

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

THIS LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN SETS OUT THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC APPROACH TO TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT IN CARMARTHENSHIRE OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS.

In 1998, the Government set out its objective for a new integrated transport policy in the White Paper "A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone". This was followed by the Welsh Transport Policy Statement "Transporting Wales into the Future", which set out how an integrated transport policy is to be pursued in Wales.



Both of these key policy statements, which aim to rationalise the nation's transport systems, highlight the need for Unitary Authorities to prepare Local Transport Plans, as these will provide key elements in the delivery of national policies at the local level.

Significant responsibilities are therefore being placed on local authorities by the Government to deliver the desired outputs on transport efficiency, accessibility and sustainability.

Carmarthenshire County Council fully supports the National Assembly for Wales and the United Kingdom Government in the promotion of sustainable transport, and is keen to play an active role.

Carmarthenshire's Local Transport Plan contains a 5 year programme of actions designed to promote a more accessible and inclusive transport system for all its residents and visitors.

The Local Transport Plan recognises that transport is not a separate service or activity, but is an integral part of everyday life, which underpins all other services:

- the economy needs efficient transport for the distribution of goods and materials,
- communities need transport to travel to work,

leisure, or to visit friends and relatives,

- education requires transport to bring teachers and learners together,
- the promotion of good health requires travel behaviour which minimises accidents and reduces air pollution whilst encouraging safe exercise,
- care for people with poor health requires access to services.

The challenge facing the Authority is therefore that of improving accessibility for those without a car, and encouraging the use of alternatives to cars wherever possible, whilst acknowledging that there are particular needs in the context of sparsely populated rural areas, where the problem of accessibility is often more acute, and likely to remain so.

However in promoting the Government's sustainability agenda, the Authority has an essential role to play in supporting a shift away from the private car to other modes of travel, such as public transport, cycling and walking, and in particular, the greater integration of land use and transport planning.



Land use and new developments play a significant role in the demand for travel, and a consistent approach to land use and development is advocated in the Local Transport Plan. This approach will seek to encourage development which is accessible by all modes of transport and which is or can be easily served by public transport. The evolving Unitary Development Plan will include transport policies and objectives which are entirely consistent with the Local Transport Plan and which aim to reduce the need for private transport.

Carmarthenshire County Council has always recognised that the Local Transport Plan needs to command widespread support, and therefore consultation has been a very important part of the development process. As part of the consultation exercise, the Council produced a Local Transport Plan - Key Issues Discussion Document. For the purpose of public consultation, a Leaflet and Questionnaire was distributed to every householder and business within the County. Consultations have also taken place with neighbouring authorities, the Town and Community Councils, statutory bodies, transport operators and other interested groups through the creation of a Local Transport Forum. A number of transport strategies and plans contained within the overall Local Transport Plan have also been subject to individual public consultation exercises.

Carmarthenshire County Council will continue to cooperate with the National Assembly for Wales; neighbouring Unitary Authorities; South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium; Police; Town and Community Councils; Educational Establishments; Health Authority; Welsh Development Agency; bus, rail and air operators; freight transporters; business and commerce; access groups; walking, riding and cycling groups and other interested groups in the development and implementation of sustainable transport policies.

Carmarthenshire County Council has also been required to submit a Road Traffic Reduction report to the National Assembly. This report is incorporated within this Local Transport Plan as Chapter 8. The Council does not consider it to be realistic to reduce absolute traffic levels in the short term, but has set targets for reducing the rate of growth in traffic. The Council will continue to work to discourage through traffic from residential streets and will employ measures to encourage modal shift on the strategic routes through the development of improved bus services, parking management, travel plans for the Council and other major employers and school travel plans.

Public transport is one of the most important aspects in encouraging modal shift, and more emphasis will be given to improving the reliability, efficiency and quality of bus services provided. Carmarthenshire County Council proposes to enter into Quality Partnerships with local bus operators to improve services on specific transport corridors. The Authority along with neighbouring authorities, will continue to press for improvements to rail services and frequencies on the main line to and from Swansea in terms of line speed enhancements, freight gauge improvements and possible re-opening of stations/halts.

Carmarthenshire County Council recognises the

need to develop a transport system, which is accessible to the whole community. This involves encouraging the use of, and providing the infrastructure to support, walking, cycling, car sharing and public transport. It also involves taking proper account of the need of the disabled, reducing crime and promoting travel awareness for all journeys, but especially for journeys to work and school.

Carmarthenshire County Council will give priority to improving the health of its citizens, especially children and promoting social inclusion in all spheres of life.

The Contents of the Local Transport Plan

The Local Transport Plan contains ten chapters:-

CHAPTER 1 introduces the plan and sets out the new deal for transport in Carmarthenshire.

CHAPTER 2 outlines the broad objectives of the Local Transport Plan, which are required to be consistent with the UK and The National Assembly's integrated transport policy.

The over-arching objectives contained within the Local Transport Plan are:

- to protect and enhance the built and natural environment;
- to improve safety for all travellers;
- to contribute to an efficient economy, and to support sustainable economic growth in appropriate locations;
- to promote accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially those without a car; and
- to promote integration of all forms of transport and land use planning, leading to a better, more efficient transport system.

Alongside these over-arching national objectives the Council has set itself a range of local objectives. These are:

- to improve the health of its citizens and especially children;
- to promote social inclusion;
- to reduce accidents on the highway network;
- to promote safer routes to schools
- to improve the environment;
- to reduce pollution, congestion and the consumption of fossil fuels;

- to improve mobility and accessibility for all our citizens;
- to recognise the particular difficulties experienced by disabled and elderly persons;
- to reduce traffic speeds;
- to increase education and awareness in the community on sustainable transport issues;
- to promote green commuter and school travel plans;
- to promote the Welsh Language by sustaining rural communities;
- to promote economic regeneration of the county's town centres;
- to attract inward investment and job creation.

In order to achieve both the over-arching national objectives and Carmarthenshire's own local objectives the Local Transport Plan contains a number of both strategic and locally based strategies. These strategies are listed in Table 1 along with a short description of how each individual strategy will contribute to the achievement of the above objectives.

CHAPTER 3 contains a sub-regional analysis developed with neighbouring authorities and a more detailed local analysis of the current situation and the problems facing transport in Carmarthenshire.

CHAPTER 4 sets out the extensive consultation process that has been followed in the development of the Local Transport Plan.

CHAPTER 5 Outlines the principal challenges facing Carmarthenshire and sets out a large number of short, medium and long term actions which are aimed at meeting the principal challenges.

CHAPTER 6 Contains the Local Transport Plan policy statements which take into account the Government's new transport policy agenda and the strategic land use policies within the context of:

- The evolving Unitary Development Plan;
- The Council's emerging Local Agenda 21 Strategy;
- The need to reflect changes in National and European policy objectives.

CHAPTER 7 details both the regional and local transport strategies that will be pursued in order to deliver the Local Transport Plan objectives. These are divided into six categories :-

(i) Regional

Regional transport strategies are being developed

through the Council's participation in the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWITCH) and our other neighbouring authorities.

(ii) Network Management

Strategies are being pursued to arrest the decline in the condition of the highway network and to upgrade the County's bridgestock along with improving the public rights of way network.

(iii) Network Development

A number of critically important highway infrastructure projects are being pursued which will reduce congestion in residential streets, provide access to development land, thus creating employment opportunities and contribute to a reduction in road traffic accidents. Key infrastructure projects include:-

In the over £5 million category

- The Ammanford Distributor Road,
- The Gwendraeth Valley Link Road
- Completion of the first phase of the North Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion Link Roads

In the under £5 million category

- The Morfa to Berwick Link,
- The Burry Port Southern Distributor Road
- A number of other urgently required local road safety improvement schemes.

(iv) Public Transport

A number of public transport strategies are being pursued aimed at providing good standards of access, punctuality, reliability, comfort and value in order to meet the needs and expectations of existing and potential service users.

The Council will enter into Quality Partnerships with transport operators to improve service quality, frequency, information and the stability of local service networks.

The Council will actively promote the extension of community transport with Community Councils and voluntary groups.

(v) Integrated Transport

The County Council will continue to pursue a number of integrated transport strategies. Work will continue with the implementation of the Llanelli and Coastal Corridor Sustainable Access Strategy, and bids will be submitted for Transport Grant package funding to implement the recently developed Town Traffic Management Plans for Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford.

In order to reduce the rate of growth in car borne

journeys the Council will introduce a Green Commuter Plan for its staff, and will develop School Travel Plans in partnership with teachers, pupils, governors, parents and the local community.

Walking and cycling strategies are also being pursued in order to promote more healthier lifestyles and to contribute to road traffic reduction targets.

(vi) Road Safety

Road safety strategies will be pursued with a view to achieving or exceeding the Governments national targets for road casualty reduction.

The Council will also produce a Road Safety Plan in partnership with Dyfed Powys Police.

CHAPTER 8 sets out in this plan the Council's targets for reducing the rate of traffic growth in accordance with the requirements of the Road Traffic Reduction Act. The Council will concentrate its efforts in reducing the number of car borne journeys associated with the travel to work and school journey peak flows.

CHAPTER 9 sets out the Council's planned capital and revenue programmes for the implementation of the strategies contained within the Local Transport Plan.

Whilst planned revenue and capital budgets will be applied, progress will depend to a great extent on the Council's ability to be successful in attracting external funding.

CHAPTER 10 contains a series of targets which the Authority will aim to achieve during the 5 year lifetime of the Plan and performance indicators have been identified, which will be used to measure success in achieving, or moving towards, these targets.

The effects of the policies and strategies contained within the Local Transport Plan will be monitored to see if the desired outputs are being achieved. This approach reflects the Governments interest in performance measuring of public services. The Plan will be subject to a full review after 12 months, coinciding with a fundamental Best Value Service Review of transport strategy and implementation during the 2001/2002 financial year.

There are a number of crucial factors for the success of the plan. Failure in any of these areas will seriously prejudice the Plan's success.

For the Plan to be successful there is a need for partnerships at a number of levels. Carmarthenshire County Council will continue to seek partnerships where appropriate to the mutual benefit of the community, the Authority and participating organisations.

Relationship with other Strategies and Plans

Transport is an integral part of everyday life and underpins all of the Council's services. The Local Transport Plan links in with many of the Council's corporate plans and strategies.

The success or otherwise of the Council's corporate strategies and plans depend in whole or in part on the implementation of the policies, plans and programmes contained within the Local Transport Plan. Appendix 5 in this Plan lists a number of the Council's corporate strategies and plans, their overall scope, the services and organisations affected and their relationship with the Local Transport Plan.

Conclusion

The production of Carmarthenshire's first Local Transport Plan has been a challenging process. Every effort has been made to obtain the right balance between the Authority's economic, environmental and social policies in developing a realistic and viable Local Transport Plan, which will promote change and reduce dependence on the private car.

Table 1 Linkages of Transport Plans and Strategies with the Plan's Objectives

Regional Transport Strategies	
Transport Strategy/Plan	Contributions to LTP Objectives
SWITCH	Contributes to the development and implementation of regional transport strategies within South West Wales
The North Carmarthenshire & Ceredigion Link Road.	Contributes to the rural economies of north Carmarthenshire, the Teifi Valley and Ceredigion.Promotes accessibility to rural areas.Reduces journey times and delays caused by slow moving heavy goods vehicles and agricultural machinery. Reduces road accidents.
Local Transport Strategies	
Transport Strategy/Plan	Contributions to LTP Objectives
Maintenance of the Highway Network	Contributes to the efficient movement of people, goods and materials within the County.Improves safety for all road users.
Bridge Key Economic Corridor Access Strategy	Contributes to an efficient economy.Promotes accessibility to everyday services.
Public Rights of Way	The development of the public rights of way network provides opportunities for leisure and promotes healthier lifestyles.Provides an alternative mode of transport, especially in the urban context, thus reducing pollution, congestion and the consumption of fossil fuels,
Ammanford Distributor Road	Reduces congestion in town centre and diverts traffic away from residential streets.Opens up opportunities for environmental improvements. Provides access to development sites, thereby contributing to the economic regeneration of the area.
Gwendraeth Valley Link Road	Reduces congestion in Cross Hands and diverts traffic away from residential streets.Opens up opportunities for environmental improvements. Provides improved access to development sites and the Gwendraeth Valley, thereby contributing to the economic regeneration of the area.
Morfa to Berwick Link Road	Reduces congestion at the Trostre Roundabout and diverts traffic away from Lower Trostre Road.Contributes to the redistribution of traffic flows in Llanelli.Opens up inaccessible development land, thus contributing to economic regeneration and employment opportunities.Provides improved access to the Millennium Coastal Park, Swannery and Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre.
Burry Port Southern Distributor Road	Provides an effective and commodious route to the town centre, station and harbour area, bypassing residential streets.Opens up inaccessible land for both retail and industrial development, thus creating employment opportunities.
Dualling of A4138/M4 Hendy Link Road (long term)	Provides a high quality highway link between Llanelli and the M4 Motorway
Ysgol Glan y Mor School, Burry Port	Provides direct access to three schools from the main A484 Principal Road, thus relieving traffic congestion in narrow residential areas within the town.Provides a safe route to school and a bus parking area adjacent to the school grounds.

(cont.): Table I

Llanelli/Pwll Southern Relief Road	Will divert traffic from residential areas of Pwll and western Llanelli, where traffic is predicted to reach saturation levels. Will allow for the introduction of environmental improvements in traffic relieved areas.
Public Transport Strategies	Improves mobility and accessibility for all citizens. Promotes social inclusion. Reduces pollution, congestion and the consumption of fossil fuels. Reduces the rate of growth of traffic.
The Llanelli & Coastal Corridor Sustainable Access Strategy	Increases access and mobility for all transport users. Increases the efficiency and attractiveness of bus services. Provides intermodal transport hubs at Burry Port and Llanelli Railway stations. Provides dedicated routes for cyclists and pedestrians. Supports the regeneration of Llanelli, Burry Port and the surrounding locality. Contributes towards broader strategies directed towards road traffic reductions and improvements to the environment and air quality.
Town Traffic Management Plans	Provides integrated transport strategies at the local level. Ensures that development takes place in a co-ordinated manner, having regard to the environment and sustainability.
Green Commuter Plans	Reduces congestion, pollution and the consumption of fossil fuel. Reduces dependency on the car.
School Travel Plans	Reduces congestion on routes to school at the start and end of the school day. Improves the health of children who will get more exercise. Reduces car dependency at an early stage in the child's development.
Safe Routes to Schools	Promotes safer routes to schools and reduction in accidents involving children. Encourages children to adopt healthier lifestyles with more exercise through walking and cycling. Reduces dependency on the private car.
Walking	Provides an alternative to the private car, especially for short journeys in urban areas. Improves the health of the county's citizens, especially children.
Cycling	Provides an alternative to the private car, especially for short journeys. Improves the health of the County's citizens, especially children. Opens up opportunities to access leisure facilities. Contributes and supports the development of a National cycle network.
Parking	Contributes to a balanced integrated transport strategy. Makes better use of road space. Enhances accessibility and through that economic development through adequate parking provision.
Freight Partnerships	Contributes to the efficient movement of freight within and through the County. Seeks to protect the built and natural environment.
Motorcycles/Mopeds (Powered Two Wheelers)	Provides a realistic alternative to the car where public transport provision is poor and where cycling and walking are unrealistic options. Makes more efficient use of road-space, parking space and fuel economy compared to single occupant car use.
Road Safety & Traffic Management Strategies	Designed to improve safety for all travellers. Makes more efficient use of road space. Contributes to a reduction in traffic speeds in urban and semi urban areas. Improves mobility and accessibility for all citizens. Contributes to the protection and improvement of the environment.
Education and Awareness	Raises awareness of transport and environmental issues. Encourages people to think about how they make journeys. Provides easy access to information about ways to travel. Promotes walking and cycling as a healthy alternative to the car. Contributes to the reduction of accidents on the highway network. Contributes to the improvement of the environment, by reducing pollution, congestion and the consumption of fossil fuels.