

Somerset County Council

Transport Policies

AIMS, TARGETS AND IMPLEMENTATION CONTEXT



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1 Introduction

1.1 This Document sets out how we will monitor our progress towards our aims and challenges and how we will put our transport policies into action.

2 Aims and Targets

2.1 For our transport policies to be successful we need a way to measure our progress towards achieving their goals. This is important to make sure our work addresses Somerset's biggest problems and makes the best possible use of our limited resources.

2.2 The diagram below explains how we developed the aims and targets that will help us to make sure our transport policies deliver the improvements in transport that Somerset needs.



What we need to measure and the level of change we need

We have chosen a number of indicators to measure our performance against our transport policies' goals and challenges, these indicators are listed in the table below.

We are also working to develop targets for each of these indicators, to set out how much they need to change to help us meet our transport challenges. The targets we have already worked out are also listed below. These targets have been set for the first three year implementation plan period of Somerset's Future Transport Plan (unless stated otherwise).

Indicator	Target
Funding	A new monitoring methodology and target are being developed.
Air Quality	Maintain current targets for Air Quality Management Areas
People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	The Road Safety Partnership are currently agreeing future targets to 2020.
Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	The Road Safety Partnership are currently agreeing future targets to 2020.
Principal roads where maintenance should be considered	Maintain current levels.
Non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered	Maintain current levels.
Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking & cycling	A new monitoring methodology and target are being developed.
Adapting to Climate Change	Progress is monitored through other plans and programmes.
Road traffic mileage	A maximum level based of Department for Transport projections.
Cycling	A new monitoring methodology and target are being developed.
Journeys to Work	A new monitoring methodology and target are being developed.
Rights of Way	A new target is being developed based on an existing dataset.
HGVs	Maintain current levels of satisfaction and proportions of HGV traffic on non-strategic routes.
Average journey time per mile during the morning peak	A new monitoring methodology and target are being developed.

Indicator	Target
Local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area	Small increase on current levels.
Bus services running on time	Maintain current levels.
Per capita CO ₂ emissions in the Local Authority Area	Progress is monitored through other plans and programmes.
Children travelling to school – mode of travel usually used	Maintain the levels we are currently achieving.

What are the risks?

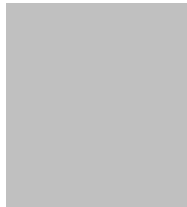
It is important that we know what could go wrong, so that we can set appropriate targets and can work to stop it happening. We considered a wide range of risks, the most serious of which are listed in the table below. The table includes the things we plan to do to help manage these risks.

	Risk	Challenges affected	What we are doing
Finance	We expect a significant reduction in funding in the short and medium term future. Whilst the size of this reduction is not known it is likely to seriously impact on the services we are able to deliver.	All challenges	We considered a wide range of scenarios whilst developing our strategies, this should help us respond to the level of funding that becomes available. We will continue working to understand which investments will help us make the most progress towards meeting our challenges with the funding we receive.
	Traffic levels and carbon emissions will rise as the economy recovers. This will impact on the environment, quality of life and our communities. Minimising these impacts whilst supporting economic recovery will be a challenge, particularly given the significant reduction in funding we expect (see above).	Challenges related to transport's impact on quality of life, traffic growth and congestion and reducing carbon emissions.	The aims and targets we have set will help us ensure that traffic growth remains at a level that will allow us to meet our challenges. By monitoring traffic levels we will be able to monitor the situation and review our plans if necessary.
	If communities do not engage in meeting their own needs or potential partners are unable to contribute funding, the savings associated with these objectives will not be realised. This is particularly important as potential partners are also likely to be facing challenging financial conditions. This may impact on their ability to contribute and may even lead them to seek similar contributions from Somerset County Council.	Challenges related to encouraging communities to meet their own needs and attracting external funding.	Effective and early communication with potential partners will help ensure our plans are based on a good understanding what can be achieved.

Resources	Many new technologies offer cost savings in the long run but require significant up-front investment. However, with significant reductions in funding expected, our ability to make these initial investments is likely to be reduced.	Challenges related to maximising the use of technology.	Considering the costs and benefits of potential investments over the whole plan period (or the life of the infrastructure in some cases) will help us value long term savings.
	Existing partners are likely to be facing challenging financial conditions too, this may impact on their ability to continue to contribute to partnership activities.	Minimising casualties and meeting road safety targets.	Effective and early communication with potential partners will help us understand their ability to work with us.
Political support	Decreased staff numbers, due to expected reductions in funding, could seriously impact on our ability to deliver the improvements necessary to help us meet our challenges.	All challenges	We will continue working to understand what investments will help us make the most progress towards meeting our challenges. This will allow us to make sure the staff we have are doing the most important work.
	Political priorities could change significantly during the plan period, potentially impacting on support for some challenges.	All challenges.	The flexibility in the way we prepare our transport plans (provided by the Local Transport Act 2008) will allow us to review the strategy's ability to support new priorities.
	Vocal communities can create political pressure to make investments that do not provide the greatest possible benefits. For example, vocal communities may be prioritised for investment over more deserving ones. This would mean that our investment buys less progress towards our objectives than it could do.	All challenges and minimising adverse impacts on quality of life in particular. (Also discussed under 'Community support' below)	Building on our use of 'scorecards' to prioritise the investments that fit best with our challenges will help ensure we invest in the most beneficial schemes. Writing the modal strategies that support our strategies and our reviews of transport in Somerset's market towns has helped us understand the

Community support	transport problems Somerset faces. This will allow us to identify where investments will be most beneficial.		
	<p>Some of the most effective and best value ways of reducing congestion (such as smarter choices schemes) are not always very well understood, due to their focus on behavioural change rather than physical works. Our ability to make the best investments may be compromised if this understanding is not developed.</p> <p>Newer areas of work are sometimes seen as less central to our objectives than other more established issues. This could affect the priority afforded to these challenges as the limited funding and resources available are apportioned.</p> <p>With the increased focus on involving communities in delivering services, their support will become increasingly important. If these partners' objectives are not well aligned with our own, their ability to contribute to meeting our challenges could be reduced.</p> <p>Some of the most effective and best value ways of reducing congestion (such as smarter choices schemes) are not always very well</p>	<p>Challenges related to traffic growth and congestion.</p>	<p>We will draw on the growing body of evidence about these measures and quantify the benefits expected from specific investments. This will help us develop understanding of the value of behaviour change measures.</p>
	<p>Challenges related to reducing the negative impacts of transport on health and reducing carbon emissions.</p>	<p>Defining problems and identifying solutions based on our challenges has helped us to avoid focusing unfairly on established areas of work. Using evidence of the importance of new areas of work to quantify their importance will also help ensure they receive the priority they need.</p>	
	<p>All challenges and improving access from rural areas in particular.</p>	<p>Effective and early communication with potential partners will help ensure our plans are based on a good understanding what can be achieved.</p>	
	<p>Challenges related to traffic growth and congestion.</p>	<p>We will draw on the growing body of evidence about these measures and quantify the benefits expected from specific</p>	

Unplanned events	understood, due to their focus on behavioural change rather than physical works. Our ability to make the best investments may be compromised if this understanding is not developed.	investments. This will help us develop understanding of the value of behaviour change measures.
	<p>Extreme weather events, like the heavy snowfall experienced in 2009 and 2010, cause significant damage to our roads and can delay projects. With these events predicted to become more frequent, the impact on maintenance requirements and our ability to deliver a programme of investments is likely to grow.</p> <p>Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and severity of flooding in Somerset. This could damage infrastructure and affect travel in many ways.</p>	<p>We will consider the risk of extreme weather events when planning maintenance activities and new schemes. If forecasts continue to predict the growth of this risk, the mechanisms we use to do this may also have to be reviewed.</p> <p>New developments and transport infrastructure will consider predicted increases in flood risk. Somerset County Council's civil contingency planning work will help us cope with individual flood events.</p>
Changes in legislation	<p>Funding from developers for transport improvements is secured through the planning system, which is vulnerable to legislative change.</p> <p>Measures associated with improving transport are often heavily regulated and could both benefit and suffer from changes in legislation.</p>	<p>Maintaining an understanding of proposals for new legislation will help us plan for changes to legislation. Contributing to discussions about new legislation (before and after its implementation) will be vital to minimise this risk.</p> <p>Maintaining an understanding of proposals for new legislation will help us plan for changes to legislation. Contributing to</p>
	<p>Challenges related to ensuring the transport network is well maintained.</p> <p>Challenges related to attracting external funding.</p> <p>Challenges related to ensuring the transport network is well</p>	



(Recent examples include legislation regarding concessionary fares and the ability to choose which school your child attends). maintained, access from rural areas and minimising traffic growth and congestion. discussions about new legislation (before and after its implementation) will be vital to minimise this risk.

High risk issues and mitigation measures

3 Implementation Context

3.1 The Implementation (Delivery) Plan will set out how we will deliver our transport strategy. It will be a more detailed document looking at how we intend to allocate our resources over the next 3 year period from 2011-14. Importantly, it will also explain how we plan to use additional investment from a range of sources to address Somerset's transport challenges. It is likely that the first implementation plan will focus almost exclusively on using of developer funds, along with any emerging new sources of grant funding, rather than utilising any available Government borrowing approvals.

3.2 Transport investment comes from a variety of different sources. These are explained below:

3.3 Central Government Allocations

3.4 These allocations are calculated on a formulaic basis for each transport authority in England and were agreed in 2006 to provide authorities with some longer-term certainty. There are two parts to the allocation; one element is for maintenance and is used for undertaking planned and reactive maintenance, and one is for wider transport improvement schemes, known as the integrated transport element.

3.5 These allocations are made up of part grant-funding and part borrowing-approvals. At the current time the split for Somerset is approximately 25% grant-funding and 75% supported borrowing. This has significant implications as the council is looking to reduce its overall debt and thus reduce its borrowing.

3.6 Central government is seeking to amend these formulae and questions exist over the future split between grant funding and borrowing approval. However, it looks likely that a formulaic approach to allocations will continue to be used.

3.7 The Former Regional Funding Allocation for Transport (RFA)

3.8 Prior to the change of national government, this pot of money was agreed by authorities across the region to fund large-scale transport projects. The fund covered schemes that cost more than £5M, which in the past included the new bridge and park and ride at Silk Mills, and the Third Way in Taunton. As projects had to be agreed by the region they needed contribute to regional priorities, so investment tended to be focused on the main urban areas in the south west where congestion exists and significant growth is planned.

3.9 The RFA programme was suspended by the new Coalition government and it is not yet clear what form any replacement mechanism will take. However, current proposals for a Regional Growth Fund accessed via the newly formed Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) may provide some scope for major transport investment. Nevertheless, large-scale infrastructure investment is likely to remain focused on supporting economic growth in urban areas and unlocking opportunities for significant development potential.

3.10 Additional Council Funding

3.11 The council can choose to direct some of its own money into transport investment where it sees this as a priority. In recent times the council has put more money into maintenance as well as investing in the Somerset Road Safety Partnership. However, with the significant reduction in council funding anticipated over the next few years it is unlikely that substantial investment will be available in the short-term.

3.12 Developer Funding

3.13 When development takes place the council requires developers to either directly fund, or make contributions to, transport improvements in order to offset any additional travel and traffic generated by the development. In small developments this might be as simple as making sure the new development provides appropriate levels of car and cycle parking and has a safe access onto the existing road, cycle or pedestrian networks. Where developments reduce levels of travel and traffic no additional contributions will be required. However, for larger developments the impact can be far more significant and so contributions are sought to deliver improvements that address this greater magnitude of impact.

3.14 Other Sources

3.15 Other sources of funding currently being discussed include the idea of rewarding councils that enable development to take place. This could take the form of a 'new homes' bonus that would effectively see councils receive extra money for a certain number of years after completion of new development projects. The government has also announced a new Local Sustainable Transport Fund. The fund will challenge local authorities to develop packages of measures that support economic growth and reduce the negative impacts of transport by encouraging people to travel more sustainably.

3.16 These are just two of many potential options being discussed and it remains far from certain what the total funding picture will be in the future.

3.17 There are a number of other sources of funding available, but these tend to be less consistent and arise either on a temporary basis or on a competitive bidding process. For example in past years the government has funded a range of demonstration projects where additional money has been made available to successful bidding authorities. Other examples include large-scale opportunities such as the Community Infrastructure Fund which was made available by government to fund infrastructure needed to unlock significant housing growth, or the funding to look at Eco-town viability for spatial growth proposals. At a more local level this could simply mean taking advantage of funding opportunities with partners who have similar objectives and jointly funding a shared priority. The thing that these funding sources all have in common is that they are sporadic, variable and usually involve a competitive bidding process that is reliant in one way or another on the strength and quality of the council's transport plan.

The Funding Picture in Somerset

3.18 As explained earlier, allocations provided by central government have been one of the the key sources of funding for transport. In the last five years Somerset County Council received £19,619,000 of capital funding for integrated transport improvements and £79,662,000 of capital funding for maintenance work. It is extremely unlikely that future funding will be at these levels. We have tested different levels of reduction and how they could affect our ability to enact our transport policies. This included scenarios ranging from a best case scenario of a 15 per cent reduction and a worst case scenario of a 50 per cent reduction.

3.19 Whatever the reduction is, it will lead to some difficult choices about what we want to do. Our work with communities showed us that highway maintenance is an important priority. However, a reduction of just 21 per cent would mean that if we spend the same amount on maintenance, there would be no funding do anything else. This would mean no improvements to road safety, public transport, parking, walking, cycling or other important areas. Any cut greater than 21 per cent would necessitate reducing the amount of maintenance we do, in addition to cutbacks in other areas.

3.20 We will have to look carefully to understand what we can do to meet our transport challenges. There are some areas that we would not wish to see cut completely, such as road safety, and there are other areas where smaller sums of money can unlock big improvements. For example, the table below shows the high Benefit to Cost Ratios (BCR's) achieved by walking and cycling schemes (the benefits provided for every pound invested). This data shows an average BCR of 19:1 for a range of walking and cycling schemes in the UK, meaning every pound invested produced nineteen pounds worth of benefits.

Study	Study focus/location	Benefit to cost?	Comment
DfT, 2005	London	24.5:1	Canal towpath assessed in terms of levels of walking and cycling commuter use
SQW Consulting, 2008	UK	almost 10:1.	Estimated impacts of five cycling infrastructure projects
Cycling England	England	2.59	Increases in cycling associated with Cycling Demonstration Towns - mortality benefits only.
Sustrans	Bootle	29.3:1	Resurfacing, some new construction, road marking, signing and lighting

Sustrans	Hartlepool	32.5:1	Construction of toucan crossing close to primary and secondary school, with some general infrastructure improvements in immediate vicinity.
Sustrans	New Haven	14.9:1	New shared-use path in an existing grassed verge adjacent to, and set back from, the busy A259 was constructed

3.21 This means that small investments in things like walking and cycling can deliver significant progress towards meeting our transport challenges. Therefore, the final Implementation Plan is likely to concentrate on protecting maintenance spend, while setting aside a smaller amount for continuing to deliver our road safety objectives and completing our sustainable networks as funding allows.

3.22 It is also worth remembering that the Implementation Plan will set out our plans for all types of spending, not just council funding. So while we will be allocating funding from our own sources to deliver specific transport schemes, the Implementation Plan will also be used to guide other investment we can secure over the next 3 years in order to help address the challenges identified in our strategies.

3.23 In summary, a detailed Implementation Plan will need to be finalised once further announcements have been made about anticipated levels of funding. We will need to make decisions based on the priorities of Somerset's community as to where to target the limited resources. We will have to make sure we listen and respond to the calls to continue investing in maintenance, while at the same time trying to address the challenges that Somerset has committed to tackling.

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