

7b The Bus Strategy

Introduction

The bus provides mobility to those who do not have access to a car and can contribute towards the sustainability objectives of the County Council by reducing car use and pollutant emissions. It is, therefore, a vitally important mode of transport within Cambridgeshire.

In recognition of this, the bus was afforded high priority within the first Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (LTP), which sets down the framework for transport infrastructure provision and services in the County over the period 2001 – 2006. This Bus Strategy has been developed to form an integral part of this Local Transport Plan, covering the period 2004 –11, and key developments are contained in Appendix D of this strategy.

The first Local Transport Plan established the broad objectives for the provision of bus services within the County. The role of the Bus Strategy is to interpret these objectives. In doing so, it identifies:

- (a) how bus services will be provided over the LTP period
- (b) the measures that the County Council in partnership with the District Councils and bus operators will take to foster bus use, and
- (c) how the strategic role of the bus will be developed within and beyond the first LTP period.

The Bus Strategy has been developed using the Bus Policy County Advisory Group and the Transport Forum. Notes from the latest meeting of the Transport Forum are attached as Appendix C. These forums have enabled the County Council to stimulate ideas and test potential policies. Many of these ideas are reflected in this document. Although the Bus Strategy contains a number of clear policies, it is not intended to be a detailed action plan establishing the precise schemes to be implemented, these are contained in Chapter 6 of the LTP. Rather, it establishes the framework around which such actions can be defined.

Background

The need for and direction of the Bus Strategy can be traced through national, regional and local planning and transport policy initiatives.

National Policy

At a national level, Government policy is focused on the achievement of sustainable and integrated transport provision. This was highlighted by the Transport White Paper A New Deal for Transport – Better for Everyone, published in July 1998, the broad objectives of which were clarified by a series of daughter documents, including From Workhorse to Thoroughbred published in March 1999.

Both the White Paper and the daughter paper recognise the vital role that public transport has to play in delivering the objectives of an integrated and sustainable transport system. These include:

- a fairer society, in which all have reasonable access to transport to work, school, shops and for leisure
- protection of the environment and a reduction in pollution
- prosperity, in town and countryside alike, whilst cutting down on congestion
- giving people a choice about how they travel, thus reducing dependence on the private car.

The bus will form the central part of any public transport system and must be promoted if the overall objectives of sustainable travel are to be achieved. It is, for example, efficient in its use of road space and can carry large numbers of people along main transport corridors. It is also flexible in that it can reach into outlying suburbs and rural areas, linking the country and towns. It can also provide connections with other modes of transport.

The White Paper acknowledges that during recent decades, use of buses has declined as car ownership has increased. This limits opportunities for those without a car and perpetuates the need to own and use one. As a central plank in its strategy to increase use of the bus, the Transport Act 2000 (for the first time since the 1985 Transport Act) gives new powers to local authorities to promote bus use. These include Quality Partnerships and Quality Contracts. Under a Quality Partnership, local authorities are able to set standards in relation to quality facilities they provide, e.g. bus lanes and shelters etc. Buses and services not reaching the required standards could be excluded from using them. A Quality Contract might be introduced where the local authority is satisfied that it is the only practicable way to implement their Bus Strategy and also that the scheme, when implemented, will deliver best value. Under these arrangements the Authority may decide that services on particular routes should be put out to tender. Exclusive rights to use such routes may be granted to one or more operators, and others could be excluded from using them.

Regional Policy

Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) sets the framework for development plans in East Anglia until 2016. Reducing reliance on the private car and promoting walking, cycling and public transport are amongst its leading objectives.

The location of new development, where it can take advantage of existing or potentially good quality public transport is a recurrent theme of the Guidance. More specifically, the Guidance suggests that to increase the opportunities for sustainable travel modes, the enhancement of public transport (bus and rail) should be sought through measures to improve reliability, frequency, accessibility (particularly for people with disabilities), coverage and travel information. It also focuses on the need for integration by developing high quality interchanges at and between bus and rail stations and the further development of park and ride sites.

For investment decisions across the transport modes, the Guidance states that in priority sequence, bus based public transport should come after that for walking and cycling, but before the private car.

Local Policy

Local planning and transport policy is contained in the Structure Plan and the LTP.

The Structure Plan covers the period to 2016. It pays particular attention to providing choices for travel, including alternatives to the private car. In these policy areas, the focus will be on how new development can become fully integrated with public transport. The Bus Strategy has an important role in this respect in identifying the nature and type of services that are required and how this can be secured through the development process. For more details of the links between the Strategy and New Developments, see Appendix B.

This LTP covers the period 2004 – 2011 and is the main source of capital funding for transport schemes. To ensure that the Bus Strategy remains an integral part of our LTP it will be updated and reviewed regularly over this period.

Vision and Objectives

The transport vision contained within the first LTP is to establish:

“...an inclusive and integrated transport system that enhances and sustains our economic vitality and our cultural and environmental diversity in a dynamic County.”

Although this objective is to be applied Countywide, the Local Transport Plan recognises that Cambridgeshire is a diverse County and that transport need varies. The Local Transport Plan reflects this by establishing different sets of more detailed objectives for distinct areas within the County. These areas include Cambridge and its surrounding Area, Market towns, rural areas and corridors. It is recognised that those settlements that “look to Peterborough” merit a different approach to that of the other areas, reflecting the inherently different transport policy of that City. These objectives, as they relate to buses, are summarised in Table A7.1:

The purpose of the Bus Strategy is to interpret the general objectives and produce a clear set of policies that will be used to guide bus provision within the LTP period and beyond. The vision that has been established for the Bus Strategy is:

“To provide an efficient and affordable bus service that makes a major contribution to the County’s sustainable transport objectives in terms of transfer of journeys from the car, promoting economic development and providing access to communities.”

To achieve this vision, the key objectives of the Bus Strategy are as follows.

- To improve service frequency, reliability and quality and so make the bus the mode of first choice where viable services can be provided. This could be a mixture of services in and around Cambridge involving concentrating improvements on

routes with the greatest passenger flows to provide a limited number of high frequency services. On such routes, buses would run 10-15 minutes apart during the working week. Outside Cambridge, regular ‘core’ routes would link Cambridge, Peterborough and the Market Towns.

- To provide services, appropriate to the needs of local people and local areas.
- To integrate bus and rail services to provide for seamless journeys.
- To deliver high quality and accurate information systems, both printed and electronic, thus allowing passengers to plan their journeys and have certainty as to service availability.
- To contribute towards the delivery of targets in the LTP and other objectives of the County Council.
- To ensure bus transport is developed to improve the well being of the residents of Cambridgeshire.
- To further develop the Park and Ride system in and around Cambridge in consultation with appropriate District Councils.
- To contribute towards strategic developments within the County.
- To achieve these objectives by establishing targets and monitoring performance.

The Strategy for the County’s rural areas requires some innovative proposals. The connections between transport and social exclusion are well documented, and this has clear implications for the County Council’s Bus Strategy. The Strategy will, therefore, in partnership with bus operators, the Health Authority, District Councils, and others, introduce measures to assist in combating social exclusion. The focus will be in three main areas:

- access to social services (including hospitals)
- access to the labour market, and
- opportunity for social participation (including shopping).

The above objectives will be promoted through a series of policies (detailed in the following sections) and other initiatives such as Market Town Strategies. The definition of the quality of services required by the County Council is conveyed in Appendix A.

Consultation

The public consultation of the Cambridgeshire Bus Strategy took place between 9th February and 30th March 2001. Questionnaires were distributed through road shows, exhibitions, schools, libraries, Council website and mailing to statutory consultees and interested organisations.

Table A7.1 LTP Objectives by Area

Cambridge and surrounding area	Market Towns	Strategic Routes	Rural Area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing car dependency by strengthening radial public transport routes and, where appropriate, rapid transit systems • Reducing car use by developing rural park and ride sites away from the immediate Cambridge area and by developing multi-modal inter-changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing links with main cities and towns • Improving bus provision within and between towns • Providing bus connections with railheads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide high quality bus services • Develop Multi Modal Studies – bus services will play a key role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining bus links with market towns • Improving the level of public transport provision by improving co-ordination between local bus, school and community transport services

Questions 1 and 2 in the Questionnaire asked the respondents whether they support the Overall Vision and Aims of the strategy. Question 3 asked respondents to rank the main policies and actions in order of importance from 9 to 1. The questionnaire also gave respondents an opportunity to include any additional comment on the Strategy.

In total, 564 questionnaires were returned, along with 16 additional letters. The biggest response was from South Cambridgeshire District at 41% with the lowest response from Fenland at 7%.

The overall response to the Vision for the Bus Strategy was very positive. 94% of the responses either 'fully' or 'partly' support the overall vision. Support for the Overall Aims of the Bus Strategy was at a similar scale.

The policy that scored most and that could be considered most important overall was 'Improving standards, quality and frequency of existing services' which scored 3331 out of a maximum potential score of 5013. 29% of the respondents considered this the most important. The policy that was considered least important was 'Development of new ticketing arrangements e.g. through-ticketing, on-line booking, on-street booking etc'. Only 5% of the respondents considered this policy most important. Nevertheless, this latter policy scoring 2209 could still be considered reasonably important. Some of the listed policies are closely related. 'Quality bus routes', 'Core routes' and 'Rural transport' all scored quite evenly.

The respondents also gave additional comments on issues not listed in the questionnaire. Major issues raised were:

- Fares:
 - lower fares
 - more subsidy/concession
- Infrastructure/Facilities:
 - improve bus priority measures
 - improve Cambridge city centre bus station
 - provision for cyclists (including shared bus lanes and cycle lockers)
- Timescale for implementation:
 - anticipate immediate action
- Integrate with other forms of transport, e.g. bus/rail.

Achieving the Objectives – Operational Policies and Practices

The implementation of Bus Strategy policies will be funded through the Council's Revenue Support Grant, with contributions from District Councils, Developers and bus operators. There should be sufficient sources of funding to initiate many of these policies. In reality, financial resources will vary from one year to the next among each of the stakeholders.

The County Council does not operate any bus services itself. Most services within the County are therefore either operated commercially by the bus companies or under contract to the County Council where commercially viable services cannot be provided. As a consequence, the objectives of the Bus Strategy will be achieved in two ways:

- (a) through close partnership working with the bus companies to drive up the quality and range of bus services being operated; and
 - (b) through the provision of additional infrastructure and services by the County Council and its partners, including neighbouring authorities.
- The District Councils, in their roles as local planning authorities and potential funders, are important partners in this process. With other partners, they have a role in helping to tackle problems of deprivation and social exclusion. Other potential sources of funding include the Rural Bus Grant (RBG). This is a Government grant, now in its second 3-year period, specifically aimed at addressing accessibility problems in rural areas of England. Through the policies of the Bus Strategy, its use could now be extended to assist in the provision of minimum service levels in Market Towns. RBG spending will also focus on routes into Cambridge and other smaller urban areas, together with bus-rail links. Emphasis will be placed on the need for these routes to have minimum support and contribute to a modal shift from car to public transport. Another significant source of funding is developer contributions. By securing, through negotiation with developers, measures that improve the quality of bus services, the County Council will continue laying the foundations for the sustainable operation of any new developments.
- The following paragraphs identify the policies the Council will follow to achieve the objectives of the LTP and the Bus Strategy. These are divided into Strategic Policies and Operational Policies and will be applied as appropriate to the 4 geographic areas identified in the LTP.
- As indicated previously, this document is not a detailed action plan. Detailed proposals will need to be developed throughout the life of the LTP and will need to be judged against two criteria:
- Affordability – the extent to which service improvements or infrastructure provision can be afforded and such expenditure offers good value for money when judged against the objectives, and
 - Effectiveness – the extent to which proposed provision meets the objectives of the Local Transport Plan and the Bus Strategy.

Operational Policies

These policies establish the Council's longer-term aspirations for buses and must be implemented if the objectives of the LTP are to be achieved. These policies will be developed in close partnership with the District Councils and the bus companies and aim to provide a high quality, accessible bus system offering seamless, frequent and reliable journeys. The Council will therefore do the following.

- i. Develop Quality Partnership agreements with the bus companies.
- ii. Develop and seek to implement (in consultation with bus operators) a Cambridge network; a series of high quality routes offering a "turn-up and ride" facility within Cambridge. It is essential that buses on this network are associated with quality, therefore image and branding will be among the key features of the system. Integration of existing and proposed park and ride sites will be a primary function of these routes.
- iii. Develop (in consultation with bus operators) a series of core routes throughout the County. Core routes link major centres, including Cambridge and Peterborough, and the Market Towns and, where possible, links between Market Towns. Regular services (i.e. operating at least every hour during the day on weekdays) will be operated on these routes. Consideration will be given to promoting the development of Sunday and evening services on these routes.

- iv. Implement measures to improve the reliability and running times of services, initially on the core routes. These will include where appropriate, bus priorities, bus lanes and dedicated routes.
- v. Develop, for longer-term implementation, rapid transit schemes within the Cambridge Area consisting of segregated and non-segregated sections.
- vi. Ensure that major new residential and employment developments are provided with fast, frequent and high quality bus services to Cambridge and surrounding Market Towns at the start of the development process.
- vii. Establish minimum service levels for Market Towns secured through the planning process.
- viii. Develop rural transport interchange sites with parking and/or feeder services to the core route network, especially in relation to Market Towns.
- ix. Develop, in conjunction with Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, the public transport information system (i.e. PTI 2000) to ensure that bus information and travel enquiries are available using a variety of media, including the Internet. This system could be further developed, allowing real time information to be displayed, illustrating the exact location of a bus at any given time.
- x. Develop and fund appropriate community transport schemes as part of the overall public transport network.
- xi. Develop a Countywide promotional strategy for buses. This will be developed through full market research and will focus on market segmentation and appropriate delivery media.
- xii. Provide, in partnership with the bus companies, full and accurate timetable information at roadside stops, including the development of a comprehensive system of real time bus information.
- xiii. Based on 1998 figures, take the appropriate measures to meet the Council's PSA target in relation to bus patronage. This is to increase patronage on bus services entering Cambridge on a daily basis by 20% by 2003/04 through the above initiatives..
- xiv. Seek to introduce Quality Contracts where improved services cannot be delivered through Quality Partnerships.
- xv. Work with Market Town Strategies to improve bus infrastructure, including bus stations and facilities.

Operational Practices

These practices will govern how we manage and develop bus services across the County on a day-to-day basis. Over the life of the plan, the Council will do the following.

- i. Develop bus/bus and bus/rail Interchange through ticketing initiatives in partnership with the bus and train operating companies.
- ii. Develop inter-availability of bus tickets in partnership with the bus companies.
- iii. Promote new and innovative means of ticketing including an extension of multi-journey and on-street ticketing.
- iv. Develop a Countywide concessionary fares scheme (with the District Councils) for those of pensionable age and other eligible groups, which leaves no group worse off.
- v. Develop with the bus companies, further cross-routing through Cambridge of rural services to minimise the need for stopping capacity in the city centre.
- vi. Establish minimum service levels, ensuring that communities with a population exceeding 100 will have at least one return service per week to the local market town.

- vii. Ensure that services are available to give access for pupils to schools and colleges within the agreed levels of provision.
- viii. Aid further development of existing schemes and fund new dial-a-ride schemes to accommodate those unable to use conventional buses.
- ix. Seek, in partnership with the bus companies, to improve "full accessibility for all vehicles".
- x. Promote bus services that suit commuting patterns between those areas unserved by rail with local rail stations.
- xi. Ensure that contracted services are subject to conditions relating to vehicle quality, performance measures and staff training.

Measuring our performance

Success in delivery of the Bus Strategy objectives will be measured using the set of focussed performance indicators outlined below. These cover the areas of subsidy levels, patronage levels, modal split, accessibility, customer satisfaction and service provision.

Key indicators that relate to the Bus Strategy are:

- i. number of passengers per annum (BVPI)¹
- ii. cost per passenger journey for supported services (BVPI)
- iii. number of passengers satisfied with local bus provision (BVPI)
- iv. number of passengers satisfied with local bus information (BVPI)
- v. the percentage of bus services running on time, and
- vi. the percentage of scheduled bus services operating (bus operators will be expected to provide this data).

In addition to the above, the County Council will also carry out non-user market research to determine wider public perception. The County Council, in seeking designation as a pilot Public Service Agreement authority, has set itself the following target:

to achieve a 20% increase in bus usage on journeys into/out of Cambridge from 1998/99 base patronage levels by 2003.

Intermediate targets have also been established for 2001/2 (i.e. 5%) and 2002/3 (i.e. 14%).

Indicators vi and vii relate to service reliability. The Council will work closely with operators to establish these so that information on bus reliability is publicly available.

The County Council will monitor the performance of the Bus Strategy in achieving its objectives on an annual basis. Data for the indicators detailed in Section 5.2 will be published in the LTP Annual Monitoring Report and, for BVPIs, the County Council's Best Value Performance Plan. Where appropriate, the County Council will also measure customer satisfaction with service provision through its Citizen's Panel and through customer suggestions and complaints.

Achieving the Objectives – Action

The Bus Strategy is linked to the LTP timescale, which covers the period 2001 – 2006. However, in the longer term it is envisaged that buses will be developed further, with an appropriate rapid transit system, to provide a level of public transport that offers a real alternative to car travel for a high proportion of journeys. The measures set out in this Bus Strategy will contribute to this longer-term vision. Table A7.2 is an outline action plan for the

Table A7.2 Outline Action Plan for Implementing the Strategy

<i>Timescale*</i>	<i>Action</i>
Within 3 months	Appoint a Quality Partnership and Customer Relations Manager to work with stakeholders and large employers to work towards PSA target.
Within 6 months	Identify, with the co-operation of the bus operators a potential network for the Cambridge Bus Network system.
Within 6 months	Identify, with the co-operation of the bus operators, current and potential core routes (for more details see Quality Partnership Arrangements on page 16)
	Identify a marketing strategy (including promotion of Sunday and evening services)
Within 6 months	Initiate study on potential interchange sites.
Within 9 months	Agree with operator(s) initial Quality Partnership(s).
Within 9 months	Produce county-wide promotion strategy for buses.
Within 12 months	Initiate first minimum service levels for Market towns.
Within 12 months	Monitor and review non-core routes in line with new policies.
Within 12 months	Initiate first Quality Partnership(s).
Within 18 months	Implement a trial real time information scheme.
	Implement Smart Card Scheme.
Within 18 months	Implement initial measures to improve reliability on core routes.
Within 18 months & ongoing	Implement programme of infrastructure improvements on Cambridge Network and Core routes.
Within 24 months	Ensure that travel enquiries can be made via the internet for bus, rail and coach services.

* from publication of draft Strategy

first 2 years of this period. For the purposes of this document it is intended as a guide only. It will form the basis for more detailed action plan to be developed by stakeholders (including district councils, bus operators, etc). It is envisaged that the plan will be updated annually.

Appendix A

Bus Service Standards

Introduction

If bus services are going to provide a mode of choice then service standards have to be improved. Responsibility for making these improvements involves a number of organisations and has to be taken into account within the Bus Strategy. There are four main factors involved:

- service reliability
- information provision
- vehicle standards, and
- customer care.

The last includes both quality and state of vehicles and attention to passengers by staff, thus involving operators and their staff, and the other parts of the total journey package which are the responsibility of the local authorities.

Evidence from work in other areas indicates that it is a combination of improvements that are important. The Transport Act 2000 introduces the possibility of a degree of regulation. Nevertheless, bus operators will continue to operate the majority of services on a commercial basis. This has important consequences upon staffing and investment policies. This suggests that the County Council should be working in partnership with bus operators to introduce a package of measures on any given route or corridor. The Transport Act defines such an arrangement as a Quality Partnership.

Service Reliability

There are two aspects to this issue. There are the factors that cause unreliability, and these have to be addressed. There is also the question of public perception of bus service reliability. As was shown by a survey undertaken as part of the Best Value Review, bus services are perceived to be more unreliable by non-users than by users. This issue, too, has to be addressed by monitoring services and publicising performance data.

Local authorities, bus operators, other organisations, and the public all have a role to play in making the improvements necessary to overcome these factors and influence public perception.

1. Congestion: This occurs in both urban areas and on major routes in rural areas. The latter are frequently the responsibility of the Highways Agency and it will be necessary to encourage this organisation in developing schemes to overcome congestion for buses. Measures will depend upon the specific problems in any area. In order to identify these, the County Council will require quantitative evidence from the operators and other organisations, for example, the police and bus users or their representatives. Operators have a responsibility to ensure that their timetables reflect operating conditions.

2. Enforcement: If these measures are to have any practical effect, then enforcement is crucial. Badly or illegally parked vehicles can have a serious deleterious effect upon bus services. Successful Quality Partnerships in other parts of the country have included police participation to ensure appropriate levels of enforcement. The County Council already part funds traffic wardens in Cambridge City. This principle could be extended as part of a Quality Partnership.

3. Cambridge Issues: The County Council will examine the current overall provision of buses entering and leaving the city central area to determine if modifications or more major changes to the proportion of through buses to terminating buses would deliver three specific improvements. These would be to:

- improve the overall efficiency of operation, thus saving time
- explore how new through cross-city and new cross-sub regional public transport links could be created

- estimate the consequential reduction in congestion problems in the Drummer Street area and consider consequential impacts elsewhere.

Although this and other measures will relieve Drummer Street Bus Station, further consideration will have to be given to its future development and possible relocation. The existing bus station cannot accommodate the potential growth in bus traffic and the consequential growth in bus numbers.

4. Traffic Accidents: The manner in which accidents are dealt with and, in particular, the aftermath needs to be considered. Where an accident closes a major route or reduces its capacity, the emergency services need to consider ways in which bus services can be given priority over other traffic.

5. Staffing: All operators, at least in the southern part of Cambridgeshire, are experiencing staff shortages. This is caused partly by recruitment problems, but the failure to retain staff is also important. There are a number of reasons why retention is an issue. The causes include wage levels, the unsocial hours worked in transport, and stress resulting from driving in congested conditions and by passenger attitude. Because the companies are operating in a commercial environment, it is difficult for them to increase wage levels. Staffing difficulties are also being experienced by other service sector organisations in Cambridge area. These will need to be addressed by the planning authorities, who will have to find ways of encouraging the provision of low cost housing.

Perception: In order to improve the public perception of bus services, the public needs to be informed of actual performance. Currently, too much weight is given to anecdotal evidence. A greater degree of monitoring will both indicate which services are particularly prone to unreliability and identify specific areas or times of congestion. The Authority is, therefore, establishing reliability targets, in consultation with bus operators, and will be publishing performance results.

Information Provision

The provision of information is important in encouraging the bus services. A number of approaches should be used. These will include:

- telephone enquiry lines
- timetable booklets and leaflets, and
- roadside timetable information.

Internet, including information in both standard timetable format and in the form of journey planners

Real time information, both at bus stops and in places where significant numbers of prospective passengers may congregate, such as larger retail centres and places of work. This information could also be provided through the Internet.

Telephone Enquiry Lines: A system has been introduced involving a common number across the United Kingdom linking into local call centres. The County Council has developed a database to provide Cambridgeshire data for the regional system. This database will be used for other promotional purposes.

Timetable Booklets: The County Council currently publishes a series of area booklets covering all bus services and giving details of other public transport services. It is intended that these should act as a reference volume, particularly useful for operators' enquiry offices, libraries, and tourist information centres. Some members of the public also find such publications of value. It is envisaged that the County Council will continue to produce these booklets. Operators have an important role to play in

ensuring that the information is accurate and, if possible, agreeing on appropriate service change dates.

Timetable Leaflets: The County Council and individual operators currently produce timetable leaflets. These are produced in a variety of styles to suit particular requirements. It is not intended to seek a standard format at present but quality criteria could be set which operators will be expected to meet. Criteria could, for example, include details of font type and the inclusion of complementary services. It is hoped that this can be done as part of a partnership, covering other issues such as leaflet distribution. In the event of an operator failing to meet the standards, the County Council may, using powers under the Transport Act 2000, produce necessary leaflets and recharge the cost to the operator in question. The Public Transport Information database will be important in providing data for this work. This should enable resources to be devoted to producing community leaflets. These are leaflets giving details of routes and times serving a particular community, rather than in the standard block timetable format. Many people find the latter difficult to understand. The community type leaflet has proved popular in the past but resource constraints have prevented their wide scale adoption recently.

Roadside Information: Currently roadside timetable cases are owned and maintained by both the County Council and operators. There is scope to bring this into an information partnership with a contractor, which could be an operator, providing and maintaining all the cases, either across the county or in specific areas. It should be possible to improve the format, adopting a "bus times from this point" style as opposed to standard timetable, using the Public Transport Information database. This should also enable the number of such cases to be increased. However, it should be noted that the value of such information is limited to certain types of route. On frequent routes, information giving detailed times can be both confusing and unnecessary although information about routes may be valuable. On irregular routes, it is unlikely that a prospective passenger will turn up at a bus stop on the off chance of a bus coming. They will want to know in advance when the bus runs, and it is in such areas that the community timetable is invaluable. It is on routes that run on a regular basis, half-hourly or hourly, where the roadside information is particularly useful.

Internet Information: Currently the County Council and Stagecoach have timetables on the internet. As noted in the section on telephone enquiry lines, there are plans to extend the availability of this information to the general public. The internet should, in the longer term, have a role to play with regard to real time information (see below).

Real Time Information: Consideration is being given to the provision of real time information, in partnership with the operators, on a number of possible pilot routes. This trial will test the equipment and it will also give the opportunity to discover passenger reaction to this scheme. It is expected to give prospective passengers greater assurance when waiting for buses and ensure that passengers are given information when problems occur. Signs at bus stations and stops will transmit details. It will be interesting to see if the outcomes noted in other areas is repeated in Cambridge, namely that passengers believe that services become more reliable after its installation, even when there is no substantial change. In the longer term, it is expected that signs can be installed in major stores and employment centres. Information could also be disseminated through the internet. Advantage can be taken of the system to give buses priority at traffic lights and giving operators greater control by being able to know the location of all their vehicles. Data can also be used for monitoring reliability.

Figure A7.3 Quality Partnership Arrangements

Nature of Action & Timescale	County Council Action	Operator(s) Action
Initiating a scheme	County proposes a scheme, it must then consult with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operator or operators affected • Other transport authorities • Passenger user organisations • The Traffic Commissioner • The chief police officer • Anyone else thought to be appropriate It must also be advertised in the local press	Respond to the County Council consultation
↓ ↓		
Reach agreement on the nature of the scheme	Provision can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus priority measures, such as bus lanes of traffic light schemes • Use of a Park & Ride site • Bus shelters • Information arrangements Agree with operator or operators specific growth targets and consequent developments	Provision can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle standards • Customer care procedures • Service frequency • Information Provision The latter two cannot be part of a formal Quality Partnership agreement Agree specific growth targets and consequent developments
↓ ↓		
Within 14 days of the scheme being agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the information in at least one local newspaper • Give notice to the operators • Give Notice to the Traffic Commissioner 	
↓ ↓		
Introduction of scheme	Provision of agreed facilities	Provision of agreed facilities
↓ ↓		
Each year during the partnership	Monitor target achievement Agree any necessary amendments Implement agreed improvements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better information • Improved bus stop facilities 	Monitor target achievement Agree any necessary amendments Implement agreed improvements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved vehicle standards • Increased frequency
↓ ↓		
Two/three years into the scheme	Relaunch the partnership agreement with significant enhancements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Real time information system • Provision of a rural interchange or mini park & ride site 	Relaunch the partnership agreement with significant enhancements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major service enhancement • Taking over contracted journeys on a commercial basis
↓ ↓		
Completion of scheme after five years	Agree new partnership taking into account the meeting of targets. This could involve new infrastructure provision	Agree new partnership taking into account the meeting of targets. This could involve enhance vehicle and service provision

Table A7.4 Minimum Service Levels for Residential Development

<i>Time of day</i>	<i>Interurban Service</i>	<i>Local Service</i>
Monday to Friday peak	Every 15 minutes	Every 30 minutes
Monday to Friday off peak	Every 20 minutes	Every 30 minutes
Evening	Hourly	Hourly
Saturdays	30 minutes	Hourly
Sundays	Hourly or better during shopping hours	Every 2 hours or better during shopping hours

All of these systems are in use or, as regards to real time information, in the process of being developed. It can be seen that there is scope for the development of a partnership between the County Council and operators to develop the use of all means of providing information. This should be linked with the County Council’s other promotional activities.

Vehicle Standards

Much progress has been made with the introduction of low floor single deckers but more consideration needs to be given to vehicle types. For example, on some of the increasingly busy routes, double deckers continue to be needed. New double deckers will be low floor but a careful assessment needs to be made of seating arrangements. Some of the new vehicles introduced into London, with few seats on the lower deck, would seem to be unsuitable for Cambridge conditions. Another aid for the prospective passenger is the destination display. This needs to be clear and informative.

Different vehicle types will have different emission characteristics. In future, consideration will have to be given to ensuring that buses, particularly those operating into the central areas of Cambridge, are fitted with low exhaust emission equipment.

Customer Care

On bus services, the main interface with the customer is the driver. Larger operators are developing customer care training, which can include undertaking NVQ courses. The main problem is that with staff shortages and turnover running at present levels, it is difficult to allow time for training. The turnover level can lead to other problems. Drivers are uncertain of routes and stops, this leads to late running and increasing pressure on the driver.

There will be greater opportunities for suggestions and complaints. If the image of public transport is to be improved, procedures and timescales for dealing expeditiously with these must be agreed and maintained. This applies to both operators and the local authorities. Some of the issues can be overcome if appropriate consultation procedures are adopted. The County Council and the operators need to develop this.

Customer care goes beyond what happens on the bus. It should include provision made for the passenger before and after the bus journey. Bus stops must be easily accessible for both pedestrians and cyclists. Safety and security will be paramount, so paths and waiting areas must be well lit, with shelters provided at major stops. Stops on core routes and other significant stops on other routes should have raised kerbs to make them suitable for low floor buses. The County Council will be seeking to develop Rural Interchanges. These could involve provision for car, as well as cycle, parking, and catering for those linking with services by car or feeder bus.

Conclusions

These measures can be implemented through the development of Quality Partnerships and this is illustrated in Figure A7.3. An important feature of the Quality Partnership is the package approach. A combination of improvements to a service usually results in greater growth. If an operator or operators are unable or unwilling to invest appropriately in a route, the County Council will have to consider introducing a Quality Contract.

Appendix B

Expectations of Bus Provision from New Developments

In order to meet the objectives set in the Local Transport Plan and the Bus Strategy, the County Council will assess the impact of new developments carefully and secure appropriate improvements to transport infrastructure and bus services alongside such development. This Appendix details the bus provision that the County Council would expect to secure through this process and the means by which such provision should be made.

The transport impact of new development will be assessed on the basis of a transport impact assessment produced by developers. The type of bus services and infrastructure that the Council expects to secure will depend upon the type of development, which can broadly be divided into residential and commercial.

To derive the maximum benefit from developers contributions the sums secured through planning obligations will be directed towards funding measures found in the Market Town strategies that the County Council are developing in partnership with the District Councils. For new development in Cambridge City the sums will be secured in line with the Corridor Area Transport Plans that form the Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Cambridge Local Plan. All of these documents contain specific measures to enhance bus service improvements. The scale of the proposed new development will relate directly to the additional travel needs that it generates and will therefore correspond to the level of the planning obligation to be sought in each case. Where development is proposed in areas not covered by a Market Town strategy then a judgement will have to be made by the County Council as to what specific service improvements are required.

This approach should ensure that bus service improvements, needed to respond to additional pressures arising from new development, are provided in an integrated fashion and complement measures to be implemented as part of the Local Transport Plan process. The above methodology can be applied to all types of new development.

It is essential that all new development relates well to the bus service network. This may be achieved through service improvements secured as planning obligations. It is also very important that bus services can access new development such as housing. In discussion with the bus operators, bus stops should be safely and conveniently located on the public highway where new development cannot be directly accessed by new bus services. Improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities may also be required to allow safe access to the new bus stops.

Residential Development

For developments of up to 2,500 dwellings contributions will be sought in line with the Market Town Strategies and Area Corridor approach noted above. This methodology should meet the service levels required in Table A7.4.

For developments larger than 2,500 dwellings, including the new settlement required for the Cambridge sub-region, contributions to the Market Town Strategies may not be appropriate and specific service improvements funded by the developer may be required. Such improvements will be identified in discussions between the County Council and the local bus operator(s). The service levels will need to meet those listed in Table A7.4.

Non-Residential Development

When there is an overall increase in travel demand resulting from new development there is likely to be increased demand made on bus services. Therefore when this is the case it is reasonable to seek planning obligations to improve bus services that can meet the travel needs of those travelling to the new development.

A wide range new development falls into the category of non-residential development. New offices, new research and development sites, new retail development including foodstores, new or expanded hospital and healthcare services are just some examples of non-residential development that can be served by bus as a mode of transport.

The County Council's view of the level of bus service improvements required to allow these new developments to operate sustainably will be informed by the Transport Assessments submitted in support of the development proposals.

In addition to the improvements to bus services that will be funded by the developer, new non-residential sites will be expected to implement green travel plans that will set specific targets to reduce private car use to a site by 10%-30% depending on the size and location of the development. The bus will play a significant role in providing for this reduction.

Appendix C

Transport Forum Notes

The third Cambridgeshire Transport Forum was held at the Maltings, Ely on 29 November 2000. The Forum was attended by over 70 delegates from a variety of backgrounds. The purpose was to discuss the development of the transport system in the County over the next ten years and the role that the bus should play. The results of the Forum have been incorporated into the Bus Strategy.

The transport system in 2010

Forum delegates were asked to consider the development of the transport system in the County and to produce a vision of what they thought it should provide for in the year 2010. The key expectations of the transport system were as follows:

- a bus system which travellers wish to use rather than their cars
- a system which is flexible and can accommodate alternative forms of transport
- a more inclusive transport system that can be used conveniently by all, regardless of age, disability, etc.
- a system that balances the use of cars with buses and trains, with the most appropriate modes being used
- a cleaner, less polluting system
- a balance between rural and urban transport provision
- a system that is safer for all to use
- a system that takes account of existing and new development and provides for both, and
- a system that provides for high frequency, reliable bus services in all areas.

The role of the bus

Delegates were then asked to consider the specific role that the bus would have in providing for this vision of transport in 2010. Key points that were raised were as follows:

- provision of a hierarchy of services, with mainline or core services accompanied by feeder services
- better multi-modal local interchanges, particularly to serve Cambridge
- publicity and information, particularly in real time
- incentives should be provided to use the bus and not to use the car
- services should reflect what people actually need
- community transport should be developed and has a vital role where the bus can not operate viably
- improved shelters and seating should be provided on all routes
- multi-modal integrated ticketing should be developed as well as electronic pre-purchase of ticketing to speed up boarding times, thus increasing reliability
- buses should be given priority on roads where necessary
- high capacity mass transit systems should provide for needs in densely populated areas such as Cambridge
- bus provision should focus on key areas of demand and come before new developments, and
- buses in Cambridge should offer a 'turn up and go' system.

How to achieve the objectives

Delegates were finally asked to identify what may need to be done to allow the bus to play its full role in the future transport system. A number of key suggestions were made as follows:

- integrate policies, particularly those relating to land use and transport
- encourage a review of legislation (such as the Competition Act) where it may inhibit the development of bus services

- undertake monitoring to identify why people do and don't use the bus
- encourage integration between operators and modes of travel
- local authorities should maintain some control over the services that are provided, and
- improve significantly the amount of bus priorities.

Appendix D

This Appendix to our Bus Strategy produced in 2001 sets out the developments we have made in producing the public transport framework contained in Chapter 6 of the LTP.

Introduction

The need to develop a framework for future public transport provision has become necessary due to significant pressures on our public transport budgets. These pressures are mainly due to large increases in tender prices (averaging 22% on last year's prices), and a number of service withdrawals from the commercial network. To ensure best use of limited resources, a framework is required that ensures funding is directed to services meeting strategic objectives. It should be noted that approximately 80% of bus services in the county are currently provided on a commercial basis, and any developing framework will need to reflect this.

The emerging Structure Plan places an emphasis on developing "high quality public transport corridors" in support of sustainable development. Policy P8/6 of the Plan, as amended by Supplement 21 put to the recent Examination in Public states:

"High quality public transport services will be identified in bus strategies and developed across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Key elements will include:

- A network of high quality bus services
 - Within urban areas of Cambridge and Peterborough, with priority over other motor traffic
 - As high frequency, direct services concentrated on main corridors between the cities and the market towns, with segregated lanes and bus priorities where required to avoid congestion
- Good local services for market towns and feeder services linking rural areas to urban centres
- Community transport to meet social needs."

The future framework for public transport provision is contained in Chapter 6 of the Local Transport Plan (LTP), which is consistent with the above policy, ensures that major new developments will be served by good public transport. The framework will cover commercial services, tendered services and all forms of community transport. It will be used to provide a lead for operators whilst recognising the freedom of operators to register services. The framework will also guide investment in physical infrastructure, such as bus priority measures and interchange facilities.

The overall aim of the framework is to improve transport accessibility. In some cases this will mean that we need to change the way we provide some of our services. Where services are not cost effective, attempts will be made to provide alternative forms of transport to meet local needs (e.g. community transport and demand responsive transport) although it has to be recognised that this may not always be possible. School transport services

will not be affected by the framework, although there may be effects for some pupils travelling on regular services.

Proposed Framework

The Bus Strategy has been developed as part of this Local Transport Plan, which aims to guide infrastructure provision up to 2011. The proposals have been supported through the public consultation on this LTP. Bus operators and the Bus Strategy Reference Group have also been consulted.

A framework for the Bus Strategy is detailed in Chapter 6 (and described in further detail later in this appendix). The framework is supported by specific criteria to ensure best use of resources. A business planning approach is being taken towards the Strategy's development under 4 major themes, consistent with Structure Plan policy. The business planning approach means that all infrastructure and service improvements will be assessed on how well they make use of available resources. It should be noted that the approach has been developed in consultation with Environment and Transport Spokesmen and Transport and Waste Service Development Group.

i) High quality public transport corridors

A number of key corridors in the County have been identified. Business cases are being developed (see LTP Appendix 6) to identify where infrastructure improvements such as outer Park&Ride/rural interchanges and bus priority measures etc, will be introduced in line with improved bus services to maximise the effectiveness of improvements. Where possible, and subject to funding issues, services on these corridors will be half hourly or better, although this level of service may not be possible on some more rural corridors. The business cases will also assess the potential for growth on each corridor and the level of public funding needed over time (if any).

ii) Cambridge and its hinterland

The network in Cambridge City is largely provided on a commercial basis. Nevertheless, the Strategy will seek to complement the existing commercial network by services and providing linkages to the proposed Rapid Transit system within the centre of Cambridge. A prioritised programme of improvements to routes will be developed, including new bus priority measures, improved bus infrastructure, better timetable information (including real time information) and, where appropriate, increased frequency of services and quality of buses.

In addition the Strategy will seek to develop bus services in necklace villages surrounding Cambridge (subject to ensuring value for money) and promote the use of community transport schemes to complement conventional services and ensure access is improved for all sectors of the community.

iii) Market towns

To date Market Town Transport Strategies have been developed for St Neots, March and Ely and are nearing completion for Wisbech and Huntingdon and Godmanchester. Improving access and mobility is a key issue for these strategies. Where feasible, and subject to financial considerations, local services will be developed which will be integrated with corridor services, future park and ride and, where appropriate, railway stations. Appropriate infrastructure will be introduced in market towns in support of bus services.

iv) Rural areas

Business cases will be developed for rural areas with a view to developing a number of solutions, including:

- examining non-conventional forms of public transport, such as minibuses, taxis and demand responsive buses combined with rural interchanges to connect the more rural areas with key bus corridors
- continuing to develop community transport so as to serve a wider community
- the continued provision of socially necessary bus services, both to connect to transport corridors and to serve areas not covered by these corridors
- connecting interchanges with corridors.

Criteria for supporting services

As stated earlier, 80% of bus services in the county are provided on a commercial basis. However, operators are consolidating their commercial operations and, although we can expect expansion of bus services on key corridors, there will be continued pressure for public funding intervention elsewhere and at the margins. In order to prioritise public investment in bus services, a consistent decision framework is required. The suggested criteria are detailed below:

Criteria for developing and prioritising bus services

We will continue to provide financial support for non-commercial bus services, using the following criteria.

1 Ability to meet existing LTP objectives

(a) Modal shift:

supported services should

- contribute towards LTP targets for buses, and
- contribute towards stabilising traffic entering the market towns and Cambridge.

(b) Contributes towards social inclusion and accessibility:

supported services should

- provide connections to cities/market towns/corridors
- contribute towards increasing the percentage of rural households with access to public transport, and
- help to address overall social conditions.

2 Value for money and cost:

We will support services where

- they are moving towards becoming self-supporting
- the total cost of supporting a particular service does not take up too great a proportion of the total available budget, and
- the subsidy cost does not usually exceed £2 per passenger journey (at 2003 prices)²

Taking the Strategy Forward

This approach has been considered by Transport and Waste Service Development Group. This approach has been endorsed by Cabinet as a framework to be included as part of this LTP.

¹ Best Value Performance Indicator

² Note that this figure is used as a guide and all services will be considered on their merits

