car from 54% to 50%; and
3. Increasing the average number of cycle trips by 0.8% each year.

**3.36** In a March/April 2010 survey[21] of 600 Somerset residents, 59% said that they thought they should take some action personally to reduce their use of the car. 58% of people cited saving money for cutting their car use while 46% wanted to drive less in order to protect the environment.

**3.37** So we know from our local research that many people in Somerset feel it is important to cut down on their car travel and switch to more sustainable modes of travel for some of their journeys. Lack of information about the alternatives is a big reason why some have not yet been able to make the change. Furthermore, 53% of the people we spoke to said the presence of viable alternatives would be the most important factor in helping them to change to other modes.

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21 Somerset County Council (2010) Moving Forward Tracking Study: Report and Conclusions, April 2010

**3.38**   We also know that, in some cases, people think there are no viable alternatives when actually there are.  Our National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey[22] in 2009 showed that people in Somerset could not always find the travel information they needed. In particular, there was scope for improvement on:

- Cycle route information (e.g. maps) and signage;
- Provision of public transport information; and
- Information to help people plan journeys.

**3.39**   Disabled users also told us they had difficulty finding routes suitable for wheelchairs and blind and partially sighted users found it hard to get information about bus services at bus stops and stations when staff were not available to assist them. They also suggested we could do more to promote the services available to disabled users, such as demand responsive and community transport schemes.

**3.40**   This shows that people are having trouble finding transport information both before they make their journey (trying to work out how to get where they want to go) and while they are actually out and about (trying to work out which path to take when walking or cycling, or which bus they need to catch).  Currently, about 20% of people in Somerset recognise the Moving Forward name and logo and between 1500 and 2000 people visit our website each month.

**3.41**   We have considered the feasibility of undertaking Personal Travel Planning[23] in one of our larger towns. This work has demonstrated that helping people change their individual travel choices and reduce the number of car journeys they make offers a much better value for money approach to tackling congestion than costly highway capacity improvements. This would compliment existing transport and other strategies, such as Local Development Frameworks, while also meeting wider objectives such as health and community involvement.

**3.42**   We have also worked with the University of the West of England and other stakeholders in the Yeovil area to produce *Active and low carbon travel: a transport vision for Yeovil* [24]. This documents sets out some of the things that could be done to help people make smarter travel choices in Yeovil. This work will play an important part in implementing our policy, suggesting specific measures for Yeovil but also by highlighting the types of things we could be doing throughout Somerset.

**3.43**   In terms of developing options for the strategy, we decided three areas of work in detail to look at:

- Providing information on sustainable travel choices;

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22   www.nhtsurvey.org
23   Personal Travel Planning is an approach to delivering targeted information directly to travellers, to help them make sustainable travel choices (ACT Travelwise - www.acttravelwise.org)
24   University of the West of England *for* Department of Health South West (2010) *Active and low carbon travel: a transport vision for Yeovil*

- Actively promoting specific transport services; and
- Branded Communications.

**3.44**    Much of the work has to be linked with or is reliant on other elements of the Smarter Choices work and other Strategies, such as the Passenger Transport Strategy.

**3.45**    In terms of value for money,the economic benefits of walking and cycling interventions are highly significant, and these average 11.5:1 even when using conservative estimates[25]. This means that for every £1 that is spent, the financial benefit to the community, through for example reduced healthcare costs and increased tourism spend, is £11.50. This suggests that the (relatively small) initial investments required for these interventions produce big results and offer good value for money. Environmental and other interventions to facilitate increased physical activity through cycling and walking is likely to be a 'best buy' for the road transport sector, for public health, and the NHS at large in terms of cost savings.

**3.46**    Using the information we have collected, we have developed our approach to encouraging smarter travel choices. This approach is introduced here and set out in more detail in our Active Travel Strategy, which will be available on our website once it is finalised. As part of this approach, we need to engage businesses and other organisations and communities in developing travel plans to manage their own travel. Much of our work focuses around our recent innovation, the Manual for Travel Plans[26]. Our strategy for developing travel plans is discussed in more depth in 'Ensuring Economic Wellbeing'.  Furthermore, we have also done a lot of work with our schools, encouraging them to develop School Travel Plans that are tailored to their own individual needs. This work, describing our successes to date and our future plans, is discussed in 'Enjoying and Achieving'.

> ### SUS 3 Smarter Choices
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> We will help people make smarter travel choices. We will provide high quality transport information and encourage organisations to develop 'Travel Plans'[27].

**3.47**    To do this we could:

- Create a comprehensive 'One Stop Shop' for transport information and advice across all modes of travel.

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25  Davis, A. (2010) Value *for* Money:  An Economic Assessment of the Health Benefits of Active Travel, Government Office for the South West
26  www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk/business
27  Travel Plans are written by businesses, schools and even for individual households. They help people meet their everyday needs in a way that keeps our roads working and protects Somerset's people and places.

- Integrating signage, network plans and paper and digital maps into a single wayfinding system;
- Developing our online profile by expanding and improving our website to cover all modes and integration between modes;
- Providing information in a range of traditional and innovative formats (ranging from cycle maps through to online cycle navigation tools and journey planners);
- Support people directly, with things like training and providing advice over the telephone. This includes improved cycle training for schools through schemes such as 'Bikeability';
- Provide better public transport information; and
- Investigate the information people with disabilities need.

- Carry out promotion that inspires and influences people to change their habits and use sustainable modes of travel. This could include:

  - Targeted campaigns to achieve the our transport goals and support other aligned targets and strategies (e.g. carbon reduction, health);
  - Helping people to choose sustainable travel when breaking habits e.g. moving job/home/school/college;
  - Ensuring new and existing infrastructure and services are suitably publicised to maximise the benefits they provide, by increasing awareness and usage of them; and
  - Comparing the performance of our campaigns against other authorities and best practice examples to drive improvements.

- Improve our communications and create a suite of materials that give people all the information and incentives they need to switch to non-car modes of travel. This could include:

  - Ensuring messages remain relevant;
  - Supporting policies on ICT and emerging technologies by extending our communications platforms to make more use of modern technology and communications methods in order to reach a wider audience;
  - Better integration with other internal and external operations; and
  - Reviewing our brand and creating a business-facing brand.

- Giving people informed choice, including about the true costs of travel modes;
- Engage in initiatives such as personal travel planning, travel plans (and associated transport/travel plan networks) and work with community groups to widen the message.

**3.48**    This policy is also supported by our policies on:

- Bus and community transport, which includes a number of measures to improve transport information.
- Sustainable development', which includes travel planning in new developments.

# Cycling

**3.49**    There are many well-known benefits to cycling. It is a healthy, cheap, sustainable form of transport that does not burn any fuel (other than calories!) and produces no pollution. Cycling significantly extends the distance over which human beings can transport themselves without need for an engine – an average person can cycle 5-6 miles in half an hour, meaning that two thirds of people in Somerset live within 30 minutes cycle of their work.

**3.50**    We are fortunate in many parts of Somerset to have an excellent environment for cycling. The 2001 census showed that 5% of workers in Somerset cycle to work (7 – 9% in urban areas like Taunton and Bridgwater). That's well over the national average of 3%, showing that it is a viable option for many people in this county. But there is still more we can do. In Cambridge, 18% of trips are by bicycle, and in London, Darlington and some other UK towns, cycling levels have doubled in less than 10 years.

**3.51**    In Somerset, cycling trips had been growing steadily by around 0.8% each year until Nov 2009, when the harsh winter triggered a sudden sharp decline in cycling between December and February. This is set against a national backdrop of gradual decline. In a March 2010 survey of 600 Somerset residents, a quarter of respondents thought that cycling or walking would be a practical option for them to get to work and nearly half thought it would be practical for taking their children to school.

**3.52**    In our survey of 1,100 residents, "Contribute to better safety, security and health" was selected as the most important goal and "Provide more opportunities and routes to make it easier for people to do more walking and cycling" was identified as one of the ways to achieve this goal when considering how to develop the next transport plan. All this shows that there is much more opportunity for us to increase the amount of cycling taking place in Somerset, and for us all to benefit from the effects.

**3.53**    With finance and investment likely to be constrained over the next few years, it will be necessary to seek the best possible value for money when deciding what improvement schemes to invest in. Opportunities for joining up existing parts of the network, or for creating better linkages between key trip origins and destinations are likely to yield the best possible return.

**3.54**    As well as significant user benefits to cycling in terms of increased health and fitness, there are also a range of wider benefits such as reduced absenteeism for employers. With a large proportion of road (traffic) congestion being caused by people doing less than 5 miles in their car, there is a huge benefit to be realised from reducing car use by enabling cycling. Not only will this minimise delays it will also reduce $CO_2$ emissions which are exacerbated by stop-start traffic conditions.

**What have we done already?**

**3.55**    Some of the things we have achieved to date include:

- Infrastructure improvements across the County include.
- Installation of 150 new cycle stands across Somerset including Bridgwater, Frome, Taunton, Yeovil, Wincanton, Street and Glastonbury;
- Development of a market towns action plan to make use of research suggesting these areas have a high potential for increasing cycling levels;
- Cycle training for both adults and children;
- Repair and Ride service to help employees and school pupils get their bike a service free of charge;
- Cycling and walking maps have been produced for the main towns and market towns across Somerset;
- Smarter travel choices promotions;
- Preparation of the Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which contains detail on the standard of cycle parking which should be provided as part of new development, outlined in 'Ensuring Economic Wellbeing';
- Two Workplace Cycle Challenges, in 2009 and 2010, designed to get more people cycling more often;
- Travel Planning in both schools and businesses;
- A cycle loan scheme at Bridgwater College to improve accessibility for students who might struggle to access the college by other modes and subsequently may be put off attending college; and
- Mapping all our cycle routes electronically so that people will be able to use an online journey planner to help them cycle more easily around Somerset.

**3.56**    In some areas, we have identified what needs to be done, but have not yet had the opportunity to put that into action due to lack of funding, or other difficulties with delivery. We will aim to do this over the coming years.

### SUS 4 Cycling

We will encourage people to cycle more by helping them to make smarter travel choices and get better cycling skills. We will support the provision of appropriate and well connected cycling facilities.

**3.57**    To do this we will:

- Examine gaps and barriers in our cycling network (including rights of way) and use this knowledge to plan improvements. This will include the continuation and completion of the market town studies looking at barriers to cycling.
- Work with schools and businesses to encourage cycling through travel planning, and using the planning framework to ensure developments provide access onto the existing network and upgrades to routes as appropriate. This supports our Sustainable development' and 'School travel' policies;
- Work undertaken to improve facilities will consider how it could contribute to climate change mitigation and adaption.  By providing shaded paths, avoiding areas at risk from flooding or using materials which don't contribute to surface water runoff, for example;

- Help promote the use of the National Cycle Network and support Sustrans' efforts to involve communities in maintaining it;

- Encourage people to cycle when accessing the countryside and green spaces; and

- Influence the design and implementation of infrastructure. To do this we will:

  - Review the cycle and safety audit processes to ensure they provide proactive support for problem solving rather than being a barrier to innovation;
  - Progress schemes identified in current plans (such as the Taunton area and Yeovil transport studies and the market town studies); and
  - Explore options for future countywide strategic routes.

**3.58**    This policy is also supported by our policies on:

- Smarter choices, which includes providing information and training to give more people the confidence to cycle.
- Sustainable development, which supports the use of the planning system to promote cycling, through travel plans and new facilities.
- School travel, which includes a number of measures to help more children cycle to school.
- Rights of way, which includes improved mapping of cycling routes.

## Walking

**3.59**    The county's highway network, consisting of predominately single carriageway rural roads, links settlements of all sizes, including hamlets, small villages, larger market towns[28] and the three main urban areas of Taunton, Bridgwater and Yeovil. In the rural areas, conditions for pedestrians can be made difficult by heavy traffic flows, inappropriate access by heavy goods vehicles and a lack of footways and crossings, which may contribute towards community severance and poor accessibility to local services including public transport. This limits or disrupts interpersonal networks and reduces social contact.[29][30] The amount of social interaction among the residents is inversely correlated with traffic levels in residential streets.[31]  Thus,

28   Burnham-on-sea, Chard, Cheddar, Crewkerne, Dunster, Frome, Glastonbury, Highbridge, Ilminster, Minehead, Shepton Mallet, Street, Wells and Wincanton

29   Appleyard D, Lintell M. (1972) The environmental quality of city streets: The residents' viewpoint. Am Inst Plan J. 38:84-101.

30   Appleyard D, Gerson MS, Lintell M. (1981) Livable streets. Berkeley: University of California Press.

31   Hart. J (2008) Driven to Excess: Impacts of Motor Vehicle Traffic on Residential Quality of Life in Bristol, UK, University of the West of England

residents living on busy streets are likely to have less in the way of social support networks which are health promoting. Reductions in social contacts are associated with higher mortality and long-term ill health in the elderly[32].

**3.60**    In the market towns and other service centres, safe and convenient walking routes are needed to deliver improved accessibility to local services. In the main urban areas, where development is likely to be focused during the period to 2026, it will be vital to provide the pedestrian facilities that can maximise levels of walking in the future. Improvements to pedestrian safety will also be a high priority. The 2001 Census indicated that the overall mode share of walking for journeys to work in Somerset is 12%. This figure tends to be higher in the urban centres (e.g. Yeovil is 16%) and lower in the rural areas.

**3.61**    We know we need to improve our provision of pedestrian facilities in line with the concerns and aspirations that Somerset residents have expressed and to achieve local and national policy goals. In order to create a walking environment that is more attractive, safe and accessible and to encourage more people to walk more frequently in both urban and rural communities, five priority areas have been identified. These are:

- Accessibility for all: networks: routes, crossings, interchange with other modes, provision for disabled people and minority user groups;
- The pedestrian environment: facilities and design, maintenance, priority;
- Road safety and personal security;
- Promotion: smarter travel choices, recreational walking; and
- Land use planning.

**3.62**    Options were generated for these priority areas and appraised using the assessment tool discussed in 'Selecting the Preferred Approach'.

### SUS 5 Walking

We will help people make more trips on foot and help people see the benefits of walking.

**3.63**    To do this we will:

- Raise the level of priority given to pedestrians and reinforce pedestrian rights in the urban environment. We will use traffic management measures which reallocate road space to the pedestrian and encourage a reduction in the number of vehicles using the road (without creating unacceptable congestion);
- Improve perceptions of walking by reducing the fear of crime, through good design and by improving existing facilities on pedestrian routes. This includes

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32   Berkman L, Syme SL. (1979) Social networks, host resistance, and mortality: A nine-year follow-up study of Alameda County residents. Am.J.Epidemiol. 109:186-204.

working to improve the way pedestrians and cyclists share paths and other spaces;

- Identify, improve and upgrade crossing facilities at locations with the potential for high levels of continuous footfall;
- Look at how pedestrian routes can be identified and mapped to achieve our long-term aspiration for a continuous network of accessible pedestrian routes (including rights of way). Supported by attractive signage where necessary, these routes will link residential areas, employment, community facilities and public transport interchanges;
- Encourage people to walk when accessing the countryside and green spaces;
- Support our parking policy, which aims to discourage footway parking;
- Ensure the needs of all pedestrians, including those with reduced mobility and sensory impairments, are taken into account when designing pedestrian networks and facilities (including rights of way); and

- Work undertaken to improve facilities will consider how it could contribute to climate change mitigation and adaption. By providing shaded paths, avoiding areas at risk from flooding or using materials which don't contribute to surface water runoff, for example.

**3.64**   This policy is also supported by our policies on:

- Integrating passenger transport, which includes auditing walking routes between interchanges.
- Active travel, which support working with partner organisations to promote walking.
- Rights of way, which includes improved mapping of walking routes.
- Smarter choices, which includes improved mapping of walking routes and investigating the information disabled people need
- School travel, which considers travel planning and safer routes to schools.
- Sustainable development, which includes measures designed to promote walking through the planning system.
- Landscape and biodiversity, which ensures new walking routes will not have adverse impacts.
- Parking, which include discouraging footway parking.

## Public Rights of Way

**3.65**   The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is the prime means by which we will identify changes to be made to the rights of way service and network for the benefit of walkers, equestrians, cyclists, and those with visual or mobility difficulties. One of the ways we can do this is by continuing to open up the existing network of routes to improve accessibility. Our new RoWIP will be available for comment soon and once finalised will be in place until 2021.

**3.66**   Somerset has one of the longest rights of way networks in the country.  It currently stands at 6,129 km.  A similar size county in terms of area is Cornwall with 4,238 km.  By comparison Devon is almost 50% larger in area but has 4,900 km of rights of way.

**3.67**   Our plan for improving our Public Rights of Way (PRoW) has been divided into three parts based on the relative priority of each action; high, medium or low. These priorities have been arrived at as a result of officer assessment, taking into account the statutory duties that we must perform, the Habitats Regulations, the statutory guidance for RoWIPs and Local Transport Plans, results of in-depth consultation processes, and ongoing discussions with various internal and external colleagues and stakeholders.

## SUS 6 Rights of Way

We will work to maintain our Rights of Way network and improve the information available to help people use them.

**3.68**   To do this would need to do a number of things, we have divided these into three groups:

**3.69**   Our High Priority Actions are:

- Inform our maintenance program and ensure that improvements to the public rights of way network are secured through development where appropriate;
- Maintain the 'ease of use' assessment and produce an updated Definitive Map & Statement;
- Link key destinations by identifying PRoW[33] on the urban fringes that link to nearby communities, schools, services, public open space etc, that could be upgraded or improved to become restricted byways or bridleways and serve as multi-use routes;
- Create a list of routes currently available to people with reduced mobility and identify routes that could be improved;
- Continue to develop the Community Paths Partnership; and
- Seek improvements to the Rights of Way Network by engaging with communities, volunteers, developers and other local organisations to achieve the best value for money initiatives.

**3.70**   Our Medium Priority Actions are:

- Ensure that emerging Local Development Frameworks have regard for the RoWIP;
- Ensure that the RoWIP[34] and any identified priority routes are taken into account when negotiating High Level Stewardship applications;

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33   PRoW stands for Public Right of Way
34   RoWIP stands for Right of Way Improvement Plan

- Ensure that network improvements are secured prior to the sale of any CountyFarms and improve the PRoW on the retained estate farms as and when appropriate;
- Enhanced signage and waymarking (such as destination and distance signing) will be considered on national, regional & local promoted routes;
- Develop the interactive mapping website for PRoW;
- Continue to collate permissive and other route information and engage with key stakeholders and landowners to collate and map the wider access opportunities; and
- Support and develop health initiatives that involve the maintenance and/or use of PRoW.

**3.71**   Our Low Priority Actions are:

- Work with the Countryside Team to ensure that access improvements are included in the development of County Wildlife Sites and community woodlands. Wherever possible these will be multi-use routes; and
- Work in partnership transport providers to develop publications and services to promoted trails and popular, accessible, routes. Ensure that these services are as accessible as possible for visually and mobility impaired people and for cyclists.

**3.72**   This policy is also supported by our policies on:

- Walking, which includes making our walking routes more accessible and comprehensive.
- Smarter choices, which includes a 'One Stop Shop' for travel information and improved wayfinding signage.

**3.73**   The initiatives outlined in 'Managing our Network' in 'Ensuring Economic Wellbeing', look at our measures to reduce congestion and keep traffic moving. Clearly there are close links to 'Living Sustainably', where measures such as encouraging walking, cycling and bus use overlap with our Network Management Plan (NMP). Similarly, a summary of the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) is set out in 'Ensuring Economic Wellbeing'. While this focuses on maintenance of the transport network, there are measures which overlap with sustainability.  These include ensuring walking and cycling routes are kept free of overgrowth and gritted during snow and icy conditions, salting bus routes as part of winter maintenance programmes and keeping the network free of defects such as pot holes to ensure that all users benefit from a smoother running surface.

## Rail

**3.74**   Our Passenger Transport Strategy provides greater detail on the rail issues we need to consider in the future. The aim of our strategy for rail is to attract more travellers to Somerset's rail network and improve the service offered between key locations for Somerset's people and businesses.

**3.75**   To realise this aim we will:

| Manage | Get the best out of the existing network, particularly by encouraging improved services, new connections and better access for all travellers. This will support more attractive and efficient services. |
| --- | --- |
| Rethink | Encourage travellers to change their views of the rail network and travel by train more often. |
| Understand | Improve our knowledge of how the current network works for Somerset and how this could be improved. |
| Collaborate | Work with other rail industry stakeholders to develop new solutions and promote integration within Somerset County Council's policies, to help integrate the railway into Somerset's wider transport network. |
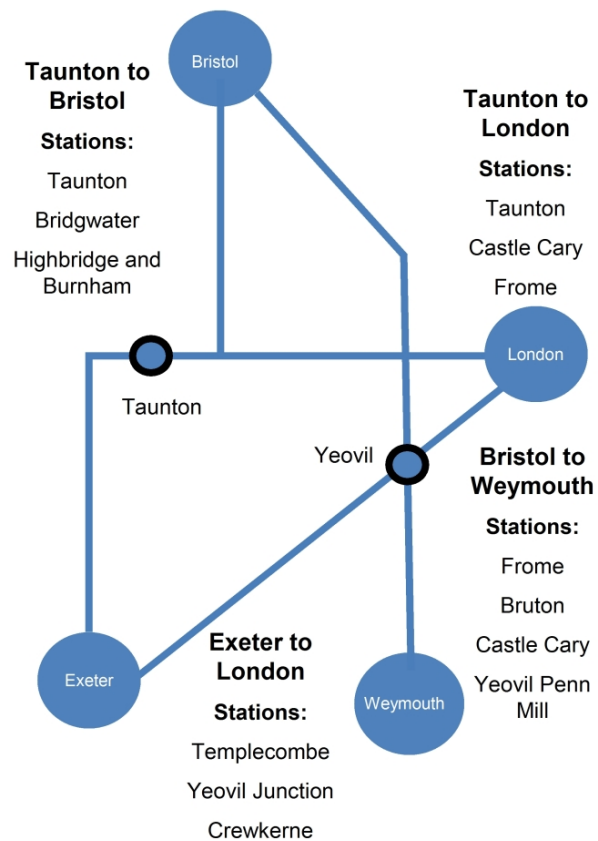


Figure 3.1 Rail Lines in Somerset

**3.76** Somerset has four rail lines, served by three Train Operating Companies. Figure 3.1 shows these lines.

**3.77** The number of people travelling by train is an important indicator of how well Somerset's rail network is working and what we need to do to realise the aims and objectives of this strategy. However, many of the things that influence how much people travel are beyond our control, such as the strength of the economy or how sunny the summer is. Figure 3.2 also shows that different stations are growing at very different rates and Somerset County Council's rail survey data suggests growth at some stations is more stable than at others. This suggests that our strategy will need to tailor its approach to different stations to tackle their different needs.

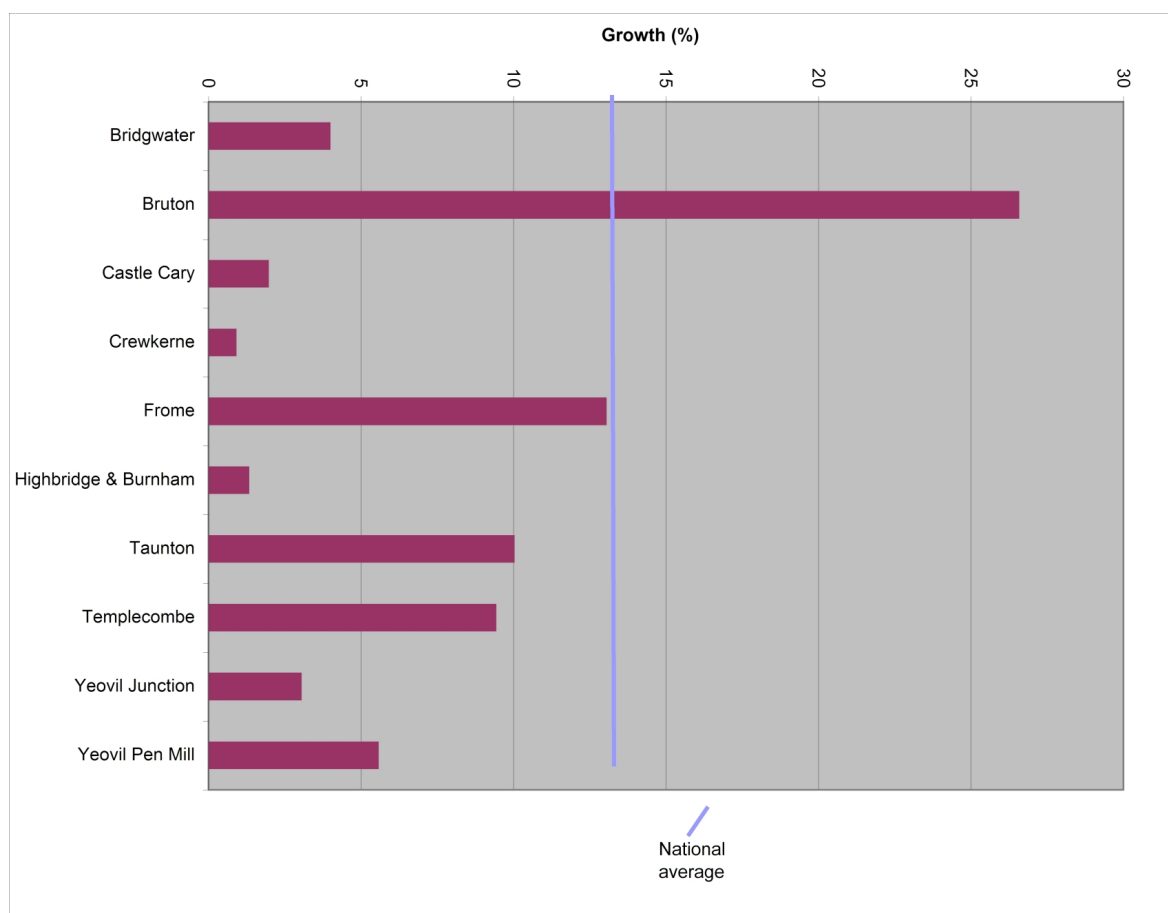**Passenger Numbers, Timetabling and Stations**



Figure 3.2 Growth in passengers boarding and Alighting 2008 - 2009) (Based on data from the Office of Rail Regulation, national average excludes Significantly Improved Stations). Significantly Improved Stations include those which have been reopened or had a significantly changed rail service. No stations in Somerset qualify.

**3.78** A review of timetables highlighted a number of problems associated with irregular intervals between services, caused by the lack of clock face timetables and specific gaps in the normal patterns of services. The Heart of Wessex line is a notable exception, due to its infrequent service (and lack of Sunday morning services), it would need greater enhancement to align with our connectivity aspirations.

**3.79**    Stations also play an import part in rail travel and have a big impact on how enjoyable (or otherwise) the experience is. Stations have to serve a wide variety of functions and need to provide a consistent service that travellers can rely on. We have carried out an inspection of each station and noted the improvements needed to make them better for travellers.

**3.80**    Our current work on rail includes:

- Lobbying the industry and central government to address the challenges identified in our Rail Strategy;
- Engaging in the development of timetables;
- Ad hoc projects at specific locations;
- Contributing to promotion of services through partnerships;
- Wider work to promote our sustainable travel initiatives;
- Station counts;
- Somerset Public Transport Forum;
- Engaging with wider rail policy development; and
- Support existing rail partnerships and fora.

**Our Strategy for Rail**

### SUS 7 Rail

We will work in partnership with the rail industry and other stakeholders to encourage more people to travel by train. We will support better services, facilities, security, integration and improvements in the way people see train travel.

**3.81**    To do this we could:

- Support our policy of promoting integration by improving the consistency of station facilities;
- Work with the rail industry (and other stakeholders) to improve our stations and support rail partnerships.
- Support the partnerships that market our rail lines;
- Research the need for new services and how people perceive rail travel;
- Engage in the development of timetables and use evidence from our research to lobby for improvements;
- Work with Local Planning Authorities to ensure opportunities for future rail use are safeguarded in development plans; and
- Engage in policy being developed by the rail industry.

## Emerging Technologies

**3.82** The Government indicate that by 2050, the radical decarbonisation of transport will be characterised by cleaner fuels, greener technology and a shift to renewable sources of energy[35]. A wide range of technologies will be in play delivering substantial reductions in emissions from road and rail. UK aviation emissions will be reduced to below 2005 levels and ships will be more energy-efficient.

**3.83** The Government's strategy is designed to ensure that by 2022, the vehicles on our roads will be vastly more energy-efficient. Promoting the use of sustainable biofuels is an important part of their strategy to 2022 and thereafter to 2050.

**3.84** As new technologies, such as electric vehicles or alternative fuels are developed, market forces and/or government incentives will have the greatest influence on the choices that people make in terms of vehicle type. Nonetheless, before supporting new technologies we also need to ensure that wildlife species and habitats that are sensitive to changes in land use be considered and that the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the 'Habitats Regulations') are complied with. There will inevitably be initiatives that we can look at in order to help communities adopt these technologies.

> ### SUS 8 Emerging Technologies
>
> We will consider how electric vehicles, responsibly sourced biofuels and other new technologies could help us meet our goals and challenges.

**3.85** To do this we will:

- Support the provision of electric vehicle charging points at locations which may help to increase the range with which an electric car, motorcycle or bicycle could travel;
- Encourage developers to provide parking spaces within new developments to be designed to provide opportunities for charging electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles, include cabling for charging infrastructure and provide charging infrastructure;
- Investigate options for providing electric vehicle battery swapping facilities, where empty batteries are exchanged for charged ones;
- Support wider initiatives looking at safe and environmentally sound vehicle battery disposal and decarbonising the national grid to provide carbon-free transport;
- Explore how we could help to mitigate the potential negative effects of electric vehicles. For example their quieter engines can make them harder to hear coming and there is potential for conflict when certain types of electric vehicle are allowed to use walking or cycling routes;

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35  Department for Transport (2009) Low Carbon Transport: A Greener Future, July 2009

- Support biofuels which are produced in a sustainable and Habitats Regulations (2010) compliant fashion, without replacing the production of food crops or destroying forests;
- Support the development and implementation of new technologies that could help us meet our goals and challenges.
- Consideration will be given to wildlife species and habitats that are sensitive to changes in land use before lending support to new technologies. The provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 will also be complied at the appropriate point.

## Noise

**3.86**     Noise from transport can be a serious problem. We all know that transport noise can be annoying but it can also disturb our sleep, cause hearing loss and stress (which can lead to very serious health problems like heart disease[36]). This section sets out how we will manage noise from transport.

**3.87**     The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' 'Draft Noise Action Plan' identified major roads[37] (outside of larger towns) that have enough traffic to create more noise than they feel is acceptable. Somerset County Council has examined the situations in these locations and where problems were found, we will;

- Identify possible solutions. This could include noise barriers, low noise road surfaces, local traffic management or sound insulation; and
- Consider the cost and benefits of these potential solutions. It is important that they don't have cause new problems; with road safety or increased congestion, pollution and journey times, for example.

**3.88**     Solutions that show they would offer good enough value for money will be included in the programme of schemes we deliver.

**3.89**     Noise from large vehicles, like Heavy Goods Vehicles, can be a particular problem. Our plans for minimising this problem are set out in 'Ensuring Economic Wellbeing'.

### SUS 9 Noise

We will manage the effect transport-related noise has on our communities at problem locations. We will assess sites according to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' guidance and prioritise possible solutions.

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36  See 'Health effect-based noise assessment methods: a review and feasibility study' by Porter, Flindell and Berry. Available to download for free from http://www.npl.co.uk/publications/
37  This includes the roads that form the National Primary and County Routes, which is made up of the M5, A37, A38, A39, A3088, A358 and A303 in Somerset.

## Landscapes and Biodiversity

**3.90**    Throughout the development of this plan, we have tried to ensure that our proposals will have the least impact on the environment. Through working with our partners and across our various departments, we make sure that these issues are considered when developing new initiatives. We will consider all opportunities to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment of the county including in protected areas.

### SUS 10 Landscapes and Biodiversity

We will protect Somerset's landscapes and biodiversity by working to minimise the effect transport schemes have on them.

**3.91**    To do this we will:

- Continue to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of biodiversity and opportunities to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment among our contractors, our partners and the general public and require contractors to adhere to contractual standards and protocols;
- Provide specific habitat and species action plans and meet targets within them that are relevant to our work and that support local, regional and national habitat legislation and objectives;
- Ensure our work does not damage Somerset's landscapes or biodiversity and seek opportunities to conserve and enhance landscapes, biodiversity and the built environment;
- Consider landscape character in the preparation of schemes and maintenance in order to minimise degradation and integrate new measures appropriately into the local surroundings to maintain and enhance local distinctiveness;
- Consider the impacts of our work on the local urban environment (including its heritage and townscape) and adopt a manual for streets approach to ensure all schemes respect local distinctiveness;
- Recognise and promote the importance of landscape and biodiversity to human health and wellbeing;
- Ensure that our work does not create an additional risk of flooding and, where possible, measures can be implemented to help reduce the risk of flooding in the future;
- Support the development of 'green infrastructure' (like rights of way, quiet lanes or green spaces) which encourage walking and cycling whilst enhancing landscapes and biodiversity; and
- Ensure that any walking and/or cycling route considered does not lead to increases in habitat degradation or loss, or species disturbance on or in areas ecologically supporting Natura 2000 sites. Where this is likely to occur the route is not promoted or mapped (including on websites).

# 4 Ensuring Economic Wellbeing

**Our Goal for 2026**

"Somerset is a place with high value and secure jobs and people are confident that their children have good career prospects. Working people are well skilled and wish to improve what they can offer. Somerset has a national reputation for quality and innovation, based on our excellence in a wide range of sectors. New enterprises that will benefit the local environment are encouraged and people choose to buy locally provided food, goods and services. New building development is well planned and makes the most of economic opportunity."

**Our Transport Challenges to reach this Goal**

- To ensure that the transport network is maintained;
- To minimise the growth of traffic in our more urban settlements to address congestion issues; and
- To maximise the potential for use of technology to support our goals.

**4.1**	The economic downturn is, along with Climate Change, the most pressing issue we have to deal with. As Stern noted, the two issues are intrinsically linked and should not be considered in isolation. We have discussed our strategy for dealing with Climate Change in 'Living Sustainably'. However, it is clear that reducing the growth in congestion through offering real alternatives to the private car and promoting more active travel are ways of helping to keep the economy moving. More active travel is one of the ways of making the workforce healthier. Studies have shown that people who regularly cycle have much lower levels of workplace absenteeism than non-cycling staff[38].  Every day that an employee is not at their desk, it costs their employer an average of £595[39].

**4.2**	Our transport policies for economic wellbeing include managing growth in the larger towns of Taunton, Bridgwater and Yeovil, freight, parking, travel planning, network management and maintenance. Specific policies address how we will manage the potential new nuclear development at Hinkley Point and major transport infrastructure to support economic growth.

## Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington Future Transport Strategy

**4.3**	Good transport links to, in and around this area are fundamental to its economic and social vitality and the need to provide better transport options has been recognised for a number of years. We have been working on gathering evidence and assessing

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38	Hendriksen, I., Simons, M.,  Galindo Garre , F., Hildebrandt, V. (2010) The association between commuter cycling and sickness absence, Preventive Medicine
39	CBI/Pfizer (2010) On the path to recovery: Absence and workplace health survey, CBI

current and future travel trends to feed into a long-term action plan which will address transport issues from now until 2026 (this work will be available on our website once it has been finalised, following consultation with key stakeholders).

**4.4**    Our work shows that a high proportion of car trips are often made within and close to town centres.  This obviously has an impact on air quality as well as making it more difficult for people to walk and cycle about the towns due to the barriers created by roads.  Our work also shows that the predominant means of travel between the three towns is the car, although public transport links (bus and, for Bridgwater and Taunton, train) are viable options when travelling from town centre to town centre.
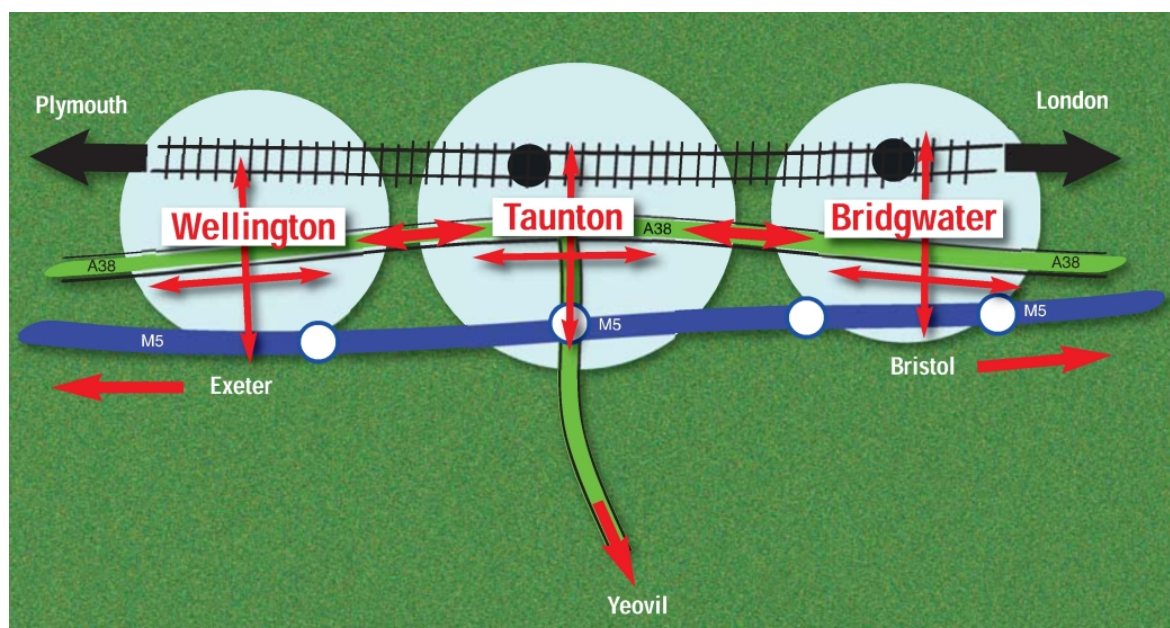


Movements between Wellington, Taunton and Bridgwater

**4.5**    Somerset authorities have been planning on the basis of local evidence on housing need and national housing requirements to 2026 which suggested 7,700 new homes and 7,500 new jobs in Bridgwater, 18,000 new homes and 16,500 new jobs in Taunton,  and 3,800 new homes in the rural remainder of Taunton Deane, including Wellington.    The new government has indicated that future planning will be based upon local evidence of housing need and community level planning.  Likely strategic development areas are now well established and it is considered sensible to continue planning for the long term.

**4.6**    Our policies therefore assume that strategic sites will come forward at some point in the future, (although some areas will be beyond 2026), and recognises that the precise location and scale of development at individual sites will evolve over the next few years. It is likely that housing and economic growth will be slower than the figures assumed above so our evidence base to 2026 will need to be updated in due course once locally derived housing and employment need is agreed.  As areas are brought forward for delivery, each site will need to be tested and reassessed proportionately on a case-by-case basis to determine the level and scale of transport intervention required.

**4.7** New access and link roads and any other infrastructure serving development may have impacts on the habitat use and behaviour of lesser horseshoe bats from the Hestercombe House Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in the area north of Taunton from Monkton Heathfield to Staplegrove. Any proposal would have to ensure that there is no adverse effect on the maintenance of the population of lesser horseshoe bats in order to comply with the Habitats Regulations.

**4.8** Detailed policies covering the Taunton, Bridgwater and Wellington growth area are set out in Annex B.

## Connect 3

**4.9** Our policies for the Taunton, Bridgwater, Wellington growth area focus primarily on maintaining an effective transport system within the urban areas. Using Government funding we commissioned the 'Connect 3 study' in 2009 to develop new interurban policies, however the work has not progressed beyond initial options assessment due to Government funding cuts.

## Yeovil Transport Strategy

**4.10** Yeovil is the second largest town in the County of Somerset and has expanded considerably over recent years. As a result, traffic levels in Yeovil have grown considerably over the past decade or so, contributing to the congestion currently experienced within the urban area. Yeovil is also surrounded by several towns and villages which, to a large extent, rely on the town centre for local employment, goods and services.

**4.11** Yeovil is relatively self contained, although it is a net attractor of trips to work. Trips into Yeovil arrive from most of the towns in the South Somerset and Mendip districts and a relatively significant number originate in Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington. The vast majority of commuters coming from outside Yeovil use private transport: 82% as car driver, 6% as passenger, 2% on motorcycle and only 3% use a bus. This is comparable to the patterns seen in Taunton. Bus, rail and cycle use in Yeovil is relatively low and while bus use is comparable to Taunton, cycle use is substantially lower.

**4.12** Recent traffic growth in Yeovil has been highest where there is least existing congestion, indicating that the network is approaching capacity. In the peak periods the contra flows on the radial routes, outbound in the morning and inbound in the evening, exhibit the greatest growth. Journey times have increased significantly on most routes in Yeovil. Long delays are typical during the peak hours at many of the major junctions and the increases in journey time are disproportionately higher than the growth in traffic, indicating rising levels of congestion.
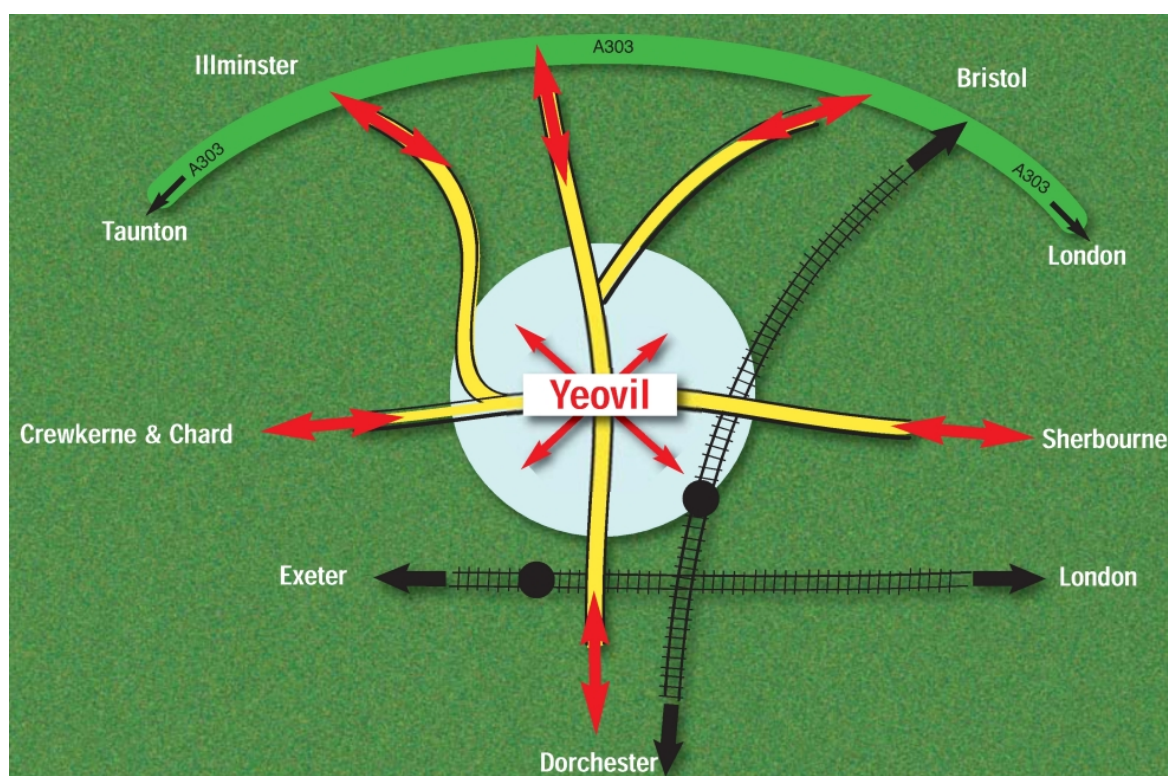
Movements within Yeovil

**4.13** Rising levels of traffic are causing air quality problems within the town and there is a significant history of road accidents within the town centre. One problem that has been identified is the severance caused by roads through the town centre, which creates barriers for pedestrians, cyclists and communities.

**4.14** A number of significant housing and employment developments are anticipated to take place in Yeovil over coming years, although there is uncertainty over the absolute numbers and phasing of this development. As a result of this uncertainty, planning for this growth is at an embryonic stage.

**4.15** Initiatives planned for Yeovil will include both highways and non-highways improvements and these are outlined in Annex B. However, these measures will be heavily dependant on how much growth Yeovil is finally allocated.

## Market Towns and Villages

**4.16** Beyond the Taunton area and Yeovil transport initiatives we have set out, we also need to look at how we address issues arising in our market towns and villages. Figure 4.1 shows the location of the market towns and the larger villages in Somerset.

**4.17** Physical transport improvements in these settlements are likely to be brought forward through opportunities arising from planned development or other external funding sources. This will particularly be the case where employment sites are identified for development, where we would need to ensure our travel planning work is fully integrated.
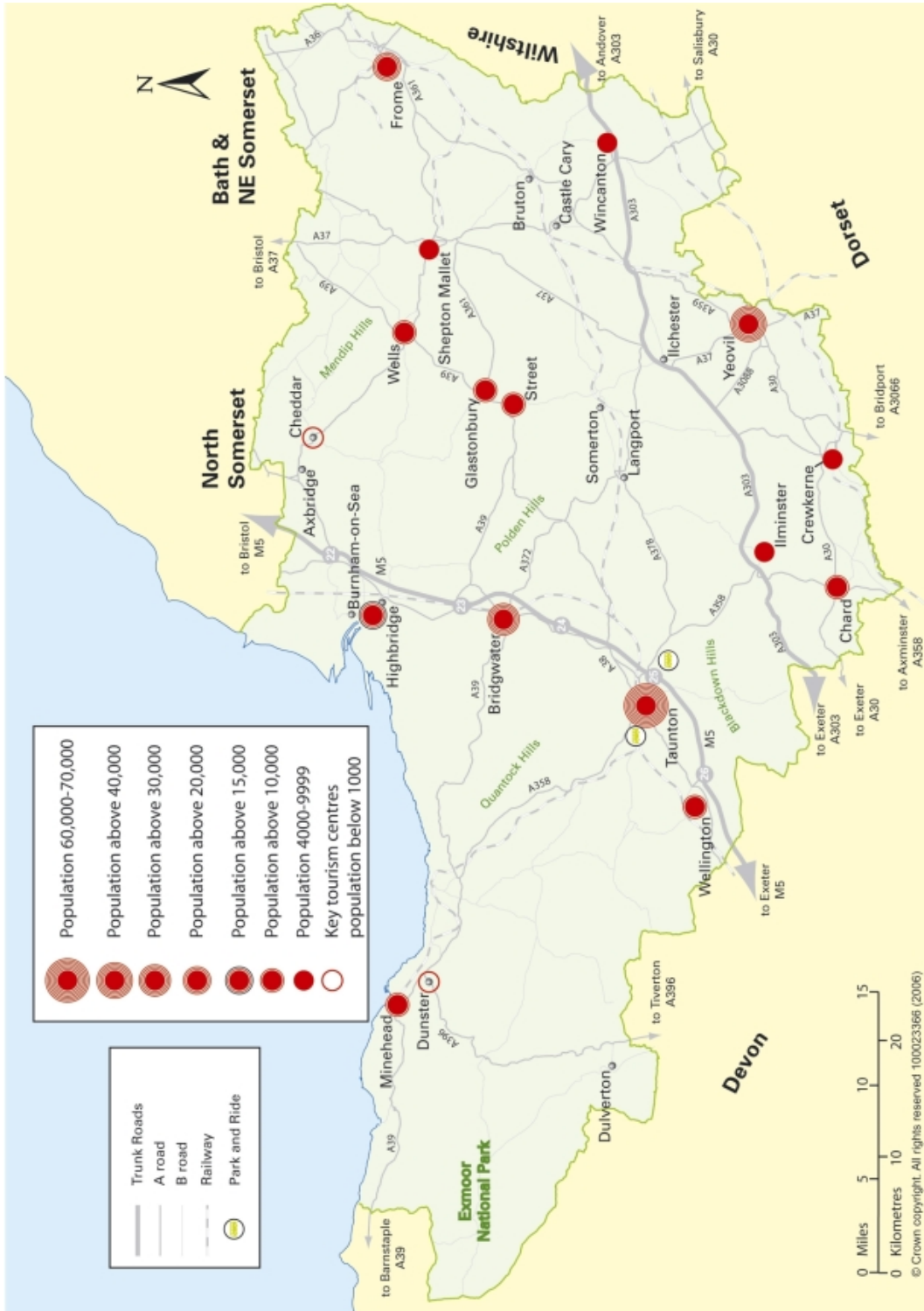
Figure 4.1 Somerset Settlements by Population

**4.18** We will also need to work with our bus and community transport partners and rights of way colleagues to work to address issues of poor accessibility. There may also be opportunities to improve accessibility through enabling communities to tap into new ideas such as car clubs using electric vehicles or creating community hubs where people can work or car share from. This will also help people reduce the need to travel and help communities become more self-reliant.

## Cars and Taxis

**4.19** Trying to eliminate the use of cars would be wrong as for many people, particularly in rural areas and for medium-distance or multi-leg trips, the car is the only practical choice and will remain so. It is important for travellers, our economy, the environment and our communities that these necessary trips are well managed and do not cause unnecessary congestion. Taxis also have an important role to play in a sustainable transport system, extending the reach of public transport and assisting those who do not own cars. This policy reflects our commitment to managing traffic and brings together important elements of many our other policies.

### ECN 1 Car and Taxi

We will work to better manage the traffic on the roads and improve the most congested junctions and routes. We will work with developers to try and make sure new developments don't make conditions worse.

## Travel Planning

**4.20** Travel plans[40] form an important part of business management strategies and are an essential part of most major planning applications. We have developed a Manual for Travel Plans (MfTP), which is a comprehensive guide to developing a travel plan for any site - including employment, housing, leisure and tourism. It is part of a business and developer support package to help manage travel to, from, and within a site. The MfTP draws on the best practice and guidance being applied nationally and internationally and looks to lead the way in terms of providing all the information someone needs to produce an effective travel plan.

**4.21** We have set up an online travel plan resource centre which contains information and resources to support people producing travel plans. This includes providing tools for assessing the travel opportunities in and around a particular site,

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40  A travel plan is a long-term management strategy for an occupier or site development that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through positive action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed. Travel plans focus on achieving the lowest practical level of single occupancy vehicle trips to or from a site and widening the use of other travel modes. (DfT/DCLG, 2009)

example questionnaires for surveying staff, customers, visitors and residents and information on the local and national services available to support particular aspects of travel plan development.

**4.22**   We have developed an online tool called iOnTravel[41] aimed at developers and travel plan coordinators.  It provides a series of templates for users to help them project manage the preparation, approval and operation of a travel plan.  The tool allows people to track the implementation of action plans to support smarter travel choices, store survey data and other files relating to a travel plan, calculate and produce annual reports, and record progress in reducing the $CO_2$ emissions arising from travel to a site.  This allows us to collect data easily and more efficiently for our own monitoring purposes.

**4.23**   We are developing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support the delivery of Travel Plans in Somerset using the MfTP.  The purpose of SPD is to help the development industry prepare high quality travel plans that provide sustainable and long-lasting outcomes, and for these to be fairly and consistently implemented within Somerset across Local Planning Authority (LPA) areas.

**4.24**   The SPD covers:

- When a travel plan is required;
- An outline of the expected content of different types of travel plan and when they are required;
- The process of gaining travel plan approval;
- Arrangements for the monitoring and ongoing auditing of travel plans;
- Procedures for the effective operation and enforcement of travel plans; and
- The respective responsibilities of all the parties involved in developing, implementing and monitoring travel plans.

**4.25**   The SPD outlines a set of standards for the delivery of travel plans through the planning process in Somerset.  The SPD expects proposed developments to contribute to modal shift; sets out the required content of travel plans; ensures that good quality cycle parking and other on-site physical facilities will support new development; sets out a consistent process for the delivery of promised travel plan outcomes; and describes the overall process for efficient and predictable decisions.

**4.26**   Once the SPD is complete, it is anticipated that all LPAs within Somerset will formally adopt the document as part of their own land-use policies being produced through the Local Development Framework (except where its principles have already been written into their emerging policies).

**4.27**   Alongside the requirements of the SPD, we also need to look at specific off-site elements of sustainable development planning where transport improvements are needed if sites are to be functional.  As new development is created, it invariably

41   www.iontravel.co.uk

generates additional travel demand. Most of these developments are in areas where the highway network is at, or close to capacity, so the implications of these developments with regard to network management are of critical importance.

**4.28**    Planning legislation allows us to enter into an agreement with a developer or land owner to ensure that they contribute to transport infrastructure improvements, such as new junctions, cycle ways, rights of way improvements or buses and associated infrastructure.  We have worked closely with Taunton Deane Borough Council to develop a supplementary planning document alongside their Local Development Framework, which addresses securing contributions for transport infrastructure through the planning process.

**4.29**    More widely, we have worked with all the Districts within Somerset to agree a core policy for inclusion in their Core Strategies.  The following is the recommended policy at the time of writing and may be subject to change.

### ECN 2 Sustainable Development

We will work with developers to ensure they take into account the way people travel, and how people travel, to access services.

**4.30**    To do this there are a number things we could do or will need to make sure happen:

- Ensure most new developments are located in the main urban areas, where they are most accessible and can help to increase the use of non-car modes;
- Promote attractive environments which are accessible and linked with the wider transport network.
- Encourage developers of residential estates to follow the guidelines on planning inclusive "walkable neighbourhoods", as set out in the 'Manual for Streets' and 'Manual for Streets 2 - wider application of the principles', and encourage planning authorities to require that they are followed;
- Take account of climate change in the layout of developments;
- Manage the demand for travel, reduce air pollution and enhance road safety;
- Ensure developments make the most of ICT initiatives to reduce the need to travel, where businesses encourage flexible and home working and homes have the infrastructure to support this.
- Support the development of networks of bus priority measures[42] through the planning process.
- Support, promote and deliver the travel improvements identified in the future transport plan;
- Require all applications for development which are likely to have significant transport implications to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, an Air Quality Assessment, and a Travel Plan;

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42    Such as bus lanes, bus gates and selected vehicle detection (which detects buses as they approach things like traffic lights).

- Work to engage with developers before they submit applications (where resources allow);
- Support the development, implementation and monitoring of travel plans (according to the Supplementary Planning Document 'Enabling Smarter Travel through Travel Planning in Somerset'); and
- Ensure the emerging Local Development Frameworks give walking and cycling a high priority, that patterns of development minimise the need to travel and avoid severance and that the Manual for Streets (1 and 2) approach is integrated into LDFs including SPDs as appropriate.

**4.31**   This policy is also supported by our policy on:

- Emerging technologies, which includes providing for alternatives to the fossil-fuelled car in new developments.
- Parking, which includes parking policy for new developments.
- Freight, through the location of developments and the facilities they provide.

## Parking

**4.32**   Being a predominantly rural county, with urban areas concentrated in a small number of market towns, there are understandably higher levels of car use in Somerset than in counties dominated by urban environments.  Because of the high dependency on the car, car parking provision is a critical factor in the economic success of our communities.

**4.33**   The provision of opportunities to park in our town centres, employment sites, neighbourhoods and other essential destinations is key to enabling people the access to the facilities they need to visit to go about their daily lives.  However, there are often competing demands for space and the management of parking is essential to ensure the continued vitality and viability of our neighbourhoods.

**4.34**   Within town centres, there is a danger that long stay commuters can monopolise use of the car parks closest to shops, reducing the attractiveness of the town to car borne shoppers and visitors.  The relative mix of long, medium and short stay parking, together with pricing approach, is therefore an important element of our strategy for the management of town centre car parking.  The provision of Park and Ride facilities forms an important policy strand to the approach taken in major towns.

**4.35**   Where insufficient parking is available within both residential and employment areas, displacement of overspill vehicles can lead to congestion on nearby roads. It can also lead to vehicles being parked on footways and other anti-social behaviour, such as neighbour disputes.  The management and enforcement of on-street parking restrictions is another element of our parking strategy, as is the application of appropriate parking standards for new development.

**4.36**   The availability and cost of parking facilities can be a key determinant in how people choose to travel.  While recognising that we need to cater for car-drivers, we also need to encourage people to travel by more sustainable modes where they can

as road and parking space is not unlimited.  The provision of convenient, secure parking for other vehicles, such as motorbikes and bicycles, can make the difference between whether people see this as being a viable way to travel or not.  The provision, design and location of parking for motorbikes and pedal cycles is also covered by the strategy, while commercial vehicle parking is covered by the freight strategy.

**4.37**    Provision of appropriately located and designed parking bays is essential for facilitating access for people with restricted mobility who are able to travel by car. Antisocial parking can compound the difficulties faced by people with restricted mobility, and the needs of disabled people relating to parking are also covered by the strategy.

**4.38**    Somerset's parking strategy is a separate document that sets out the details of our approach to parking. The parking strategy is being developed in consultation with planning authorities and developers and will be available on our website once it is finalised. It is split into two sections.  The first covers our approach to the management of existing parking opportunities within the county.  The second section sets out detailed standards for the design and provision of parking within new developments.

> ### ECN 3 Parking
>
> We will help improve parking facilities to encourage more sustainable means of travel. We will work to improve the management of parking and help plan new developments appropriately.

**4.39**    To do this we will work towards introducing civil parking enforcement (CPE) across the Districts in Somerset. We will also consider the following actions:

- Provide all day parking for commuters and visitors in Taunton at Park and Ride sites, to free up town centre spaces for shoppers;
- Consider the provision of Park and Ride sites in Yeovil and Bridgwater and extending existing sites in Taunton. Obviously any further development of Park and Ride sites would be subject to the appropriate assessments, scheme appraisal processes and any relevant mitigation measures;
- Manage on street parking restrictions in residential areas to put the needs of residents first;
- Discourage footway parking through enforcement, publicity and future parking policy;
- Work with the District Councils to:

  - Prioritise town centre parking spaces for use by shoppers and visitors to keep our centres vital and viable;
  - Provide well located, well designed parking facilities for disabled people, cyclists and motorcyclists;
  - Improving actual and perceived safety and security in public car parks;

- Enforce parking and stopping restrictions to ensure that inappropriate parking does not hinder access for people with restricted mobility or cause congestion; and
- Ensure the design and provision of parking in new developments supports our goals and challenges. To do this we will:

  - Set standards to ensure that developments provide appropriate levels of parking, either within the site's boundaries or through pooled parking facilities;
  - Set standards to ensure that developments cater for motorcycle and disabled parking requirements;
  - Ensure that developments encourage active travel through the provision of cycle parking;
  - Provide appropriate parking for freight transport;
  - Encourage the use of best practice in the design of parking facilities;
  - Allow developers flexibility in choosing the best mix of allocated and shared parking spaces;
  - Allow a flexible approach to the levels of parking supplied, provided that departures from the standards are covered by stringent travel plans and supported by robust evidence and monitoring. This could mean allowing more or less parking than our standards would suggest where there is evidence that this is right for the development; and
  - Ensure that parking facilities provided by new developments are managed effectively in future.

**4.40**    This policy is also supported by our policies on:

- Emerging technologies, which includes providing for alternatives to the fossil-fuelled car.

## Major Transport Infrastructure

**4.41**    There are a number of ways in which transport improvements can be delivered and for further detail on the different types of funding please see the Implementation Plan. However, while the council has the ability to invest directly in transport improvement schemes to address the challenges as it sees fit, invariably some of the larger proposals are outside the realistic scope of being delivered entirely by local authority funding due to their large cost.

**4.42**    If schemes are going to cost more than £5M then they become what's known as 'Major Schemes' and funding for them has to be considered alongside other priorities. More detail on Major Schemes can be found in the 'Transport and Development' technical note.

## Transport and Hinkley Nuclear Development Proposals

**4.43**    One of the developments that is likely to have a big impact on transport in Somerset over the next 15 years is the potential expansion of Hinkley Point. At the moment this development is only a proposal, but it has been necessary to work with EDF, the energy company proposing the development, to start understanding the likely transport implications and what degree of impact this expansion may cause, as well developing a comprehensive package of measures that will deal with these impacts.

**4.44**    Our 'Transport and Development' document provides more information and sets our policy on the potential expansion of Hinkley Point.

## Infrastructure Delivery Plans

**4.45**    Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) form part of the Local Development Framework and are documents that support district-level Core Strategies. They set out what infrastructure is needed to enable development to take place and how this will be funded. 'Infrastructure' in this context means everything required to support the development; from flood-reduction measures to green space and play areas; from affordable housing provision through to school places, new roads and pedestrian/cycle facilities.

**4.46**    In transport terms this means that all significant new infrastructure anticipated over the plan period needs to be included within the IDP. In Somerset, different district councils and the National Park Authority are at different stages in the Core Strategy process, but the County Council is feeding into these plans as they are developed in order to ensure that transport needs are reflected in these IDPs.  Because each District is working to a slightly different timescale on their LDF, we know that at some point in the future, we will need to refresh our transport policies to reflect the adopted Core Strategies.

## Broadband and Information Communications Technology (ICT)

**4.47**    The development of Super Fast Broadband today is having the same revolutionary impact as the development of electricity and transportation networks had a century ago. Super Fast Broadband is generally accepted as being access to download speeds in excess of 25mbps.

**4.48**    By harnessing the full potential of Information Communications Technology (ICT) and access to the internet, which access to Super Fast Broadband would afford, Somerset could much better address some of its most acute societal challenges: climate change and other pressures on our environment, an ageing population and rising health costs, economic development, developing more efficient public services, integrating people with disabilities and pressures on our transportation infrastructure.

**4.49**    Super Fast Broadband Connectivity is key to the delivery of many of the aims set out within this document. For instance:

- Video conferencing could substantially reduce unnecessary business travel and congestion, as would increases in flexible home working. Flexible home working would not only reduce travel but has been shown to increase productivity. It should be considered as key part of businesses future travel planning.
- Wider access to home shopping and Internet banking, for residents with slow connections, would have a similar outcome.

- E-Health technologies will play their part in reducing unnecessary travel, as patients and clients will be able to be monitored remotely in their homes.

- Currently 40% of our students have to travel for two hours or more to their nearest college. With Super Fast Broadband we could more effectively deliver education over the Internet, so removing the need to always have to travel to college.

- Looking to the future, Super Fast Broadband could be the foundation of an intelligent transport system in the county. This refers to efforts to add ICT to transport infrastructure and vehicles in an effort to manage factors that typically are at odds with each other, such as vehicles, loads, and routes to improve safety and reduce vehicle wear, transportation times, and fuel consumption.

**4.50**   All of this, and many more opportunities, will only become reality if we are able to affect a step change in Broadband connectivity across the whole County.

## The present state of Broadband in Somerset

**4.51**   During the first roll out of broadband, Somerset was towards the end of the queue; it will be the same story for Super Fast Broadband unless action is taken now.

**4.52**   In a recently produced index[43] from *Point Topic* Somerset's districts were ranked:

- Mendip  - 288/407
- Taunton Deane - 291/407
- Sedgemoor  - 295/407
- South Somerset  - 327/407
- West Somerset - 365/407

**4.53**   Early delivery of Super Fast Broadband is vital for Somerset's future economic aspirations and those of our communities, not least because Somerset is ranked 43rd out of 53 sub-regions across the Country in terms of good transport connectivity.

**4.54**   The white areas in Figure 4.2 show the areas of the County that the market will fail to deliver Super Fast Broadband to in the future if there is no public financial intervention.

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43   The index is based on 6 measures. For more information, visit point-topic.com

**EC white/grey/black classification**

- ☐ No NGA coverage
- ▨ NGA coverage by 1 operator
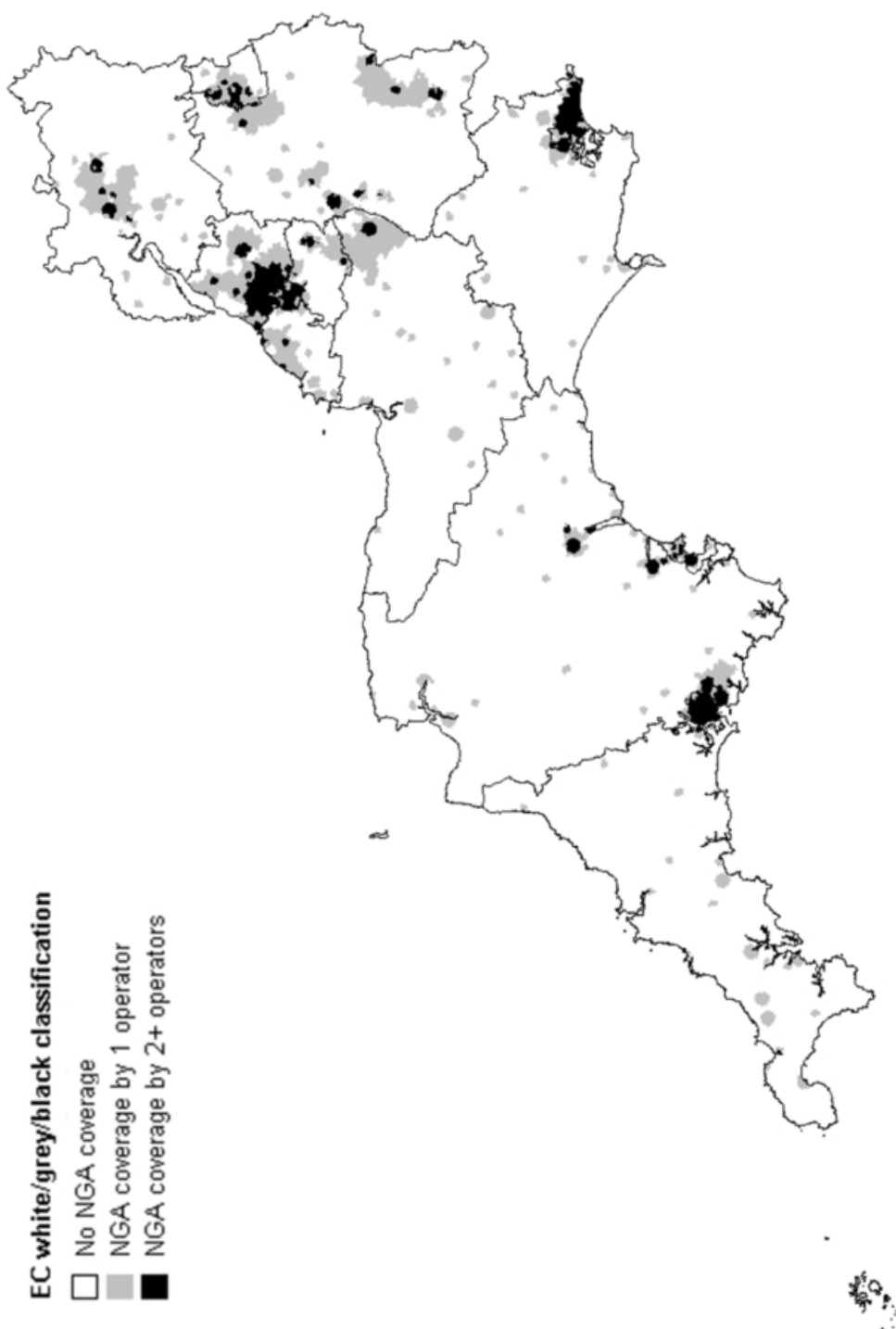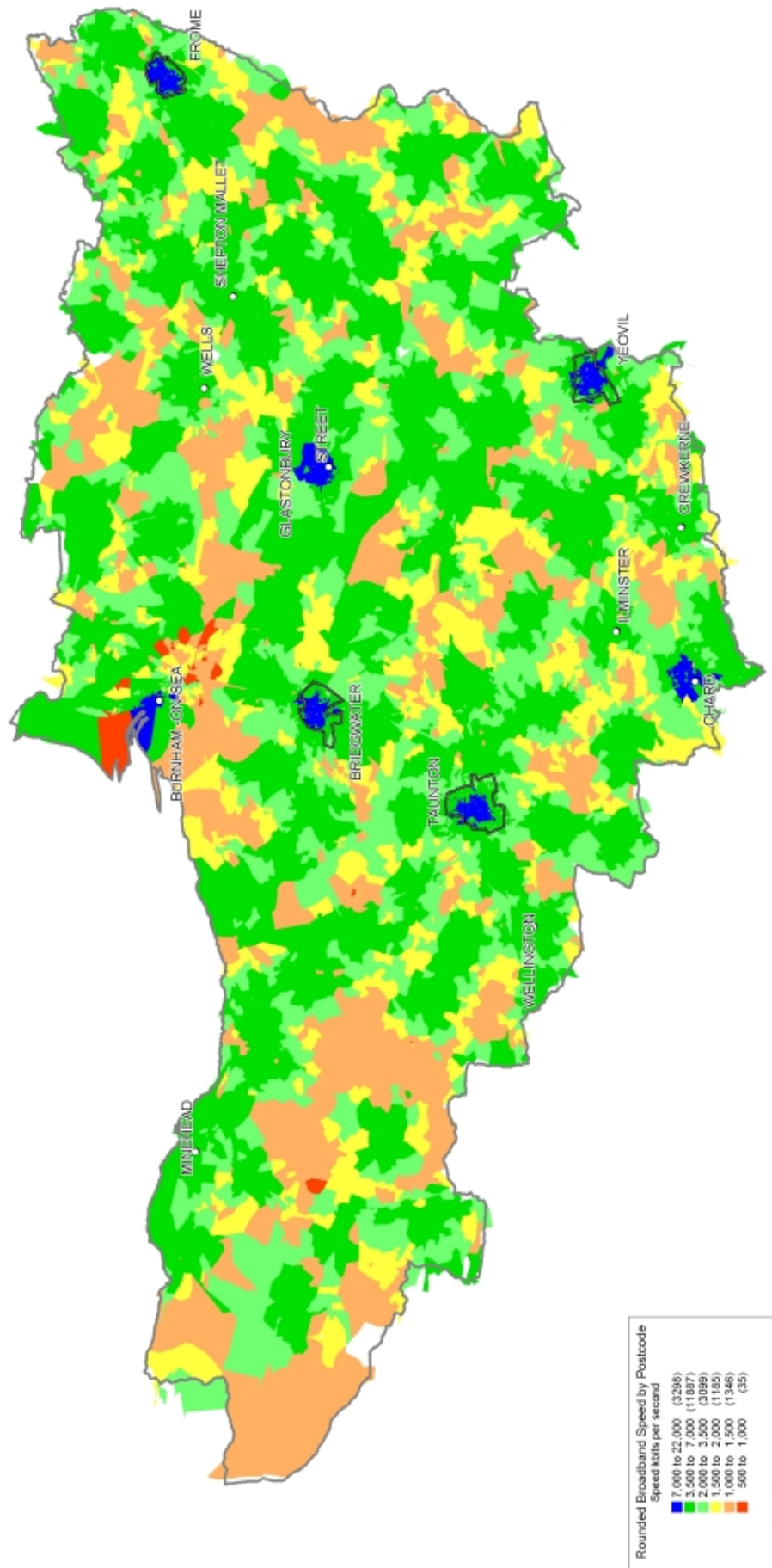- ■ NGA coverage by 2+ operators

Figure 4.2 Estimate of EC-defined white, black and grey areas in the South West expected on completion of NGA (Next Generation Access) roll-out to 65% of all UK premises by Openreach. Source: Analysys Mason/February 2010 Report for SWRDA

Figure 4.3 Broadband Speed within Somerset (Summer 2010)

Rounded Broadband Speed by Postcode
Speed kbits per second

| | |
|---|---|
| 7,000 to 22,000 | (3296) |
| 3,500 to 7,000 | (11887) |
| 2,000 to 3,500 | (3099) |
| 1,500 to 2,000 | (1185) |
| 1,000 to 1,500 | (1346) |
| 500 to 1,000 | (35) |

Connectivity data has been used with permission of Sam Knows and is © Samknows 2009. Samknows is a trademark of Samknows Limited.
Economic data has been extracted from the MINT UK database, and is used with the permission from Bureau Van Dijk Editions Electroniques SA.

**4.55**  As previously stated, first generation broadband was introduced into Somerset at a relatively late stage. Currently the average download speed in the County is approximately 3 mbps. The UK Average is 5.06 mbps. According to a report commissioned by the South West RDA, 21% of premises in Somerset do not meet the 2mbps universal service commitment[44].

**4.56**  A recent survey by Connecting Somerset showed poor broadband is a barrier to further ICT take up for 22% of rural businesses, compared to 5% of businesses in urban areas. There are very few network operators in Somerset, resulting in little competition.

**4.57**  It is estimated that 74% of Somerset's residents and businesses are in areas at high risk of digital exclusion. Currently 70% of Somerset falls into the final third – the proportion of the Country that the market, if unassisted, will fail to deliver Super Fast Broadband to. As it can be seen, unless we are able to affect a significant step change in Broadband across the County, Somerset will remain in the slow lane.

**Connecting Somerset – Building on a track record of success**

**4.58**  Despite the generally poor Broadband situation across the County we have had our successes, especially in raising the number of residents and businesses that use first generation Broadband.

**4.59**  In 2005, we launched a project called Connecting Somerset; its aim was to help businesses, communities and residents to make better use of Broadband and Information Communications Technology (ICT).

**4.60**  Since 2005 the Connecting Somersetproject has:

- Assisted 2,881 SMEs[45] with advice, training and grants
- Trained 2,576 people
- Created 125 jobs
- Generated over £53m Gross Added Value
- Helped fund the creation of South West Internet Community Interest Company – the largest rural Wi-Fi network in the country; and
- Helped to lift broadband take up from the lowest in the South West at just 18% to 47.7%, the highest in England[46]

**4.61**  Building upon this success, by continuing to work closely with communities and businesses, will be one of the cornerstones of our planned bid for funding into Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK).

**4.62**  BDUK is the Government organisation with £530m to deliver on the Government's aim that by 2015 Britain possesses the best Super Fast Broadband network in Europe and that every community in the UK will gain access to it.

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44  Analysys Mason (2010) Next-generation Access: Report for the South West RDA

45  Small and Medium Enterprises

46  All figures provided by the *Connecting Somerset* Project – circa 2008

**Somerset's BDUK bid**

**4.63**  We know that the market alone will not deliver Super Fast Broadband to an estimated 70% of Somerset.

**4.64**  Therefore, Somerset County Council, working closely with businesses, community groups, District Councils and Regional Partners, will be submitting a significant multi million pound bid into BDUK in April 2011 that will gap fund a Super Fast Broadband Network leading to a step change in covering Somerset's 'final third' areas.

**4.65**  Our ambition is to provide future-proofed Super Fast Broadband connectivity, which unlocks the potential of Somerset's growth areas and rural economy, improves access to markets, and transforms opportunities for Somerset's residents – especially in relation to transport issues.

**4.66**  A complimentary, business support, skills development and demand stimulation project will help ensure we maximise the benefits in terms of productivity and competitiveness for our businesses. Provide the necessary skills to our residents and ensure that there is the demand required to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the network.

**4.67**  A successful bid followed by a Super Fast Broadband deployment will have a profound impact of the way in which businesses work and residents access services, which will have a significant impact upon the pressures that are currently being placed upon the County's transport infrastructure.

> ## ECN 4 Information & Communication Technology
>
> We will promote the use of ICT to reduce the need to travel and increase people's ability to access goods and services.

**4.68**  To do this we could:

- Work with private and public sector partners in the South West, nationally and internationally to improve the availability and use of ICT in the county;
- Look at ways to extend Broadband coverage across Somerset, including the most rural areas;
- Seek to encourage businesses to adopt flexible and home working practices that maximise the use of ICT through the development of travel plans;
- Support ICT skills-raising programmes provided by both the public and private sectors, particularly where it helps to reduce the need to travel; and
- Work with partners to encourage communities and individuals to use ICT to access public services.

**4.69**  Alongside maximising the potential to use ICT, we also need to keep in mind that people will still wish to travel to, from and within local communities and that public transport may not always be available to them. With the likelihood of oil availability

beginning to fluctuate in the future, we need to think about how personal transport might change and how we might help communities with this change, whilst maintaining support for other alternatives to the private car (particularly in rural areas).

## Other Technology Measures

**4.70**    As part of managing our network and addressing parking, we also need to look at measures such as variable message signing to signpost drivers to car parks, upgrades to our traffic signals to make them more efficient as well as real time information for bus users.

## Tourism

**4.71**    Tourism is recognised as an important economic sector and can also have an impact on transport in Somerset. Day and staying visitors spend around £1 billion each year in Somerset and an estimated 25,000 jobs are directly and indirectly supported by tourism expenditure. The Council provides advice and background information for the tourism trade through three Visit Somerset[47] trade related websites. South West tourism businesses made transport a key priority in a recent regional tourism consultation. It had a relevance score of 86% and priority of 82% (second only by 1% and 5% respectively to the economic recession)[48].

**4.72**    One of the initiatives we have been involved in is to merge tourism and the economy through hosting the South West stages of the Tour of Britain Cycle Race until 2011 in partnership with Devon County Council.  This has not only benefited the local economy but also provides opportunities for us to promote more sustainable modes of tourism through transport.

**4.73**    Being a largely rural county of varying terrains makes Somerset a great place for tourism, giving opportunities for walking routes such as the Coleridge Way or South West Coast Path, horse riding on Exmoor, or to cycle challenging routes such as on the Quantock or Mendip Hills or easier family routes like the Strawberry Line or Stop Line Way. Much of the work we have done already in transport helps tourism. However, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, discussed in 'Living Sustainably', recognises that the off-road public highway network suffers from severance and fragmentation which can hinder tourism and economic development.   The Improvement Plan aims to address these issues where possible.

**4.74**    One of the other existing opportunities for leisure and tourism travel is the Bridgwater and Taunton canal, both in the boating opportunities on the canal itself and the pleasant traffic free environment of the canal towpath for walking and cycling. The canal is managed by British Waterways and they are working to produce a strategy for the canal which will maximise usage and seek to open up access. The canal path also forms part of the National Cycle Network, which covers a number of routes across the county and offers numerous opportunities for sustainable tourism

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47   www.visitsomerset.co.uk
48   South West Tourism (2010) Tourism & Transport in South West England Briefing Paper

in its own right. This supports the council's aims for sustainable tourism and will also provide excellent additional opportunity for enabling and encouraging sustainable travel both in the countryside and into the heart of the towns that it serves.

**4.75**    Our strategies throughout this plan look to support green tourism measures and partnership working with key stakeholders wherever possible.

## Freight

**4.76**    We have developed a separate Freight Strategy which presents background information on trends and patterns associated with freight as well as how we address issues of freight affecting our communities.

**4.77**    The aim of the freight strategy is to promote the efficient movement of goods around the County to support Somerset's economy and allow residents to access the range of goods and services they demand.  However, freight transport can have significant negative impacts on the lives of Somerset residents and the environment and we need to minimise this wherever possible.

**4.78**    A clear trend has emerged through our own monitoring which shows that freight transport increases as our economy does and vice versa. Therefore, the recent financial difficulties have resulted in a reduction in freight activity. However, we can assume that wider economic growth will lead to a recovery in the freight industry[49]. Road haulage remains dominant, responsible for 84 per cent of goods moved in 2007[50]. Growth in rail freight has tended to be concentrated in established markets, seeing mainly heavy low value goods transported over longer distances. Within the road freight sector vans are playing an increasingly important role, apparently due to increasing demand for home deliveries.

**4.79**    The National Highways and Transport Network[51]Public Satisfaction Survey provides a measure of freight's impact on less easily quantifiable issues. Satisfaction with the routes chosen by Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) is lower than average in Somerset, at only 40 per cent in 2004 (results range from 32 to 51 per cent nationally). Whilst it is clear that Somerset's residents are dissatisfied with HGV routing at present, the data does not highlight identifiable locations within the county where solutions could be targeted.

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49   Freight Transport Association's Quarterly Transport Activity Survey, July 2009.
50   Department for Transport's 2008 publication DaSTS: the Logistics Perspective.
51   www.nhtnetwork.org

Figure 4.4 Regional Freight Routes

**4.80**    The objectives we have identified are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Manage | Get the best out of the existing network, particularly by encouraging the use of strategic routes |
| Rethink | Encourage hauliers, businesses and residents to take a more balanced view of freight transport |
| Understand | Improve our knowledge of freight issues and solutions |
| Collaborate | Work with other stakeholders to develop new policies and solutions |

**Our Current Approach to Freight**

**4.81**    Since the development of the Freight Strategy in 2006 we have made progress on a number of measures designed to address freight issues in Somerset.   In particular, we have:

- Developed a clear freight map based on existing freight routes
- Worked with our partners to address perceptions of residents and the freight industry through correspondence and ad hoc meetings
- Continued the Somerset Freight Quality Partnership meetings as well as jointly hosting the South West Regional Freight Forum
- Included freight issues in wider transport policies
- Engaged with relevant planning applications to promote suitable provision for freight transport in new developments
- Lobbied and worked with the providers of routing resources to promote the inclusion of our freight routes in their products.

**Our Future Strategy for Freight**

> **ECN 5 Freight**
>
> We will help hauliers choose the most appropriate routes and work to improve communication between communities and the hauliers that serve them.

**4.82**    To do this we could:

- Manage freight by developing and promoting a package of interactive routing resources and free downloads for existing SatNav units;
- Working with key stakeholders to explore the potential for promoting (and protecting) rail freight;

- Helping residents, communities and businesses by formalising the processes used for establishing dialogues between stakeholders, providing information on the benefits of freight, workshops for different groups of road users and 'up our

street' delivery packs to provide information to local communities about freight issues;

- Consider where there are opportunities to include freight transport needs in other 'mainstream' transport schemes (by providing HGV parking, for example);
- Working with other stakeholders to improve commercially available routing resources and integration with other policies, land use planning and the travel planning process; and
- Developing a dataset detailing Traffic Regulation Orders to underpin the routing resources mentioned above and a programme of studies to inform the development of future policy (and responses to local issues).

**4.83**   This policy is also supported by our policy on:

- Smarter choices, which includes a 'One Stop Shop' for travel information, which these routing resources form a part of.
- Rail.

**4.84**   Whilst our testing shows Traffic Regulation Orders (such as weight restrictions) do not offer a good way of achieving our strategic objectives, they can be useful tools. In certain situations they are likely to remain useful tools in solving some local problems. Restrictions should be considered in the context of all of the objectives of this policy. In particular we must consider whether a new restriction might move HGV traffic onto more sensitive routes (in terms of biodiversity, heritage and landscape) and the impact on carbon emissions.

## Managing Our Network

**4.85**   As the Local Transport Authority and local transport planning authority, we have a duty to maintain and improve the transport network for the benefit of all road users. This is called our Network Management Duty (NMD) which we implement through a Network management Plan (NMP).  We can do this by:

- Removing congestion "pinch points" – especially at key junctions;
- Encouraging people to use forms of transport that reduce demand on our network – including car sharing, bus, Park & Ride, cycling, walking and motorcycle;
- Reducing the number and severity of road accidents;
- Manage and mitigate the traffic effects of other planned and unplanned events such as the Glastonbury Festival;
- Maintaining the network in the most cost effective and least disruptive way possible (via the Transport Asset Management Plan);
- Directing new development to locations where the need to travel by single occupancy private car is minimised; and
- Encouraging people to think about whether they need to travel at all.

**4.86**   The NMD is an integral part of many aspects of the work that we carry out. One key area of our NMD is our strategy for managing the growth in traffic congestion in Taunton, Bridgwater and Yeovil set out in policies 14 and 15. Other measures include road space management and identifying a network hierarchy, which also helps to support our maintenance priorities.

**Road Space Management**

**4.87**    Much of our work is done to help the network flow as freely as possible. We use a framework that assesses the needs of different users such as pedestrians, cyclists, buses, equestrians and other vehicles. This allows us to ensure that more sustainable modes of travel – walking, cycling, public transport and equestrians – are provided for in terms of space within the highway network, including on and off road.

**Network Hierarchy**

**4.88**    We are responsible for managing a very diverse range of roads – everything from highspeed, high volume A roads through to minor country lanes. It would be both inappropriate and unaffordable to treat all routes in the same way so we need to identify which ones on the network are most critical to the successful implementation of our NMD.

**4.89**    As outlined in our NMP, we have recorded every route in Somerset, including footways and cycleways and ranked them on a network hierarchy. Our policy is to give priority to maintaining, managing and improving the routes in accordance with this hierarchy.

**4.90**    The purpose of the network hierarchy is to identify which parts of the network are most important (in terms of road user need) for strategic planning and maintenance investment, which is key to keeping traffic and people moving.

## Maintenance of the Transport Network

**4.91**    We have developed a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) which is used to ensure that maintenance of the highway network is done in the most effective way possible.  The TAMP is updated annually and the latest version can be found on our website[52].

**4.92**    We have developed levels of service for all our assets, from roads to cycle routes, to achieve a balance between the aspirations of the public and our legal obligations. We also use the National Highways and Transport Network to compare our own performance against other authorities.  This way we can use best practice that has worked elsewhere in our own working methods.

**4.93**    We have developed an inventory of not only the road network, but also of footpaths and cycleways, structures such as bridges, drainage, lighting, verges and other vegetation and traffic control systems such as traffic lights.

**4.94**    Like all public services, we are facing increasing costs and decreasing budgets, which reduces our ability to deliver improvements.  Since it is acknowledged that funding will be reduced for the next few years, a process is being developed whereby the competing needs of each maintenance activity are ranked against each other, using service levels agreed by our elected members. Unpredictable issues, such as

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52   www.somerset.gov.uk

the occurrence of potholes following extreme weather events, also have a bearing on the prioritisation of maintenance programmes.  In addition, we have developed winter service criteria looking at which key areas should get priority for salting.

**4.95**    We often encounter events beyond our control which affect our ability to deliver our annual maintenance programme, such as poor weather, changes in customer values or problems that cannot be rectified through maintenance alone. We use the Council's own risk management process to assess and manage the impacts of unforseen events.

**4.96**    During our work, we develop 'lifecycle plans' for the assets that we maintain. They identify the lowest long-term cost for the work needed on an asset to ensure that it will perform at the levels we expect.  The lifecycle plans document specific actions for how each phase of an asset's life is managed from creation to disposal.

**4.97**    The asset lifecycle plans set out in our TAMP are:

- Carriageway;
- Footways and cycleways;
- Highway structures;
- Highway surface water drainage;
- Verge and landscaped areas;
- Highway lighting
- Road signs;
- Road markings and studs;
- Traffic control systems; and
- Public rights of way.

**4.98**    Ancillary asset lifecycle plans also include the following:

- Safety fencing (vehicle restraint barriers);
- Cattle grids;
- Arrester beds;
- Winter service; and
- Depots.

**New Asset Creation**

**4.99**    Most new assets are created in one of three ways:

- Through major schemes, such as The Taunton Third Way, which are mainly funded by the Government;
- Smaller schemes which are publicly funded though the integrated transport block allocation;
- Schemes funded by developers as part of the planning process.

**4.100**    New development has a significant impact on our highway assets every year. Significant lengths of new roads, footways and cycle routes are built as sites are developed for houses, business, and other uses. This process also creates new drains, gullies, signs, lines, structures, traffic signals and street furniture which also needs maintaining.

**4.101**    We obviously need to make sure that new assets are of good quality design and that the materials will last.  These new assets then get added to our inventory.

**4.102**    When we carry out our road and maintenance works, we need to ensure that this is done in a way that minimises interruptions to the traffic movement.  This is not always possible but we create work plans so that our own workers and other people needing to carry out work, such as gas, water and electric suppliers, reduce disruptions to traffic.  This makes sure we can coordinate the booking of road space, particularly when more than one set of works is being carried out.  We also ensure that work plans are checked against environmental records to minimise the environmental impact of works.

**4.103**    'Whole of Government Accounting' (WGA) guidance requires that we value our highways, and that this value is contained within the Council's accounts. In simple terms, we use a Gross Replacement Cost, which is the cost of replacing the asset with a Modern Equivalent Asset.  The Gross Replacement Cost for Somerset's roads is in the order of £8.6 billion with a backlog to remove all defects of approximately £356m.

### ECN 6 Maintenance

We will maintain our network in a way that makes best use of the resources available.

**4.104**    To do this we could:

- Target our work so that it provides the best possible value. To do this we will:

    - Regularly monitor condition of our assets and ensure that the best available techniques are employed to improve the standard of the transport asset.
    - Prioritise competing demands for maintenance work based on our goals and objectives, local needs and their ability to deliver the best possible value (more information about how we will do this can be found in the TAMP).

    - Monitor and update the value of our transport assets to ensure appropriate decisions can be made on their maintenance.

- Ensure that all maintenance-related risks are recorded and monitored according to the risk they present. Risk exposure and action plans will be periodically

reviewed to monitor changes in risks and to ensure our control measures are still suitable.

- Consider the long term impacts of our work. To do this we will:

  - Produce and update lifecycle plans for the different range of assets set out in the TAMP as set out in paragraph 4.78. This will ensure the maintenance we undertake has the lowest possible whole life cost and our maintenance funding is used appropriately.
  - Seek designs and materials that are effective in use, efficient to construct and minimise the longer term costs and implications of maintaining and managing our transport assets. We will continue to promote the use of sustainable and responsibly sourced materials through our Highway Maintenance Contracts.
  - Seek to reduce the unavoidable effects of climate change through the design of our maintenance work.

- Ensure that disruption caused by work to the highways, for maintenance purposes or by a statutory undertaker[53], cause the minimum delay to users of the network.

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53   Statutory undertakers are organisations who have rights to work on roads, verges and footways without going through the full processes of gaining permission. Statutory undertakers are mostly utility companies (Gas, Electricity, Water, British Telecom and Cable Television companies etc).

# 5 Enjoying and Achieving

**Our Goal for 2026**

"Somerset is a great place to live and to raise children. Everyone feels able to develop and improve their skills and life opportunities, free from poverty and discrimination. People have high aims for themselves and their families. They have confidence in the high quality of all learning opportunities available and can enjoy a broad and stimulating range of cultural activities that enhance their quality of life. People have choice and control over their lives, whatever their age, situation and background; and independent living is promoted and supported."

**Our Transport Challenges to reach this Goal**

- To seek innovative ways of making jobs, services and tourism more accessible to, from and for rural areas.

**5.1**    When we talk to our communities about the transport issues that affect them, the impact of the 'school run' is almost always a factor. Whether it's inappropriate parking, additional traffic volume or simply children not walking to school, we know that these issues cause conflicts within communities. However, it is important to realise that ultimately, we cannot insist that children attend their nearest school because of the government choice agenda.  What we can do is work with schools to manage the impact they have on traffic. We discuss our achievements to date in this area and look at further measures we can introduce in the future. We also look at how children living in more remote areas or away from bus routes may be able to access education.

**5.2**    The decrease in physical activity among children in England is a key concern. The effect of switching from active modes of travel (walking and cycling) to the use of the private car is now regarded by health professionals as the major health impact of current transport policy and behaviour.

**5.3**    Research shows that child development  can be constrained through a reduction in walking and cycling. This can impact upon self-confidence and the lack of physical exercise can impact upon cognition, concentration and academic performance[54].

## School Travel Strategy

**5.4**    The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) has been developed in response to a statutory requirement from Government. The strategy describes how the Council is developing its infrastructure and systems, processes and promotions

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54    Sibley, B. Etnier, J. 2003 The relationship between physical activity and cognition in children: A meta-analysis, *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 15: 243-256

to better cater for and support journeys to, from and between schools. We have outlined a summary of our recent activity below along with our policy in school transport below as an overview of SMoTS.

**5.5**   Over the last five years, we have worked to encourage more sustainable travel to school.  We have employed a number of School Travel Advisors, using Government grants, to help deliver school travel plans.  As a result, we have completed travel plans for 96% of Local Education Authority schools and 86% of all schools.

**5.6**   We have delivered a Walk on Wednesday scheme each June and launched a 'Wild about Walking' stamp card to keep children engaged in our promotions. We have signed up to and delivered 'Bikeability' cycle training in schools, training nearly 600 pupils in 2009/10.  We have assisted schools in delivering cycle parking, helping them with issues such as siting, design and funding.  We also produce an annual School Travel Health Check, which allows us to show each school how children travel to school by mapping each trip.  The results can be seen in Figure 5.1.  This tool, along with an online monitoring tool, not only helps schools plot their own travel to school maps, but also gives them useful information about the amount of $CO_2$ their school generates as well as providing issues to discuss during class time.

**5.7**   Since 2003/04, we have seen an 8% increase in walking to school, so that just under half of all journeys to school are made on foot.  We are seeing small increases in car sharing and cycling because of the work we have done to target these modes of travel.  We have undertaken new analysis over the last couple of years to identify which schools have high numbers of children being driven to school that live within a reasonable distance to walk to school[55].  For Somerset this is 12.53%, although some individual schools have much higher numbers of children falling into this category.  In some instances, factors such as school location or the nature of the school will have a bearing on this trend.  Our work developing and improving Rights of Way has benefits for school travel. Opening up new or improved walking and cycling routes will make it easier for pupils to use these modes to travel to school.

**5.8**   We have statutory requirements in accordance with the Education Acts of 1996 and 2000 to provide:

- Free transport to entitled statutory age children; and
- A Local Education Authority (LEA) discretionary policy to consider individual circumstances.

**5.9**   Whilst the decisions regarding transport entitlement and policy are made within the Communities and Young Persons Directorate, the responsibilities for procuring and providing the required transport services are discharged through 'Transporting Somerset'.

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55   For Primary Schools, a walk to school threshold is 800 metres (half a mile). For Secondary Schools, this is 2 km (1.2 miles).
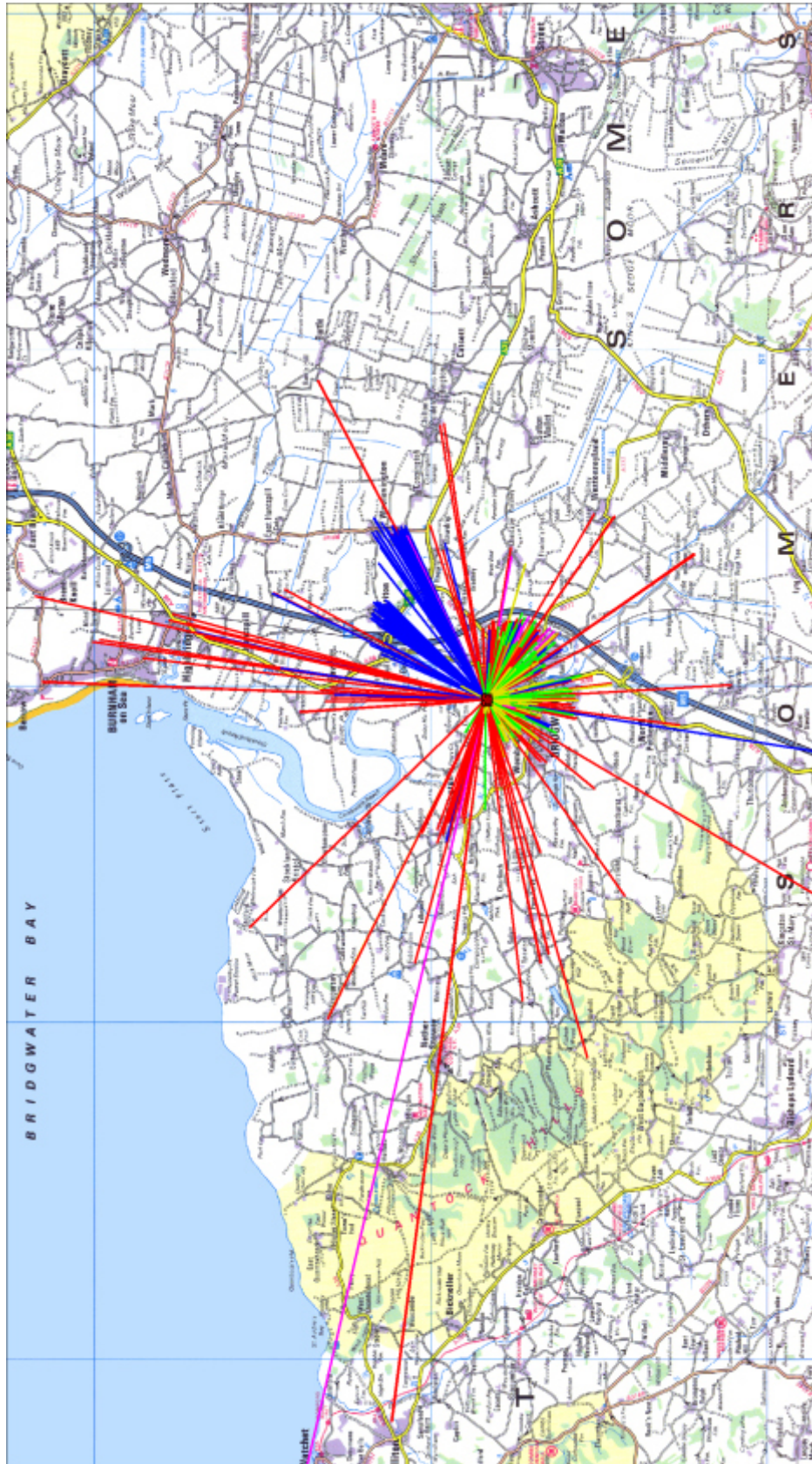
Figure 5.1 Mapping outputs for a sample school in Somerset showing origins of each pupil. The different colours represent different modes of transport.

**5.10**    We provide free home-to-school transport for children who attend their catchment or nearest school or a pupil referral unit, and who live further than the statutory walking distance from that school. For children with special educational needs, transport to the catchment or nearest appropriate school is provided so long as the statutory walking distance criterion is met. If the distance from the home address to the school is less than the statutory walking distance the child's ability to walk to school is assessed and transport is provided if the child would otherwise not be able to attend school.

**5.11**    Children who attend an alternative school on the grounds of religious belief may also be eligible for transport assistance. We also offer spare seats at a discounted rate to students not entitled to free school transport.  We are in the process of introducing a new 'routing' software tool which is designed to improve the organisation of school transport by optimising route selection and the use of vehicles.

**5.12**    In 'Ensuring Economic Wellbeing', we have outlined our strategy for delivering broadband technology to more areas of the County.  The benefits of this work will help people access education remotely, raising the standards of education of young and old alike.  This work also serves to help tackle issues of rural accessibility by making education more available to the people of Somerset.

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### EDU 1 School Travel

We will help people walk and cycle to Somerset's schools and make the school transport services we provide more efficient.

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**5.13**    To do this we could:

- Work with the schools with the most children living within a reasonable walking distance of their school but are currently driven to school;
- Work with schools to help them implement School Travel Plans and address gaps in the provision of safe walking routes to schools;
- Work with schools to investigate getting involved with Sustrans' 'Bike it' project;
- Encouraging schools to develop, update and implement their travel plans to provide healthy, sustainable options for school travel;
- Integrate the long-term road safety strategy into schools;
- Working more closely with communities to deliver schemes that can be delivered in partnership;
- Increase the efficiency of the transport we provide to help get children to school. To do this we will;

    - Improve integration of school travel planning and the provision of school transport through the annual sustainable modes of travel to school strategy;
    - Seeking efficiency savings from school transport services, including using a smaller number of single contractors;

- Selling spare seats on school transport vehicles to pupils, students and members of the public not eligible for free transport; and
- Working with local schools and colleges to ensure that appropriate transport services are in place to minimise exclusion of pupils from after school learning and activities.

**5.14** This policy is also supported by our policies on:

- Smarter choices, which includes improved cycle training for children.

# 6 Staying Safe

**Our Goal for 2026**

"People of all ages feel safe in their homes and on the streets and roads of Somerset. There are strong and positive relationships between people of all ages and from different backgrounds. People take great care when driving and there are few road accidents. The number of crimes and offences committed in Somerset is low. Vulnerable people of all ages and backgrounds feel secure and action is taken to protect them when it is needed."

**Our Transport Challenge to reach this Goal**

- To keep the level of casualties on our road to a minimum and continue towards achieving our long-term road safety targets.

**6.1**    Keeping people safe on our network is one of the responsibilities we take seriously as a County Council.  Through detailed data and evidence collection, we know the areas where we most need to target our work and who we need to work with to get the best results.  We also understand that sometimes people have perceptions of safety and perceptions of danger that prevent them from using a particular form of transport.  We know in these instances we have to give people the tools, techniques and knowledge to help them overcome this fear.  With such a long term plan, we also know that we have an opportunity to influence a generation of people. This might be young people growing up with our plan but could also be adults reaching transition points in their life, such as a new job or moving house, and being in a position where they want or need to know more about staying safe on our network. We discuss our long-term strategy for Road Safety and also look at motorcycling as a particular area of our work.

## Perceptions of Safety

**6.2**    We know that there is debate among communities that the promotion of active travel modes will lead to greater increases in casualties among pedestrians and cyclists. However, evidence suggests that there is "safety in numbers" for walkers and cyclists. One key study into this concept was reported by Jacobson 2003[56]. Jacobsen provided evidence based on analysis of national data from 14 European countries on walking and cycling as well as data for 47 towns in Denmark, and 68 towns in California. The author concluded that:

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56    Jacobson, P, 2003, Safety in numbers: more walkers and bicyclists, safer walking and bicycling, Injury Prevention, 9: 205-209. Referenced in Davis A, 2010, A Desk-top Review of Safety in Numbers: International Evidence, Working Draft. NHS Bristol & Bristol City Council.

*"there is a relationship between motor vehicle collisions with pedestrians and or cyclists and numbers of pedestrians and or cyclists. For example, in a community where walking doubles it can be expected that there will be a 32% increase in pedestrian injuries, where cycling doubles it can be expected that there will be a 34% increase in cyclist injuries; motorists appear to adjust their behaviour in the presence of people walking and cycling which largely controls the likelihood of collisions. In result, the relationship between pedestrian or cyclists exposure and casualties is not linear, that is, there is safety in numbers for these mode users"*[57].

**6.3**    In the context of Somerset the evidence above may mean that in urban areas, where there are already some significant pedestrian movements and some cyclists, the growth of these modes is unlikely to see a linear increase in injuries.  This is likely to result because motorists' speeds reduce as they adapt to the greater numbers of pedestrians and cyclists.

**6.4**    Reporting against national indicators suggests that violent crime, aquisitive crime and anti-social behaviour show slightly lower rates in Somerset that the national average. Crime rates in the rest of the South West of England are lower than the rest of England. Information about perceptions of safety show that while people generally feel safe during the day, a significant proportion feel unsafe after dark.

**6.5**    Surveys suggests passengers can feel insecure while waiting for public transport at bus stops or railway stations; also, some car parks, cycleways and footpaths can be perceived as dangerous. Evidence suggests that the presence of pavements or footpaths that are well maintained with good surfaces, cycle paths and street lighting increase the number of walking and cycling trips.[58] For example, many people have told us that they do not feel it is safe to cycle on roads. We therefore need to both improve our cycle routes and give people the skills they need to be more confident on a bicycle on the roads.

## Road Safety

**6.6**    Speed of traffic is the top anti-social behaviour in communities, according to the British Crime Survey[59] We know that it is something communities feel strongly about and it is our duty to help tackle the problem.  We were instrumental in the coordination of the Somerset Road Safety Partnership in 2006 by bringing together the extensive experience and expertise from a number of organisations, including the police, fire and rescue service and the NHS, to bring down casualty rates, create safer communities and improve the quality of life for all residents and visitors to Somerset.

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57   Davis A, 2010, A Desk-top Review of Safety in Numbers: International Evidence, Working Draft. NHS Bristol & Bristol City Council.

58   Cochrane, et al. 2009 Small Area and Individual Level Predictors of Physical Activity in Urban Communities: A Multi-Level Study in Stoke on Trent, England. International Journal of Environment Research and Public Health, 6, 654-677.

59   Poulter, D., McKenna, F. 2007 Is speeding a "real" antisocial behaviour? A comparison with other antisocial behaviours, Accident Analysis and Prevention, 39: 384-389.

**6.7**    Our Road Safety Plan (2008-2010) was developed to ensure that all aspects of road safety work were clearly focused and co-ordinated and that maximum effort is targeted towards sustained and long term casualty reduction.

**6.8**    The key achievements over this timescale include:

- A cohesive unit was formed to investigate additional ways of obtaining collision data including visiting locations of serious injury crashes and attending the scene of on-going incidents;
- A Casualty Reduction Implementation Team (CRIT) was set up, comprising experts on education, engineering and enforcement, to consider all the available data (the location, type and cause of collisions) and decide what measures should be used to reduce casualties;
- Partnership working was fostered and developed by identifying other organisations that could assist in spreading the road safety message;
- A wide range of programmes were set up to promote an understanding of road safety issues among young people of all ages from preschool to sixth form and further education colleges.  Road safety officers worked with the County Council's Young People's Directorate to establish key learning objectives;
- Somerset Road Safety Partnership built on its existing work to:

  - Train new recruits for the School Crossing Patrol Service and risk assess all sites;
  - Carry out Walking Bus risk assessments and training (working with the School Travel Plan Team);
  - Increase the number of students receiving cycle training;
  - Provide pedestrian training in areas with high child casualty rates and specialised training "A Step in the Right Direction" for people with learning difficulties;

- A number of high casualty routes were identified with a mix of education, engineering and enforcement being used to reduce collision/casualty rates;
- Driver Education was the main focus of activity since cars are involved in 90% of injury collisions in Somerset:

  - Speed Choice offers workshops as an alternative to prosecution for speeders and was expanded to include motorcyclists and professional drivers;
  - Community Speed Watch, which involves residents monitoring the speed of vehicles through their community, was integrated into the Partnership and extended to other areas;
  - Pass Plus Extra helped to increase the number of young drivers receiving subsidised extra driving tuition by 15% each year to 2011;

- A range of other initiatives were supported to try to reduce the high number of motorcyclists being killed and injured on Somerset roads, including Project Kickstart (for pre-riders aged 12-16), BikeSafe and Ride2Arrive. We also

introduced Riding Performance Days for sports bike riders in the 30-50 age group; and

- Safety camera enforcement continued to be used where there is a casualty or speeding issue and at traffic lights where there is a collision history. Nine film cameras were replaced by digital cameras over the last three years.

> **SAF 1 Road Safety**
>
> We will work with partner organisations, for example, by helping drivers and riders to improve their skills.

**6.9**  To do this we will:

- Finalise a new Road Safety Strategy for the period up to 2021;
- Focus on increased education, particularly amongst higher risk or potentially higher risk users. This will include improved and extended training and promotion for motorcyclists; and
- Look at further developing our strategy on identified higher casualty routes, mostly located in more rural areas.

**6.10**  In the longer-term, we will review the financial viability of establishing a driver skills centre, which is currently on-hold due to the financial climate, with a view to implementing this at an appropriate time. If a centre is developed, the selection of a suitable site would need consider the impact it might have on the environment.

**6.11**  It is important to recognise the close links road safety has with maintenance. Maintaining our network has a direct benefit on road safety since reducing or removing defects from our roads and paths will improve the surfaces that people travel on, be it in a motor vehicle, on a bicycle or on foot.

## Motorcycling

**6.12**  We have developed a separate Motorcycling Strategy, which focuses specifically on the issues that affect road safety for powered two-wheel vehicles. One of the reasons for doing this is the proportionally higher rate of casualties on our roads involving motorcycles.  The full Motorcycling Strategy can be found on the Somerset County Council website.

**6.13**  The use of motorcycles is currently growing in Great Britain. When compared to the private car they can offer the potential to greatly improve personal mobility at an affordable price, particularly for those in rural areas where public transport is limited. In congested conditions a powered two wheeler can achieve significantly shorter journey times than a car. They make a smaller contribution to overall congestion by taking up less road space than cars and require less room in which to park. Motorcycles represent a more efficient use of resources than the private car in terms of both their fuel efficiency and manufacture and the smaller and newer machines produce lower $CO_2$ emissions than most cars.

**6.14** Undoubtedly the most serious drawback of powered two-wheelers is their extremely high casualty rate. Riders are at a much greater risk of death or serious injury than all other road users. Nationally the relative risk of a motorcyclist being killed or seriously injured was 54 times higher than for car drivers in 2006[60]. In Somerset in 2008 motorcycling represented only 1% of all road traffic but accounted for over a quarter of deaths and serious injuries[61].

**6.15** Since 2006, we have been doing a lot of work to improve safety and facilities for motorcyclists in Somerset. Much of this work has been done through our successful Road Safety Partnership.

**6.16** We have undertaken a programme of road safety and casualty reduction including accident investigation, education, through projects such as BikeSafe, Ride2Arrive, a rider performance course, young rider education programme, First Bike on Scene and other awareness campaign, enforcement, using initiatives such as Project Kickstart and Rider Choice; and finally, engagement with the motorcycling community.

**6.17** We also consider highway design and engineering, conducting road safety audits, which look at making minor alterations to our roads, to reduce the chances of bikers coming off and minimising the likely injury if they do: Measures include:

- Looking at where removing signage in certain areas can prevent motorcyclists from colliding with them;
- Minimising the locating of manhole covers where bikes might skid on them; and
- Looking at providing measures to help motorcyclists negotiate left hand bends in rural areas by providing markers to focus on.

**6.18** Our maintenance programme has built in measures to help motorcyclists, such as providing skid resistance in places where accidents have been reported, removing surface debris and other potential hazards and ensuring motorcycles are considered in the design of traffic calming features where the wrong types of materials can increase the chance of an incident.

**6.19** We have looked at parking provision for motorcycles, partly though our Manual for Travel Plans to ensure that employers provide suitable areas to store helmets and protective clothing as well as the bikes themselves. We acknowledge that there is a need for better and more secure public parking for motorcycles, particularly where users are expected to 'pay and display' for a ticket.

**6.20** We have also supported a moped loan scheme, run by the Somerset Rural Youth Project, which aims to help young people aged 16 - 25 access education and employment within Somerset in rural areas where public transport is limited. Around 30 mopeds are available, each for a six month loan period. At the end of the loan participants are given the opportunity to purchase the moped.

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60   Compendium of Motorcycle Statistics 2008 (Table 4.2.; Source: Road Accident Statistics, DfT)
61   Somerset Road Safety Partnership Three Year Plan 2008-2010

> ### SAF 2 Motorcycling
>
> We will promote safe and responsible motorcycling by working with our partners to deliver our road safety policy and helping to improve parking provision.

**6.21** To do this we could:

- Ensure highway designers and planning professionals 'Think Bike' (including when considering traffic calming schemes).

- Promote the use of improved anti-skid service covers by utility companies

- Prioritise locations for using the WYLIWYG ('Where-you-look-is-where-you-go') concept in safety schemes on bends and incorporate it in new scheme design.
- Identify sites for motorcycle safety barriers.
- Ensure that motorcycles receive adequate attention in the creation and review of planning guidance and other related documents, such as motorcycle parking standards; and
- Engage with the District Councils, the Motorcycle Forum members and other motorcycle users to assess and improve existing public parking provision for motorcycles across the county.
- Engage with key stakeholders and seek opportunities to gather feedback from riders.

**6.22** This policy is also supported by our policies on:

- Road safety, which includes improved and extended training for motorcyclists.

## Other Safety Considerations

**6.23** Staying Safe is not just about road safety but also about keeping people safe when using all transport. Ensuring our streets are well lit, that our car parks are secure and that waiting facilities, such as bus stops or railway stations, are covered and have appropriate information available to travellers.

# 7 Being Healthy

> **Our Goal for 2026**
>
> "People are healthy and everyone has the information and support to be able to make the best choices about their lifestyles. There is little difference between an individual's health and life expectancy from one community to another. There is a range of health services to meet differing needs, including those who find it difficult to connect with services. People requiring care or support have good information and help that is responsive to their needs and gives them greater choice, convenience and ownership."
>
> **Our Transport Challenges to reach this Goal**
>
> - To help to address the negative impacts of transport on health, such as air quality and obesity.

**7.1**    We know that transport creates a negative impact on people's lives as well as positive ones.  Our policies for reducing those negative impacts are set out below. Health has been a largely hidden issue within transport policy in the UK but this is changing with increasing recognition of the levels of ill health attributable to current travel behaviours. The government has begun a process of returning local public health leadership and responsibility to local government [62]. This will give Somerset County Council a key role in keeping Somerset healthy, and transport will have an important part to play in doing this [63].

**7.2**    Transport matters for public health because the growth of mass car ownership is environmentally unsustainable and affects population health in many ways[64].Health issues include obesity due to sedentary lifestyles, respiratory problems caused by poor air quality and the reduction in quality of life caused by nearby traffic and severance.  We also know that active travel and healthy lifestyles impact on nearly

62    As set out in the White Paper *Healthy Lives Healthy People: our strategy for public health in England*(http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_121941)

63    As set out in *Healthy Lives, Healthy People: consultation on the funding and commissioning routes for public health* (http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_123114.pdf) and *Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Transparency in Outcomes* (http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_122962)

64    Woodcock, J. Aldred,  R. 2008 Cars, corporations and commodities: Consequences for the social determinants of health, Emerging themes in Epidemiology,  5:4. http://www.ete-online.com/content/5/1/4 (open access).

every other aspect of the transport work that we do. Therefore, it is very important that we work with the relevant partners to create public health benefits and reduce health inequalities.

**7.3**     Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or ill-health.[65] The main factors affecting levels of health lie outside of the healthcare system and are impacted by public policies in areas such as transport, education, and housing.  Since people travel in order to access facilities, services, jobs and so on, reducing distances people need to travel can help maximise accessibility rather than mobility per se. As a result, travelling shorter distances is more likely to enable physically active travel while minimising environmental impacts, not least through carbon emissions which contribute to climate change.

## Active travel

**7.4**     Travelling in an active way, such as walking or cycling, can reduce the risk of obesity and many other serious medical problems. It can also help to reduce congestion and all the problems associated with it.

**The challenge we face**

**7.5**     In the UK there has been a generally upward trend in car ownership since the 1960s. Driving a car or van is by far the most common mode of travel. This is indicative of sedentary lifestyles where people have limited time to undertake planned physical activities, such as sports. We have seen the loss of routine physical activity through a decline in walking and cycling (including travel to public transport connections). The substitution of car use in place of more active ways of travelling has amplified the health risks associated with increased sedentary lifestyles.

**7.6**     Many of these health risks are related to the obesity epidemic. In Somerset only 12.5% of adults are physically active[66] (which is in line with the low levels of physical activity among adults in England as a whole). The decrease in physical activity among adults (and also, increasingly, children) in England is a key concern for public health professionals. Although there are other factors involved in this decrease (fewer manual jobs and fewer physically active elements of housework, shopping etc), changes in travel behaviour are a significant factor.

**7.7**     The main negative impact of road transport on health is due to sedentary lifestyles. The direct and indirect costs of physical inactivity have been valued at £8.2 billion per year. This does not include the cost of the contribution of physical inactivity

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65   WHO, 1948 Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/about/definition/en/print.html accessed 3rd December 2009.
66   Source: APHO and Department of Health, Health Profile for Somerset 2010

to people being overweight or obese, which has been estimated to be £6.6-7.4 billion per year (at 2005 prices)[67]. This means that there is an urgent need to increase physical activity through routine activities such as walking and cycling.

**How active travel can help**

**7.8**    An international peer reviewed evidence base provides a clear message that the transport sector should give priority to walking and cycling, particularly in urban areas where a greater percentage of journeys are under 5 miles. Consequently, the evidence base identifies the need for far more concerted promotion of walking and cycling and a variety of traffic restraint measures[68] to enable people to choose these modes knowing that they are not putting themselves at risk from injury from motor traffic. Moreover, evidence shows significant 'suppressed demand' for these modes (meaning more people would use them if they were able). The outcomes of more walking and cycling would benefit Somerset's quality of life and improve health, leading to cost savings including:

- Significant reductions in illness due to physical inactivity, including slowing the growth in obesity;
- Fewer deaths and acute injuries from road traffic crashes;
- Major cost savings through lower levels of workforce absenteeism;
- Co-benefits also include reduced congestion, improved air quality, improved accessibility, and reduced risk for each traveller;
- Increased reliability in journey times for essential private transport users due to reduced congestion and more reliable public transport journeys.

**7.9**    Moreover, in terms of value for money, the economic benefits of walking and cycling interventions are very high. They average 11.5:1. On average, you get £11.50 of benefits for every pound spent, even using conservative estimates [69]. This means that measures to increase physical activity through cycling and walking are likely to be a 'best buy' for the road transport sector, for public health and for the NHS in general (in terms of cost savings).

**7.10**    Thus, a step change in the promotion of walking and cycling to achieve a healthier modal share across the urban areas of Somerset would be good economically; good for health and good for the environment.

**7.11**    Evidence shows that far higher levels of early deaths occur due to the 'substitution effect'. This is when people switch from physically active modes (principally walking and mixes of public transport, walking and cycling) to sedentary private motorised modes, principally the car. Deaths occur as premature mortality increases, especially from coronary heart disease, stroke, and cancers but also other

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67   Source Allender, S., Foster, C., Scarborough, P. Rayner, M. 2006 The burden of physical activity related ill-health in the UK, Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 61: 344-348.

68   For example pedestrianised areas or lower speed limits

69   Davis, A. 2010 Value for Money:  An Economic Assessment of the Health Benefits of Active Travel, Government Office for the South West

diseases associated with physical inactivity. Figure 7.1 below shows deaths attributable to road traffic fatalities for cyclists and all road users compared to premature deaths due to physical inactivity, from just 3 major conditions, in 2003.
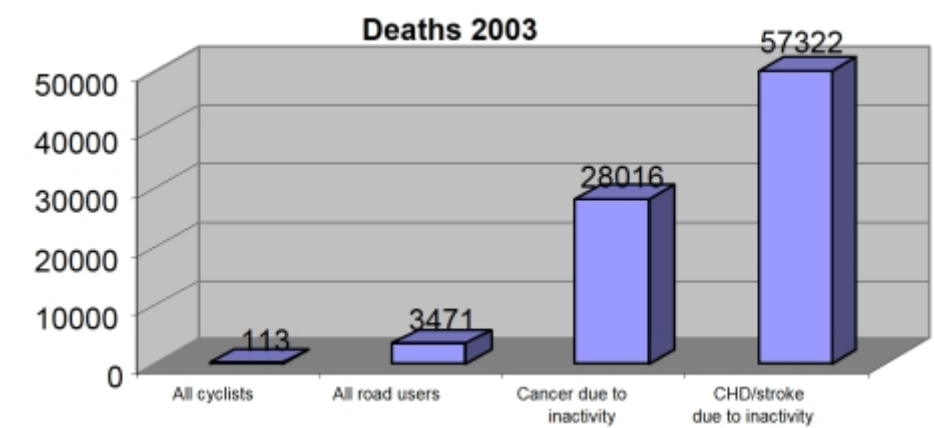


Figure 7.1 Deaths attributable to road traffic fatalities for cyclists and all road users compared to premature deaths due to physical inactivity for 2003 (CHD-Chronic Heart Disease) (Department of Health, 2007)

**7.12**    The graph shows that deaths due to physical inactivity, from just 3 major conditions, are far higher than from all road traffic incidents. This confirms that physical inactivity due to transport is the greatest negative impact road transport has on health. Low levels of physical activity also increase the risk to health from a range of up to 20 diseases including coronary heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis, some cancers, and mental health problems[70]. Moreover, research is increasingly linking the way we are choosing (or are constrained) to travel, the built environment, and health. The design of the built environment, particularly where it allows for easy car use, suppresses physical activity and consequently increases risks to health.

**7.13**    The 2004 report on physical activity of the Chief Medical Officer for England identified the importance of routine active travel:

*"For most people, the easiest and most acceptable forms of physical activity are those that can be incorporated into everyday life. Examples include walking or cycling instead of driving…" (p.29)*Ibid.

**7.14**    It has been shown that levels of walking and cycling can be increased by[71];

• High densities of development,

70  Source Department of Health (2004) 'At least five a week' and 'Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health' a report from the Chief Medical Officer. London: Dept. Health
71  Active Community Environments (undated) How land use and transportation systems impact public health: A literature review of the relationship between physical activity and built form, Atlanta: CDC and National Institute for Clinical Excellence (2008) 'Physical Activity and the Environment'. London: NHS.

- A greater mixture of land uses
- A balance between housing and jobs in developments
- Pedestrian and bicycle friendly site and street design
- Grid street networks
- Separated facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.

**7.15**    Thus, urban areas are prime locations for early interventions to increase walking and cycling levels.

**7.16**    People who live in 'traditional' or 'walkable' neighbourhoods report doing about 30 minutes more walking for transport purposes each week, and more physical activity in total, than people who live in less walkable neighbourhoods (even amongst older residents).

**7.17**    This is particularly important in terms of the development of new urban extensions, as proposed around Taunton, Bridgewater and Yeovil. It is important to ensure that mixed use and high density development are a high priority. This will help avoid dormitory settlements, which simply generate large volumes of motorised traffic. Achieving this will require us to work with developers and the retail sector to create truly environmentally sustainable urban settlements.

**Our vision**

"Healthy travel will become easier and more attractive, leaving the people of Somerset able to walk and cycle more often, and more safely."

**What we are already doing**

**7.18**    Policies SUS 4 and SUS 5 on cycling and walking describe some of the things we are doing to get more people travelling in active ways. This includes;

- Improved infrastructure (such as foot and cycle paths, cycle parking or rights of way)
- Training to help improve people's confidence to cycle
- Information (such as maps and selling the benefits of travelling actively)
- Innovative schemes, like free cycle repairs, helping schools set up walking buses and a cycle loan scheme at Bridgwater College.

**HLT 1 Stay Active**

We will help people be more active by giving them more opportunities to travel in a healthy way, such as by walking or cycling.

**7.19**    This requires clear leadership and partnership working to ensure that communications and behavioural programmes, as well as physical changes to the environment, are delivered by a range of service providers across the county. Our Policies on walking, cycling, sustainable development and smarter choices set out the things that we could do to help people travel in more active ways. Any of the

measures suggested that get people walking and cycling more often will be good for their health, however, smarter choices measures are aimed at encouraging people to travel in more sustainable ways in general. As such, some of the smarter choices measures may not be directly relevant to active travel (like promoting car sharing). Our sustainable development policies also have a number of wider objectives. However, many of the measures they propose will help make new developments better places for walkers and cyclists.

## Access to Health

**7.20**    We have completed five local area studies examining the barriers that residents experience when accessing hospitals from remote and/or deprived parts of Somerset. Between April and July 2009 Somerset's Accessibility Planning Team completed action plans to implement the proposals arising from the Local Area Studies.  The action plans identify a number of issues concerning the difficulties of accessing healthcare by public transport.

### HLT 2 Access to Health

We will talk to healthcare providers about transport plans, to help make it easier for people to access their services. We will help to develop 'out of hours' transport to healthcare services.

**7.21**    To do this we could:

- Work with health service to ensure we share information about the planning and delivery of existing and future services; and
- Develop 'out of hours' transport for patients, employees and visitors.
- Work in partnership with specialists in public health, as this policy will also contribute to improving patient experience, a priority within NHS Somerset.

## Air Quality

**7.22**    Poor air quality is a reality across the County. Road transport is the chief source of the emissions responsible for respiratory-related deaths. Reducing particulate emissions from motor vehicles could significantly reduce the number of such premature deaths, which nationally exceed 30,000 each year.  This means that the lives of some people in Somerset are shortened by poor air quality. Moreover, many more, including children, the elderly and those with pre-existing respiratory and cardio-vascular conditions suffer more and treating their conditions costs the nation more. Again, action to reduce poor air quality entails reducing reliance on private motorised transport.

**7.23**   All six Councils that form the administrative region of Somerset - the County Council and the five local authorities of Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, South Somerset District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset District Council - have a long-established working relationship in pursuit of protecting air quality across the County.

**7.24**   The development of a County-wide Air Quality Strategy for Somerset is the culmination of air quality management work over recent years, which has resulted in some of the local authorities identifying particular pollution hot spots across their district and other locations where air quality is potentially a problem.

**7.25**   For those local authorities with air quality action plans, or requiring the development of air quality action plans in future, the close collaboration with various stakeholders, agencies is essential in improving and protecting local air quality, particularly in transport planning and land-use planning authorities.

**7.26**   Broadly speaking, air quality across the County is good. However, since industrial processes within the districts do not pose a threat to air pollution, and the major source of emissions is from traffic and this has caused air quality problems in a few small pockets in Somerset. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared in two local authorities; within Taunton Deane (East Reach and Henlade) and in South Somerset (Yeovil).

> ### HLT 3 Air Quality
>
> We will work to minimise the effect any changes to Somerset's transport systems have on air pollution. We will work with Somerset's district and borough authorities to improve air quality in Somerset by encouraging partnership working and sharing best practice with our neighbours.

**7.27**   To do this we could:

- Encourage District and Borough Councils to continue their existing Air Quality reporting duties;
- Promote the sharing of information and expertise across the County, encouraging greater consistency in the air quality management process;
- Foster collaboration between environmental health and protection professionals from Somerset County Council and the five district and borough authorities. This will improve the approach to air quality monitoring, hot-spot identification, pollution sources and other relevant air quality issues in Somerset;
- Ensure local air quality maintains a high profile, through the appropriate communication of information across the County; and

**7.28**   Continue participating (alongside the district and borough authorities) in the formal 'Environmental Protection Committee for Bristol, Somerset and Gloucestershire'. This will help to build on the exchange of best practice and information that happens through Somerset's Air Quality Steering Group.

## Annex A - Cross Boundary Issues

Section 1 gives a broad picture of the sorts of issues we have to deal with in discussion with our neighbouring transport authorities. The Appendix gives more detail of the issues that we have jointly agreed.

| Topic | Area | Issue |
|---|---|---|
| Travel Planning | West of England | Addressing travel to work from these areas through travel planning. |
| | Devon | |
| | Wiltshire | |
| | Dorset | |
| Access to Regional Airports | West of England | Congestion and road safety on the A38 corridor approaching Bristol International Airport (BIA) from the south due to the impact of airport expansion. Limited public transport access from Somerset to BIA meaning Somerset residents have to travel via Bristol in order to catch the Bristol Flyer. |
| Rail Improvements | West of England | Enhanced rail services needed to serve Somerset/Weston-super-Mare/Bristol/ Gloucester corridor. |
| | Devon | Enhanced rail services needed to serve Cardiff to Paignton corridor and London Waterloo to Exeter corridor. Support reopening of Wellington station. |
| | Wiltshire | Achieving rail service improvements on the Salisbury-Exeter, Bristol-Weymouth and Reading-Plymouth lines. |
| | Dorset | Enhanced rail services needed to serve Bristol to Weymouth corridor and London Waterloo to Exeter corridor. Lobby for new service provision on Weymouth – Yeovil – Exeter axis either by construction of Yeovil South Chord, or, more realistically by reversal of trains in Yeovil Pen Mill. |
| Freight Issues | West of England | Freight routes and route hierarchies including A368/B3134/A371 corridor. |
| | Devon | Freight routes and route hierarchies including A30/ A358/ A38/ B3224/ A39 corridors. |
| | Wiltshire | Freight routes and route hierarchies including A3098, A362 and B3092. |

| Topic | Area | Issue |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Dorset | Freight routes and route hierarchies including A37/A3066 corridors. |
| Bus and Coach Improvements | West of England | Bus and coach service enhancement along corridors to/ from Bristol and Bath: benefits of proposed major schemes in reduced journey times. Ticketing schemes. |
| | Devon | Bus and coach service enhancement along corridors between Devon and Somerset. Ticketing schemes. |
| | Dorset | Bus and coach service enhancement along corridors to/from Yeovil. Ticketing schemes. Investigate Yeovil to Bournemouth/Poole limited stop bus service. Consider joint procurement of bus services in appropriate cross boundary situations. Continue to work with other authorities in the South West to enhance the Traveline public transport information initiative, but seek to reduce costs. |
| Walk/ Cycle Routes | West of England | National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 24 Bath/ Radstock/ Frome and other cross-boundary links including resolution of Axe River crossing at Brean, which forms part of NCN 33. |
| | Devon | Joint working on Exmoor to improve walking and cycling. Developcross-boundary walk/cycle links. |
| | Dorset | Developcross-boundary cycle links, in particular between Yeovil and Sherborne. |
| Traffic Management | West of England | Network management reviews. Effect of incidents on M5. |
| | Devon | Effect of incidents on M5/A303. Network management reviews. Management of Exmoor routes. |
| | Wiltshire | Liaison on traffic management issues where diversionary routes are likely to impact on smaller settlements. |
| | Dorset | Effect of incidents on A303 and on A31/A35 trunk road, especially on Dorchester to Honiton section. Network management reviews. |
| Commuting and Strategic Routes | West of England | Increased commuting from towns and villages from Somerset into Bath and Bristol. Access to further education establishments. |

| Topic | Area | Issue |
|---|---|---|
| | Devon | Increased commuting from towns and villages along the Tiverton/ Wellington/ Taunton corridor and along A303 corridor. Opportunities for joint promotion of similar messages such as road safety and travel awareness. |
| | Wiltshire | Aspirations for A303 to act as 'second strategic route'. |
| | Dorset | Increased commuting from towns and villages from Dorset into Yeovil. |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment | West of England | The Strategic Environmental Assessment of potential cross-boundary environmental issues. |
| | Devon | |
| | Wiltshire | |
| | Dorset | |
| Access to Regional Hospitals/ Employment Areas | West of England | Access to regional hospitals and major employment sites affecting both urban and rural residents. |
| | Devon | |
| | Wiltshire | |
| | Dorset | |
| Parking | West of England | Impact of parking and other management policies on competing commercial centres. |
| | Devon | |
| | Wiltshire | |
| | Dorset | |

# Annex B - Taunton Area and Yeovil Transport Measures

Over the last 2-3 years, we have been collecting data and evidence in order to be prepared for proposed growth in housing and employment in the Taunton area (Wellington, Taunton, Bridgwater) and Yeovil. Much of this work has been guided by the land use planning work being done by the District Councils in these areas. While parcels of land for development in the Taunton area have been broadly determined and we have produced our transport strategy alongside it, in Yeovil there is still discussion amongst local decision makers as to where the best place is to allocate the growth. As a result, we have not been able to accurately model and test the different spatial alternatives for Yeovil and therefore, no options have been developed. We are therefore continuing to use our previous work on the Eastern and Western corridor improvement options as a basis for our strategy but recognise that these will eventually be superseded by a Yeovil Transport Strategy. Any development of the schemes listed here would be subject to further exploration of the impact they might have on Somerset's transport networks, environments, carbon emissions and natural resources. The appropriate assessments, scheme appraisal processes and safety audits will also be undertaken for all schemes at the appropriate stage.

This work has concentrated on Somerset's towns and links to other areas are considered further elsewhere in our policies. We will work with the relevant authorities, agencies and developers to jointly work towards delivering the following initiatives subject to securing appropriate agreements and funding.

**Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington Transport Strategy**

Our Area Wide Initiatives will include:

- Air quality monitoring stations
- Management of traffic to make better use of the road network
- Promotion of electric vehicles
- Encourage HGV deliveries take place outside main shopping and commuting hours
- Improve Community Transport
- Work with schools and businesses to promote walking, cycling and public transport use and provide information to help make informed choices, using Travel Plans where necessary
- Ensure the design of new schemes considers safety for all without compromising ease of use for more vulnerable users.
- Park and bus sites to be accredited to safe parking standard
- More control over retail parking on edges of town centre

Our Initiatives for Bridgwater will include:

- Pedestrian and cycle links between the schools and key destinations
- Celebration Mile - Improved pedestrian and cycle links between the College, railway station and town centre
- More public transport on rural routes and more evening and Sunday services.

- Improvements at Bridgwater railway station to address access issues
- Enhanced bus service linking Wellington, Taunton and Bridgwater along the A38 corridor
- Traffic calming, pedestrian priority, shared spaces etc in town centre
- Linked cycle network
- More integrated transport: better coordination of bus and rail services.
- New shared cycle and pedestrian routes in Bridgwater linking outskirts to town centre
- Improved junctions considering needs of non-car users
- Work to stop roads carrying high volumes of traffic from splitting communities and making it hard to get around by foot or bike (known as 'severance').
- New Park and Bus sites to the south and north of Bridgwater, enhanced bus services, new or improved bus priority, improvement of the principal arterials into the town, improvements for pedestrians in the town centre.
- Improved links from A39 Quantock Road to Spaxton Road and using Little Sydenham link to relieve Bath Road.

Our Initiatives for Taunton will include:

- Completion of a bypass for Norton Fitzwarren
- Traffic management Variable Message Signing
- Quality Bus Partnerships / enhanced bus services
- On-street parking permit-controlled, public transport has priority
- Additional pedestrian crossing facilities around town centre area
- Real Time Information on buses
- Increase pedestrianisation of Taunton town centre to include increased cycle access
- Shared walk/cycle routes in Taunton
- Increased parking charges
- Comprehensive and integrated cycle network
- Improved facilities at Taunton bus station
- Improved interchange facilities and better integration of bus and rail services at Taunton railway station
- Henlade by-pass, traffic calming, improved junctions (303/A358 improvement package)
- New or expanded Park & Ride which is located to avoid impacts on Hestercombe House SAC
- Bus priority routes to town centre
- Improved junctions between Norton Fitzwarren / Monkton Heathfield / M5 and Taunton town centre
- New access and link roads to facilitate development but which are also routed to avoid impacts on Hestercombe House SAC

Initiatives for Wellington will include:

- New road between Taunton Road and B3187 to serve new developments at Longforth Farm and Tonedale

- Possible reopened railway station at Wellington
- New park and bus facilities at Chelston roundabout (250 spaces) and at Rockwell Green (25 spaces)
- Shared walk/cycle routes in Wellington
- Reduce heavy traffic flows in town; consider pedestrianisation, removal of on-street parking.
- Junction improvements at Chelston Roundabout, A38 Hockholler Junction and the Nynehead/Wellington Junction.
- Town bus route

**Yeovil Transport Strategy Review**

Non- highways improvements include:

- Car parking review to cover charging regime, approach to employment sites, public off and on road provision;
- Comprehensive walking and cycling network improvements, including radial routes to the town centre
- Pedestrian priority areas within the town centre
- Public information and education programme for behavioural change
- Cycle parking provision at residential and employment developments
- Cycling improvements at Yeovil Hospital
- Cycle link provided on A37 between Ilchester and Yeovil
- School, workplace, residential and personalised travel planning
- Quality Bus Partnerships covering core services
- Bus Station improvements
- Real time passenger information (RTPI) and on-bus electronic information
- Dedicated bus routes and other priority measures

Highways improvements set out in the Eastern and Western Corridor Studies include:

- A30 Reckleford/Market Street
- Reckleford Gyratory Provision
- A30 Sherborne Road/Lyde Road
- Coombe Street Lane/Mudford Road
- Thorne Lane/Western Avenue
- Copse Road/Western Avenue
- Western Way/Preston Road
- Asda Access
- Westland's (Cartgate Link/Bunford Lane)
- Lysander Road/Watercombe Lane
- Horsey (Police Station) Roundabout
- Hospital Roundabout
- Fiveways Roundabouts

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