Somerset County Council
Transport Policies
Information and Communication Strategy
Part of the Active Travel Strategy

SOMERSET
County Council

August 2012

Executive Summary

This Information and Communication strategy is required to support the Somerset Future Transport Plan and to ensure that we create a culture of better informed travellers. This document is one element of active travel which also includes walking, cycling and school travel and all four are summarised in the Active Travel Strategy.

When information is readily available and in formats that are easy to read and understand, it can help residents and visitors in Somerset to consider new ways to access the things they need. This strategy will help to promote and clarify people's choices as they change in the coming years and will help people to understand the benefits of using alternative modes of transport to the car.

The strategy includes identification of barriers to achieving our desired outcomes, aims and objectives, achievements to date and future options. It also introduces several new policies:

ICS1	Ensuring more opportunities for people to use sustainable transport
ICS2	Making sure people know about sustainable transport options
ICS3	Making sure people can use sustainable transport
ICS4	Helping people understand transport options
ICS5	Helping people decide the best choice of transport and assess the options
ICS6	Helping people find accurate information whilst on the move
ICS7	Continue to work with schools and businesses to develop travel plans

The preferred approach over the Future Transport Plan period is that Somerset County Council and partners should seek to deliver the following elements of the Information and Communications Strategy:

1. Secure increased resources to support travel planning activities. This should include work to further strengthen travel planning requirements for new developments by enshrining those requirements in a Supplementary Planning Document within each District Council Local Development Framework. It should also include identification of resources to further support other organisations, including businesses, schools, communities and residential developments to develop and implement travel plans to increase active and sustainable transport in their local area;

2. Make it easier for people to find their way around when walking, cycling and using public transport. This should include improved information at transport hubs, better network maps and comprehensive signage in urban areas and around key destinations. We must ensure that these things are put in place as

standard in new developments and that they include improved information for people with disabilities;

3. Implement Personal Travel Planning (PTP) projects in selected areas. Some initial assessment work has already been completed to identify suitable locations in some urban areas. New, large residential developments may also offer good opportunities for PTP as incoming residents will be seeking information on their new community and how to get around;

4. Extend and expand our practical training programmes, such as cycle training (adults and children), road safety education, bike maintenance, route planning and bicycle loans;

5. Continue to maintain, add to and improve our website to provide information to help people plan their journeys by foot, bicycle and public transport, including finding cheaper and more convenient fares/routes. Expand our capacity to offer advice and respond to specific enquiries through a wider range of channels, including an investigation of the opportunities offered by new technologies and media;

6. Undertake selective marketing to make people aware of the support services and transport help we can provide; and

7. Seek opportunities to collaborate with other organisations, e.g. health and social care providers, on joint projects to bring more activity into the daily lives of the community, including specialist support for selected groups.

1 Introduction

Information and Communication

In order to make the best transport choices for their journeys, people need to understand what options are available to them and how to use them. This is particularly important when people are planning a journey they have never done before, or if they are considering trying new ways of travelling. Therefore, if we want people to travel in more active ways we need to give them the information they need to get going. This section of the Active Travel Strategy sets out how we will do this.

The following sub-sections explain what this document does and how it is structured.

1.1 What this document does

Most people in Somerset and the UK feel it is important for people to be able to get around without using a car and to be supported and encouraged to do so[1]. 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, there are other methods of transport that are cheaper, healthier and quicker and which do not cause pollution or congestion.

Somerset's Future Transport Plan (and the technical notes that supported its development) sets out a number of challenges developed to help us meet Somerset's transport needs. Creating better informed travellers will help us meet many of these challenges. Better information can help people choose to travel in a way that has less of a negaitve impact on their health, the environment, road casualties, congestion and carbon emissions. Better information can also help us think about new ways of accessing the things we need; using new technologies, accessing services online or working at home.

We also need to make sure we consider how our needs may change in the coming years. Many scientists are now speculating we may reach "peak oil" within 10-20 years[2]. This is a situation where oil resources diminish and become difficult to extract, leading to a dramatic worldwide rise in the price of oil. At best, 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. At worst, it may 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.

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1   Somerset County Council (2010), *Moving Forward Tracking Survey April 2010*
2   See, for example All Party Parliamentary Group on Peak Oil and Gas, www.appgopo.org.uk

The recent Coalition Government Agreement (May 2010) states that, "We will support sustainable travel initiatives, including the promotion of cycling and walking, and will encourage joint working between bus operators and local authorities."

In a March 2010 survey of 600 Somerset residents[3], 59% said that they thought they should take some action personally to reduce their use of the car. 1,100 residents consulted during the preparation for the Future Transport Plan rated seven proposed schemes to improve walking, cycling and public transport services as among the eight most important priorities for the future.

The purpose of this information and communication strategy is:

1. to help people understand the benefits of using modes of travel other than the car for some of their journeys; and
2. to provide the information needed for people to understand what alternatives are available for their journey and how they can use them.

This information must be provided in the right way, so it is available whenever it is needed, useful and easy for everyone to understand.

1.2 How this document is structured

This document begins by looking at why we want to provide more travel information and the barriers standing in our way (section 2). It then explains the aims and objectives we have set (section 3) and the options we have considered (section 4). These options are then tested (section 5) and developed into a preferred strategy (section 6).

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3   Somerset County Council (2010), *Moving Forward Tracking Survey April 2010*

2 Creating informed travellers

This section looks at some of the benefits that having more informed travellers could bring to Somerset. It also sets out some of the barriers that stop us becoming informed travellers. Finally it explains what we are already doing and how well this has worked. It is important to understand all of these things so that what we know what the aims and objectives set out in the next section should be.

2.1 The benefits of informed travellers

In recent years, there has been lots of research into how information and promotion might help people change to different modes of travel. In 2004, the Government published a document called *Smarter Choices – changing the way we travel*[4]. The research for this document identified that car traffic could be reduced by between 10-15% over 10 years by providing people with the right sort of information and encouragement to use other forms of transport.

Between 2004 and 2009, the Government invested money in testing out a Smarter Choices programme in three "Sustainable Travel Towns" – Worcester, Darlington and Peterborough. Each town invested approx £5 million pounds over the 5 years to see if people could be helped to use other forms of transport. The results have been very encouraging, with the number of car trips taken by residents decreasing by an average of 9%, with corresponding increases in walking, cycling and bus use. The greatest effects were seen when improvements to services or built facilities (e.g. cycle lanes) were combined with information, marketing and promotion. The report concluded that Smarter Choices programmes had been very effective and showed very good value for money[5].

In Somerset, we discovered that 42% of our population lived close enough to their place of work to walk there in about half an hour (up to 5km), and a further 12% could cycle there within the same time (up to 10km)[6]. 81% of workers in the South West could access employment by walking or public transport[7], yet 77% usually travel by car. This is a problem because it causes traffic jams on the roads of our urban areas and because people are becoming overweight and unhealthy due to lack of exercise, which is costing our economy millions of pounds every year.

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4   *Cairns, S., Sloman, L., Newson, C., Anable, J., Kirkbride, A. and Goodwin, P. (2004) Smarter Choices – Changing the Way We Travel. London: Department for Transport*

5   Sloman L, Cairns S, Newson C, Anable J, Pridmore A & Goodwin P (2010) *The Effects of Smarter Choice Programmes in the Sustainable Travel Towns: Summary Report*

6   Census 2001

7   DfT Core Accessibility Indicators 2009

Behavioural research [8] suggests that the choices of a particular form of transport (especially the car) is usually a matter of habit. Habits are obstructive and reduce the perception of travel alternatives. The purpose of marketing campaigns or promotional activity is to try and break that habit and to encourage people to reconsider their choices. It has been suggested that the most effective marketing is done when people are undergoing a life change such as moving house or changing job for example before new travel habits are embedded. It is therefore vital that promotional material is available at this time by way of information provided by employers, schools, developers etc which details the availability of sustainable transport modes.

2.2 The barriers that stop us becoming informed travellers

In our survey[9], 41% of people said that improving their health would be a strong reason for them to walk or cycle more often.

Public transport, car sharing and reducing the need to travel through home working, internet shopping or combining trips are also very effective ways to reduce congestion and pollution and save money. 58% of people found saving money and 46% found protecting the environment important reasons for cutting down on their car travel.

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:

- 8% said lack of knowledge of the alternatives was stopping them reducing their car travel;
- 36% said lack of alternatives was a problem; and
- 53% said the presence of viable alternatives would be the most important factor in helping them to change to other modes.

We also know that, in some cases, people think there are no viable alternatives when actually there are. For example, 84% of parents in urban areas thought there was no suitable transport for their children travelling to school when in fact either a public or private bus was available. A further 5% didn't know. We know that, in actual fact, coverage by public or contracted school buses is better than this, indicating that parents aren't always aware of the services that are available to them. So we need to work on providing better information.

The National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey in 2009[10] showed that people in Somerset could not always find the travel information they needed. In particular, there was scope for improvement on:

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8   Verplanken B, Walker I, Davis A, Jurasek M (2008) Context change and Travel Mode choice: Combining the habit discontinuity and self-activation hypotheses. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*

9   Somerset County Council (2010), *Moving Forward Tracking Survey April 2010*

10   www.nhtsurvey.org

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

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.

2.3 Connecting Somerset

Somerset County Council is working together with Devon County Council along with North Somerset, Plymouth City and Torbay councils to provide 100% broadband coverage with a minimum of 2Mbps for all residents by 2020.[11]With successful funding of £31 million from central government, work is now underway to deliver improved broadband for rural Somerset, in particular those rural areas which are unlikely to benefit from commercial broadband investment. Improved connection will allow residents to access on-line information such as bus times, alternative travel mode information and the wealth of information available on Somerset County Council web site. The internet continues to be a driving force in information dissemination. With more access available we hope to use the resources to improve information access.

2.4 What we have done so far

Somerset County Council realised the need for a Smarter Choices programme of information and promotion of alternative travel options during the last Local Transport Plan period (LTP2, 2006 - 2011), in order to tackle rising problems of congestion and pollution. As a result, we created a Smarter Choices team to develop this programme and work with local residents, businesses and schools to help them reduce their car travel. LTP2 contained a number of targets about reducing car travel and promoting alternative, more sustainable options. These included:

1. Reducing the number of children driven to school alone by car from 29.2% to under 28%;
2. Reducing the number of people driving to work alone by car from 54% to 50%; and
3. Increasing the number of cycle trips by 10%.

There were some other targets and indicators the Smarter Choices programme contributed to, including improving air quality in problem areas of Taunton and Yeovil, increasing pedestrian activity in Taunton Town Centre and increasing bus use.

The first thing the team did was to undertake some market research to understand how people in Somerset felt about travel. This was to find out who could reasonably use alternatives to the car for some of their journeys, if they would be willing to do

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11   http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/

so and what information, persuasion and help we could provide to enable them to make the change. We then used this information to develop a programme of marketing, information and practical activities, including:

- Creating a website to provide information on all the different forms of transport available in Somerset – www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk ;
- Working with schools to help them develop travel plans to encourage children and parents to travel to school by healthy, active modes of travel;
- Working with businesses to develop individual and area Travel Plans to help employees and customers cut down their car travel;
- Marketing campaigns to help people understand the opportunities offered by different transport choices, including walking, cycling, car sharing and reducing travel;
- Practical projects such as the Repair and Ride bike maintenance scheme, "Walk on Wednesday" projects in schools, cycle training for adults and children and the www.carsharesomerset.com website, which helps people find other people to share their car journeys with;
- Developing planning guidance and standards to ensure that new developments in Somerset provide the right facilities and environment to enable people to walk, cycle and use public transport;
- Working in partnership with other organisations, such as the NHS, to deliver joint campaigns, such as the Somerset Cycle Challenge; and
- Developing printed materials including a set of 20 walking and cycling maps of Somerset's towns, leaflets and guidance documents.

These were all delivered under a specially created brand called "Moving Forward". Using a single brand for all sustainable travel information helps people recognise opportunities and provides a single place to go for information and advice about all these modes of travel.

The results from these activities have been encouraging. Between 2005 and 2011:

- The number of children driven to school alone by car dropped from 29.2% to 25.03%. This is equivalent to around 2000 cars off the road. If static, these would make a traffic jam around 12km long. Over 90% of schools in Somerset now have their own travel plan and are continuing to work to encourage children to come to school by healthy, active travel methods like walking and cycling;
- The number of people driving to work on their own has fallen from 54% to 51%. This is equivalent to 6,600 people switching to another mode of travel;

- Cycling trips had been growing steadily until Nov 2009, with an average increase of 0.8% each year, until the harsh winter of 2009/early 2010 set things back substantially. We saw a sharp decline in cycling between December and February. The same thing happened in 2010/11, when early Nov/Dec snowfalls and the coldest winter since 1890 sent cycling levels plummeting to nearly half their usual levels. These two winter declines have meant we have fallen substantially short of our target to increase cycling by 10%;
- About 20% of people in Somerset recognise the Moving Forward name and logo and understand they can contact us for information and advice about alternative modes of transport. Around 2000 people visit our website each month;
- We have delivered National Standards cycle training to over 2,000 school children; and
- We distribute around 100,000 free walking and cycling maps each year.

More recently, this evidence, data and understanding has meant the Council has been in a strong position to attract funding from a range of sources. From delivering joint health initiatives with the NHS, promoting the benefits of active travel, through securing a multi-million pound investment for Bridgwater as part of the governments's Local Sustainable Transport Fund[12]; this work has ensured that Somerset continues to secure resources to deliver active travel and behaviour change investment.

This has helped us develop an understanding of what works for Somerset, what we need to do more of and what we need to do differently. The aims and objectives section below uses this information to set out what we need to do in the future.

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12   http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/local-sustainable-transport-fund
     -guidance-on-the-application-process/

3 Aims and objectives

This section explains how we developed our aims and objectives from the understanding of the challenges we face that was developed in the last section. It then explains how we are going to measure our progress towards these objectives.

It is important to have a clear picture of what we need to do in order to make sure our policy delivers the information people in Somerset need.

3.1 Developing our aims and objectives

The previous section set out the challenges we face in creating better informed travellers. This suggests a number of things that we need to include in our aims and objectives.

Our existing work suggested three areas we needed to consider as we moved into the Future Transport Plan period (2011-2026):

1. Providing improved information on sustainable transport options, including new services, facilities and infrastructure;
2. Further promotion of smarter travel choices, so people know what options are available, where to look for information and how to make the best choice of transport (considering health, cost and environmental impacts as well as speed and convenience); and
3. Communicating more effectively with people by making sure information is available when people need it, in a form that they can understand and use. We need to communicate not only with individuals, but also with organisations, businesses and schools.

These three aspects are all interlinked, so they all need to be tackled together to work effectively. There is no point providing excellent information if people do not know how to find it or it is not available when they want it. Similarly, there is no point running a new bus service, or building a cycle path if no one uses it because they do not know about it.

Our work on the barriers that stop us from becoming better informed travellers 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). This suggests we also need to consider:

1. The information we provide to people who are planning journeys, e.g. printed and online timetables, maps, journey planners and information about combining modes of transport; and

2. Information for people who are already on their journey, e.g. direction signs, maps, timetables and information they can access while on the move e.g. by mobile phone.

This work also showed us that sometimes the information is available, but people don't know how to find it. This suggests we also need to consider:

1. The need to promote our services and information resources better and bring them all together in one place where people can go to find all the information they need;
2. Making sure we are providing information in lots of different formats, suitable for different people and that we keep up to date with developments in technology that allow us to provide information in a variety of ways; and
3. The data itself. We cannot provide people with good quality, reliable information unless we have access to accurate, up to date data ourselves. Part of our strategy will need to be to identify the best possible sources of travel information to pass on to our customers.

3.2 Our aims and objectives

We drew all of the information described above together to form a central aim and four supporting objectives that will help us meet this aim:

Aim

To provide information and support to enable people to use a wider range of transport options for some of their journeys, particularly healthy and sustainable alternatives to the private car.

Objective 1 Provide more opportunities for people to use more sustainable transport choices, including reducing travel

Objective 2 Help people understand their transport options and make informed choices.

Objective 3 Make it easier for people to find their way around by walking, cycling and public transport

Objective 4 Support other organisations to manage their own travel better and improve travel opportunities for staff, customers, residents and visitors, including through the planning process.

4 The Policy Approach to Information and Communication

4.1 Developing the Objectives

This section is divided into sub-sections based on our objectives; each sub-section explains the relevant objective in a little more detail before listing some of the different ways we could meet the objectives.

To ensure this strategy develops the best possible solutions, we need to test a variety of ways of meeting its objectives. As such, the options developed include a wide range of suggestions drawn from the evidence discussed above, best practice and our ongoing work in the area.

Objective 1 – Provide more opportunities for people to use more sustainable transport choices, including reducing travel

Many people in Somerset would like to use more sustainable transport options to help them cut costs, improve their health and protect the environment. With fuel prices potentially continually rising over the next 15 years, particularly if we reach a state of Peak Oil, this is set to become more important as time goes on.

Encouraging people to cut down on their car travel where possible helps to cut down traffic congestion, pollution and carbon emissions and reduces the need to spend so much money building new roads and maintaining the existing network. We can also get better value for money out of our transport services and walking/cycling network by encouraging more people to use them.

Policy ICS1 - We will ensure that more opportunities for people to use sustainable transport are available

To do this we could:

- Ensure that appropriate services are available by helping developers, planners and business managers understand what facilities need to be provided to make it easy for people to walk, cycle, car share, use public transport or cut out some of their trips altogether. This could mean everything from providing quality walking and cycling environments in new developments to providing high speed internet access in homes so people can work or shop from home;
- Build on the planning guidance we have already developed to achieve this and will work with the Local Planning Authorities (the District Councils) to make sure it is given due consideration when considering planning applications;
- Work to have the principles in this guidance embedded within Core Strategy documents, giving them more weight in the planning process; and
- Ensure that our own developments provide for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, slowing or restricting space for car traffic if necessary.

Policy ICS2 - We will make sure people know about sustainable transport options

To do this we could:

- Make sure people know about new transport services and facilities in their area by localised marketing and PR; and
- Ensure that developers provide good quality information about transport options to new residents/employees so they can make informed transport choices from the start. This is particularly important as when people move to a new house or job they need to consider afresh how they will travel and are more open to trying different transport choices[13]. Providing useful and encouraging information at this time can be very effective in persuading people to try more sustainable modes.

Policy ICS3 - We will make sure people can use sustainable transport

To do this we could:

- Help people to make the best use of the transport facilities and options available for their journey by providing help and guidance where needed;
- Extend our training programmes, such as cycle training for adults and children and road safety education programmes, to help people stay safe while walking and cycling;
- Seek funding to ensure continued provision of a free bicycle maintenance service in selected businesses who want to encourage staff to cycle to work;
- Continue our recently launched project to lend bicycles to people who would like to try it out before committing to buying one of their own;
- Make sure we provide facilities in our town centres and other major destinations for people who have travelled by sustainable modes. This may include things like benches and rest areas, cycle parking and comfortable places to wait for public transport; and
- Improve the information we provide to help people who currently find travel difficult or too expensive, opening up new options for them. This could include:

  - Building on our website, www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk, to provide more comprehensive information on using different forms of transport including, for example, information on how to find cheaper tickets and discounts on public transport, making bus and train fares more affordable for people;

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13 Dolan et al (2010) MINDSPACE: Influencing behaviour through public policy. Cabinet Office

- Continue responding in person to many individual enquiries received through our website and telephone line, giving advice on wide range of matters, from buying bicycles to taking mobility scooters on trains; and
- Improving and expanding the support we provide. We will extend and improve the information on our website, in particular to provide more information for specialist users, such as students and disabled people, so they can find out about the special discounts and services that might be available to them and what support they can get to use those services. We will continue to promote our website and our advice team, so people know where they can go to get help and advice about their transport choices, and seek to provide this advice in a wider range of accessible formats (see Objectives 2 and 3 below). We will seek to extend our popular cycle training programme and add new programmes where evidence/demand suggests it will be valuable.

> Objective 2 – Help people understand their transport options and make informed choices.

There is a growing body of research that shows that people often jump into their car for journeys through force of habit or because it does not require much thought. It is not always the best option for every journey. People also regularly under-estimate the costs of driving and over-estimate the time, cost and effort it will take to use other options[14].

> **Policy ICS4 -** We will help people understand what transport options might be available for their journey

To do this we could:

- Provide better information about different modes of travel using our website, phone line, printed materials and information provided by other service providers e.g. bus/train companies. As part of this, we will also need to make sure the underlying data is of good quality so the information we provide is as accurate as possible;
- Improve journey planning opportunities and provide more integrated information about combining modes of travel. This could involve things like:

  - better online journey planners that incorporate different modes of travel (including cycling and walking);
  - maps and printed materials showing different modes of travel; and
  - telephone or online advice for people planning journeys.

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14   National Social Marketing Centre (2009) *Case study: Choose how you move*

- Work with partners to provide specialist information and support to people with disabilities and specific travel needs;
- Investigate opportunities to provide travel planning information through new methods e.g. mobile internet applications;
- Investigate opportunities for Personal Travel Planning, where teams of specialist advisers provide one-to-one travel advice to households in an area;
- Strengthen links with other organisations with an interest in promoting alternative forms of travel (e.g. because of their links to health, carbon reduction, local food, service and tourism) to share resources and provide customers with a complete package of information; and
- Create a forum for people to share information about travel opportunities and find others with whom to share their journeys.

> **Policy ICS5 -** We will help people decide the best choice of transport for their journey, to do this we need to help them assess the pros and cons of each option.

To do this we could

- Run information campaigns to help people understand the benefits of active travel for health, money saving, environmental protection and (in some cases) speed and convenience;
- Develop tools to help people and businesses easily assess the costs and benefits of switching some of their journeys from the car to other modes. This would build on our existing work to develop the Travel Change Calculator – a tool on our website that enables people to plug in the details of their journey and measure the cost, calories burnt and carbon emitted using different methods of travel;
- Revise and update our Moving Forward brand and messaging so that it is up to date with current travel attitudes and needs of people in Somerset and speaks to them in a way that is appropriate and effective; and
- Work with partners such as the NHS to provide specific support to people whose health would be improved by a more active lifestyle.

> Objective 3 - Make it easier for people to find their way around by walking, cycling and public transport

It is particularly important for people to be able to find their way around easily when walking, cycling or using public transport, as the consequences of "going wrong" on a small scale are likely to lead to more physical exertion and time lost than it might in a car.

People arriving by public transport generally have to find their way on foot from the train station or bus stop to their final destination. They also need to be able to find timely information on their next transport connection.

People switching from driving to walking or cycling also need extra help to navigate new routes, as the best paths to take on foot or by bike are often very different to the main road routes they may be familiar with in the car. They are likely to be more scenic routes through parks and open spaces that have fewer landmarks and road signs; these may also provide a more direct route as an alternative to following the road network.

All of these make it important for people to be able to find accurate information while on the move, through improving on-the-ground information provision and making better use of existing and emerging technologies we aim to provide more accessible information for all.

Policy ICS6 - We will help people to be able to find accurate information whilst on the move by improving the on-the-ground information provision and making better use of existing and emerging technologies.

This could include:

- Installing pedestrian and cycle-specific signage in urban areas so people can find their way to key destinations and different areas of town. Include travel time estimates by foot and bike to key destinations so people can better judge their journey time and assess their progress;
- Creating integrated network plans showing walking, cycling and public transport networks;
- Providing maps and comprehensive onward transport information at main transport hubs such as bus and rail stations and town centres. Particularly consider how this information can be provided appropriately to travellers with specific needs, such as the mobility or visually impaired, to enable them to travel with independence;
- Investigating the possibility of real time bus information and in-bus displays, or other ways to provide more accurate bus information to passengers;
- Investigating ways of providing or promoting sources of information about transport disruptions and alternative options, potentially similar to Transport for London's traveller text service; and
- Making better use of emerging technologies to provide information that is accessible on the move. This could include things such as mobile apps, GPS (global positioning system), SatNav, mobile internet and social media.

Objective 4 - Support other organisations to manage their own travel better and improve travel opportunities for staff, customers, residents and visitors, including through the planning process.

There are places in Somerset that generate large volumes of traffic, either because they are somewhere lots of people want to go *to* (such as supermarkets, schools or large workplaces), or because they are places lots of people travel *from* (such as large residential developments).

Traffic congestion can get particularly bad around such areas. This has a number of knock-on effects:

- Economic limitations – customers can't get to/from a site, lorries can't get in or out, people waste a lot of time sitting in traffic queues, parking becomes a problem, journey times are unreliable;
- Pollution and health problems – the exhaust fumes from lots of slow-moving, stop-start traffic creates local air problems and an unhealthy environment; and
- Social barriers and safety issues – dense traffic creates a barrier between different community areas, meaning that children and older people are less able to move freely around their neighbourhood.

So it is particularly important to try to reduce car traffic and promote opportunities for sustainable alternatives in these popular areas. The best way to achieve this is by working with people who live, work, manage and visit such areas to find an appropriate local solution to the problems.

> **Policy ICS7 -** We will continue to work with schools and businesses to develop travel plans and distribute comprehensive travel plan guidance to aid this process.

During the LTP2 period, we worked with schools and businesses in Somerset to help them develop travel plans to tackle their transport problems, writing comprehensive travel planning guidance as part of this process. This has proved successful, with single-occupancy car travel to schools and businesses decreasing over that period. We have also begun to support community car reduction initiatives and form business travel plan networks where employers in problematic areas can come together to seek joint solutions to their transport problems.

To take this further during the Future Transport Plan period, we could:

- Support more organisations to develop bespoke individual or area travel plans;
- Provide more support to community groups and grassroots organisations to realise their ideas for reducing car use in their local area;
- Initiate and support the development of more business travel networks to co-operatively tackle transport problems;
- Work with more large residential development managers and residents to develop travel plans for their estates;
- Consider working in partnership with organisations and community groups to attract additional funding to implement travel planning measures;
- Continually revise, update and improve our travel planning guidance and distribute this to organisations to assist their own travel management efforts;

- Use the information on travel planning collected through www.iontravel.co.uk to build up a profile of effective travel planning solutions in different situations. Use this information to inform our investment, advice and the standards and measures we expect to be implemented at new developments;
- Seek opportunities to influence people already undergoing life changes and help them develop sustainable travel habits in their new roles, e.g. by working with home marketing companies, school admissions teams, employment agencies, the NHS and others;
- Develop travel information templates to help visitor attractions, leisure facilities, small businesses, healthcare providers, hotels, etc. provide their customers and visitors with better information about travelling to their site without a car.
- For new developments or expanding sites where a travel plan forms part of a planning agreement, support those developments to implement the required measures as effectively as possible;
- Help monitor the success of their plans through iOnTravel and assist them to refine/improve their plans as necessary; and
- Ensure the required travel plan measures are delivered and monitored according to the agreed timetable.

4.2   Packaging our approach to Information and Communication

The measures in section 4.1 can be broadly categorised into 8 different types of intervention:

- Providing journey planning information;
- Wayfinding;
- Voluntary travel planning;
- New development travel planning;
- Supporting new infrastructure;
- Creating/supporting a "community of travellers";
- Marketing the benefits of sustainable travel; and
- Enabling more transport options.

The options that have been developed from these measured are shown in Tables 1 to 8.

Within each of these categories, the possible measures have been appraised to determine which approach would deliver the best outcomes against our goals and targets. A summary of these appraisals is shown in section 5.

Table 1

		1. Providing journey planning information
Option 1	Continue with existing provision	Provide better information about different modes of travel using our website, phone line, printed materials and information provided by other service providers e.g. bus/train companies. As part of this we will also need to make sure the underlying data is of good quality so that the information we provide is as accurate as possible
Option 2	Expand existing media and outlets	Improve journey planning opportunities and provide more integrated information about different modes of travel (inc cycling and walking combining modes of travel
		Maps and printed materials showing different modes of travel
		Telephone or online advice for people planning journeys
		Strengthen links with other organisations with an interest in promoting alternative forms of travel (e.g. due to their links to health, carbon reduction, local food outlets, services and tourism) to share resources and provide customers with a complete package of information
Option 3	New technologies (inc Option 2)	Investigate opportunities to provide travel planning information through new methods e.g. mobile internet
		Investigate ways of providing or promoting sources of information about transport disruptions and alternative options, potentially similar to Transport for London text service
Option 4	Specialist services	Work with partners to provide special information and support to people with disabilities and specific travel needs.
		Particularly consider how transport information can be provided appropriately to travellers with specific needs, such as the mobility or visually impaired, to enable them to travel independently
Option 5	Personal Travel Planning	Investigate opportunities for personal travel planning where teams of specialist advisors provide one-to-one travel advice to households in an area

Table 2

	Option 1	Continue with existing provision
2. Wayfinding	Option 2	Improve existing provision — Providing maps and comprehensive onward transport information at main transport hubs such bus and rail stations and town centres. Particularly consider how this information can be provided appropriately to travellers with specific needs, such as mobility or visually impaired, to enable them to travel with independence
	Option 3	Signage — Install pedestrian and cycle specific signage in urban areas so people can find their way to key destinations and different areas of town. Include travel time estimates by foot and bike to key destinations so people can better judge their journey times and assess their progress

Create integrated network plans showing walking, cycling and public transport networks |
| | Option 4 | Mobile Technology — Investigate ways of providing or promoting sources of information about transport disruptions and alternative options, potentially similar to Transport for London traveller text service

Make better use of emerging technologies to provide information that is accessible on the move. This could include things such as mobile Apps, GPS, SatNav, mobile internet and social media |
| | Option 5 | Real Time Information — Investigate the possibility of real time bus information and in-bus displays for other ways to provide more accurate bus information to passengers |

Table 3

3. Voluntary travel planning

Option		
Option 1	Continue with existing provision	Continually revise, update and improve our travel planning guidance and distribute this to organisations to assist their own travel management efforts
Option 2	Expand resource to support more voluntary travel plans	Support more organisations to develop bespoke individual or area travel plans
		Work with more large residential development managers and residents to develop travel plans for their estates
Option 3	Supporting smaller and community travel plans	Support more organisations to develop bespoke individual or area travel plans
		Provide more support to community groups and grassroot organisations to realise their ideas for reducing car use in their local area
		Develop travel information templates to help visitor attractions, leisure facilities, small businesses, healthcare providers, hotels etc. provide their customers and visitors with better information about travelling to their site without a car.
Option 4	Grant funding (inc Options 2 &/or 3)	Consider working in partnership with organisations and community groups to attract additional funding to implement travel planning measures

Table 4

4. New development travel planning	**Option 1**	Continue with existing provision	Help make sure services are available by making developers, planners and business managers understand what facilities need to be provided to make it easy for people to walk, cycle, car share, use public transport or cut out some of their trips altogether
			Ensure current planning guidance is easily accessible and well distributed
			Ensure our own developments provide for needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, slowing or restricting car traffic if necessary.
			For new developments/expanding sites where a travel plan forms part of a planning agreement, support those developments to implement required measures effectively, help them monitor the success of their plans through iOnTravel and refine/improve their plans as necessary
	Option 2	Planning guidance + support, including research	Raise awareness of the need to provide facilities in town centres and other major destinations for people who have travelled by sustainable modes. E.g.benches and rest areas, cycle parking and comfortable places to wait for public transport.
			Ensure that developers provide good quality information about transport options to new residents/employees so they can make informed transport choices from the start.
			Use the information on collected through www.iontravel.co.uk to build a profile of effective travel planning solutions. Use this information to inform our investment, advice and the standards and measures we expect to be implemented at new developments.
			Expand and improve our suite of travel planning guidance
	Option 3	Travel planning guidance, enforcement and monitoring	Build on the planning guidance already developed and work with the Local Planning Authorities (LPA's i.e. the district councils) to make sure it is given due consideration when applied to planning applications.
			Work to have the guidance adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by each district, giving them more weight in the planning process
			Ensure travel plan measures are delivered and monitored according to an agreed timetable and work with the LPA's to enforce where necessary
			Extend www.iontravel.co.uk to provide a more comprehensive monitoring and enforcement system

Table 5

5. Marketing benefits of sustainable transport choices	Option 1	Continue with existing provision	Run information campaigns to help people understand the benefits of active travel for health, money saving, environmental protection and, in some cases, speed and convenience
			Develop tools to help people and businesses easily assess the costs and benefits of switching some of their journeys from the car to other modes. This would build on our existing work to develop the Travel Change Calculator - a tool on our website that enables people to type in details of their journey and measure the cost, calories burnt and carbon emitted using different methods of travel
	Option 2	Expand existing programme	Revise and update our Moving Forward brand and messaging so that it is up to date with current travel attitudes and needs of people in Somerset and speaks to them in a way that is appropriate and effective.
			Seek opportunities to influence people already undergoing life changes and help them develop sustainable travel habits in their new roles. E.g. by working with home marketing companies, school admission teams, employment agencies NHS and others.
			Work with partners such as NHS to provide specific support to people whose health would be improved by a more active lifestyle.
	Option 3	Partnerships	Work with partners from the voluntary and community sectors to promote walking as the most sustainable, accessible and healthy form of transport
			Investigate the needs of people with disabilities in relation to mapping and information provision
			Support external promotional campaigns and information
			Promote the Public Right of Way (PRoW) network, leisure walking and green tourism

Table 6

	Option 1	Continue with existing provision	
6. Supporting new infrastructure	Option 2	Local information/ PR campaign	Make sure people know about new and existing transport services and facilities in their area by localising marketing and PR
			Ensure adequate signage for new and existing cycling and walking routes
	Option 3	Comprehensive support package for significant new infrastructure (inc option 2)	Ensure funding is built into the budget for each significant development to allow for complementary awareness and ability raising activities e.g. training, opening events, PR etc.
			Produce new maps or ensure that new routes are added to existing maps promptly

Table 7

		7. Create/support "Community of Travellers"
Option 1	Continue with existing provision	Improve information we provide to help people who currently find travel by sustainable means too difficult or too expensive, opening up new options for them
		Building on our website www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk to provide more comprehensive information on using different forms of transport including, for example, information on how to find cheaper tickets and discounts on public transport, making bus and train fares more affordable and attractive.
		Continue responding in person to many individual enquiries received through our website and telephone line, giving advice on a wide range of issues, from buying bicycles to taking mobility scooters on trains.
Option 2	Business travel networks	Initiate and support development of more business travel networks to co-operatively tackle transport issues.
		Develop travel information templates to help visitor attractions, leisure facilities, small businesses, healthcare providers, hotels etc. provide their customers with better information about travelling to their site without a car
Option 3	Supporting individuals and community and resident groups	Continually revise, update and improve our travel planning guidance and distribute this to organisations to assist their own travel management efforts
		Provide more support to community groups and grassroots organisations to realise their ideas for reducing car use in their local area.
		Work with residents to develop travel plans for their estates
		Create a forum for people to share information about travel opportunities and find others with whom to share their journeys

Table 8

Option 1	Continue with existing provision	Help people to make the best use of the transport facilities and options available for their journey by providing help and guidance where needed
		Continue responding in person to many individual enquiries received through our website and telephone line, giving advice on a wide range of issues, from buying bicycles to taking mobility scooters on trains.
Option 2	Improve information	Extend and improve the information on our website to provide more integrated transport information based on the most reliable data.
		Continue to promote our website and our advice team so that people know where they can go to get help and advice regarding their transport choices
		Seek to provide advice in a wider range of accessible formats
Option 3	Expand/seek future funding for training programmes	Extend our training programmes, such as Bike It, the cycle training programme for adults and children and road safety education programmes, to help people stay safe whilst walking and cycling
		Continue to provide a free bicycle maintenance service (Repair and Ride) in selected businesses who want to encourage staff to cycle to work
		Continue our recently trialled project to lend bicycles to people who would like to try cycling before committing to buy a bike of their own
Option 4	Specialist support for user groups	Provide more information for specialist users, such as students, disabled people and those that need to be more active for health reasons, so they can find out about special discounts and services that might be available to them and what support they can get to use those services.

8. Enabling

5 Appraisal

This section sets out how the options developed above were tested to select the best ones to form the preferred strategy set out in section 6. It begins by describing the process we went through to do this testing before summarising the results of this process.

5.1 The appraisal process

The options developed above were appraised using Somerset County Council's 'Modal Strategy Appraisal Tool' to assess their costs and benefits. The tool measures the performance of options against the factors which informed the development of our objectives using an approach developed from best practise guidance (see the Department for Transport's guidance on future local transport plans). As well as our objectives it is also designed to reflect important factors such as cost and scale of impact. It has been developed to ensure that our strategies provide the best possible value by evaluating all options in a consistent way.

This tool builds on Somerset County Council's successful use of a 'scorecard' spreadsheet in LTP2. It uses a spreadsheet to assess our options against the appraisal categories discussed above. In order to capture the full range of issues, from easily measured factors such as cost, to more difficult ones like journey experience, two types of measurement are employed. Some things are measured by selecting from a range of values and others use more descriptive measures, accompanied by a traffic light system to flag up areas of concern. Results are provided in the form of a numerical score (for the more easily quantified aspects) and a series of written comments and traffic light indicators. It is important that all indicators are properly considered. Particular attention has been paid to ensure those less easily measured factors are not forgotten as we develop our preferred strategy.

5.2   The results of our appraisal

The table below shows the results of the appraisal of each of the proposed measures from 5.2 above.

Those coloured green score the highest (20<)

Those coloured amber score medium (15-20)

Those coloured red score lowest (>15)

It should be remembered, though, that schemes may have additional value beyond those picked up by the numerical scorecard, such as improving the value for money of other schemes, or bringing non-transport related benefits. These will be discussed in the next section.

Proposed Measure	Score
Providing journey planning information 1	16.8
Providing journey planning information 2	12.0
Providing journey planning information 3	16.0
Providing journey planning information 4	10.8
Providing journey planning information 5	22.2
Wayfinding 1	16.0
Wayfinding 2	25.5
Wayfinding 3	20.0
Wayfinding 4	13.7
Wayfinding 5	10.1
Travel Planning 1	22.4
Travel Planning 2	28.2
Travel Planning 3	25.6
Travel Planning 4	14.8
Developing Travel Planning 1	25.4
Developing Travel Planning 2	19.0
Developing Travel Planning 3	38.5
Marketing of benefits 1	10.0
Marketing of benefits 2	5.2
Marketing of benefits 3	16.3
Supporting new infrastructure 1	10.9
Supporting new infrastructure 2	10.5
Supporting new infrastructure 3	5.9
Community of travellers 1	15.3
Community of travellers 2	12.2
Community of travellers 3	12.3
Enabling 1	22.7
Enabling 2	24.1
Enabling 3	31.5
Enabling 4	19.7

6 Preferred strategy

The appraisal above suggests it would be most beneficial to concentrate our efforts on travel planning, providing support and services to enable people to use more transport options and helping people to navigate around while using active/sustainable transport options. Personal Travel Planning also scored highly as an option, while providing sufficient information to help people understand their transport options and plan their journeys is rated as a medium priority.

Proposals to support community groups and specialist groups to access wider transport options (e.g. disabled customers, those with medical needs or population sectors such as students) did not generally score highly. However, this could be brought down by the relatively small numbers of people who might benefit from such schemes and it can be recognised that there would be wider social value to such projects.

Marketing proposals also generally scored low, except when working in partnership with other organisations. However, it should be remembered that marketing activities can help increase the value for money of other schemes, e.g. training courses or new services, by increasing the market for these schemes and hence the number of people using them.

Bearing in mind the above, over the Future Transport Plan period, Somerset County Council and partners should seek to deliver the following Information and Communications Strategy:

1. Securing increased resources to support travel planning activities. This should include work to further strengthen travel planning requirements for new developments by enshrining those requirements in a Supplementary Planning Document within each District Council Local Development Framework. It should also include identification of resources to further support other organisations, including businesses, schools, communities and residential developments to develop and implement travel plans to increase active and sustainable transport in their local area;
2. Make it easier for people to find their way around when walking, cycling and public transport. This should include improved information at transport hubs, better network maps and comprehensive signage in urban areas and around key destinations. We must ensure that these things are put in place as standard in new developments and that they include improved information for people with disabilities.
3. Implement Personal Travel Planning (PTP) projects in selected areas. Some initial assessment work has already been completed to identify suitable locations in some urban areas. New, large residential developments may also offer good opportunities for PTP as incoming residents will be seeking information on their new community and how to get around;
4. Extend and expand our practical training programmes, such as cycle training (adults and children), road safety education, bike maintenance, route planning and bicycle loans;

5.   Continue to maintain, add to and improve our website to provide information to help people plan their journeys by foot, bicycle and public transport, including finding cheaper and more convenient fares/routes. Expand our capacity to offer advice and respond to specific enquiries through a wider range of channels, including an investigation of the opportunities offered by new technologies and media;

6.   Undertake selective marketing to make people aware of the support services and transport help we can provide; and

7.   Seek opportunities to collaborate with other organisations, e.g. health and social care providers, on joint projects to bring more activity into the daily lives of the community, including specialist support for selected groups.