ACCESS FOR ALL

Local Transport Plan Review

Medway Moving Forward

MEDWAY'S LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN
2006 - 2011

Medway
COUNCIL

December 2004
Environment and Frontline Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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MEMBERS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

| Cllr Baker | Cllr Davis | Cllr Hunter | Cllr Maisey | Cllr Webber |
| Conservative | Labour | Conservative | Conservative | Liberal Democrat |

1. The review

1.1 At the meeting of the Environment and Front Line Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 May 2004, members decided to undertake a review to actively seek views of a number of key stakeholders in the community to inform the Local Transport Plan. Its terms of reference were agreed as follows:

`The member task group will take evidence from six to ten groups of key stakeholders. This stage is aimed at achieving a consensus of opinion from the groups involved prior to the production of the draft Local Transport Plan'

2. Focus for the review

2.1 As the issues contained in the Local Transport Plan are many and varied it was decided that a tighter focus for the review was important to ensure that value was added by the Member Review Team.

2.2 Following the first meeting of the Review Team on 14 September 2004 `**accessibility'** was chosen as a key area for focus and investigation. This is a new and fundamental government requirement for the new Local Transport Plan and presents a challenge for both members and officers. The needs of **all** residents in Medway need to be identified being mindful of socially excluded groups.

2.3   The Review Team aimed to identify –

❖   the issues around accessibility in relation to work, education, healthcare, leisure and shopping;

❖   potential solutions to the problems; and

❖   prospective partners for Medway Council to work with to help deliver those solutions.

BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

1.   Accessibility context – national perspective

1.1   The government guidance on accessibility planning in Local Transport
         Plans gives the following as a summary context:

SUMMARY

- Improving accessibility to jobs and services helps meet national and local objectives including promoting social inclusion, economic regeneration and welfare to work, reducing health inequalities and improving participation and attendance in education
- Local authorities have an important role to play in improving accessibility by:

    ✓ Implementing specific accessibility-related transport schemes and initiatives through planning, delivering and managing the local public transport, highways, cycle, footway and rights of way networks
    ✓ Integrating and mainstreaming accessibility considerations into their wider transport strategies, policies and programmes
    ✓ Integrating and mainstreaming accessibility objectives across the planning and delivery of the authority's wider policy areas and within the corporate centre; and
    ✓ Influencing partners' policy and scheme delivery so that accessibility considerations are taken into account

- Other bodies, particularly those with responsibilities for planning, siting, delivering and managing key public services and those with responsibilities for assisting people into work, have an equally important role to play

- The primary purpose of accessibility planning is to promote social inclusion by improving the ability of disadvantaged groups and areas to access the job opportunities and essential public services that they need. It should be based on an improved assessment of accessibility problems and the joined-up planning and delivery of transport and other services

- Accessibility planning should:

    ➢ Lead to a greater understanding of travel and accessibility needs, by both transport authorities and their partners
    ➢ Deliver real outcomes for the people who need them most
    ➢ Facilitate the efficient and effective use of resources and
    ➢ Aid progress towards the achievement of national and local objectives and targets for all partners

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2.   Underlying principles

2.1   During 2002 and 2003 the Government's Social Exclusion Unit carried out a study of the role of transport in the lives of disadvantaged groups. The final report, `Making the Connections', published in 2003, highlighted how people's ability to access places of work, learning, health care, shopping and other opportunities can significantly impact on their quality of life and on their life chances. Action taken to improve accessibility provides benefits not only for individuals and the community at large, but also for providers of other services. This is because accessibility improvements lead to improved economic, educational, health and social inclusion outcomes.

2.2   Transport is a key factor in influencing accessibility. It can make a significant contribution to the successful delivery of policy initiatives, including in the areas of economic development, education, social services, public health and leisure. To maximise these benefits, local transport planning generally, and accessibility planning in particular, needs to be `joined up' with the wider national and local planning and policy framework in other sectors. 'Making the Connections' thus recommended that local transport authorities should be required to carry out accessibility planning as part of their Local Transport Plan work.

2.3   As `Making the Connections' stresses, helping to ensure that people can access jobs and services is not just a matter of improving local transport. Other bodies, in particular those involved in spatial planning, health care, education and welfare to work, can benefit significantly from improved accessibility, in terms of the effectiveness of the services they offer, and these bodies have an important role to play. They can in particular ensure that facilities, such as hospitals, GP surgeries and schools are located in sites which are accessible by means other than by car, especially public transport, and that services are delivered in a way, and at times, that increase users' accessibility.

2.4   Officers are now working on the development of an accessibility strategy, in parallel with the development of the 2005 Local Transport Plan. The first step, as indicated in the guidance (on accessibility planning in Local Transport Plans – Department for Transport), is to prepare an assessment of accessibility, based on analysis of user groups (based on demographic, economic and other data), destinations, and transport networks. The government has commissioned an accessibility mapping and modelling software tool to assist local authorities in these accessibility assessments, a copy of which will be made available to each local transport authority. Regrettably supply of this software is now over two months late, which has prevented a timely start being made on the work. Officers are also developing partnerships with organisations representing the main areas of health, employment, education, and key user groups such as the elderly, young people, and disabled people. This phase, which is being carried out by an independent consultant with expertise in the field, has been

carefully linked with this review and with the Medway Strategic Partnership. Once the initial assessments have been carried out with the designated software, a fuller review of accessibility will be undertaken with the partner organisations, and action programmes to tackle problems will then be drawn up jointly.

3.   Accessibility situation – the local context

3.1   Officers are working on developing an accessibility strategy to be submitted with the Local Transport Plan. The strategy will follow the staged process suggested by the Department of Transport Accessibility Guidelines as follows:-

Stage 1 – strategic accessibility assessment (includes strategic mapping, linking with partnerships and prioritisation of issues) -

Stage 2 – local accessibility assessments to guide the delivery of schemes and initiatives

Stage 3 – option appraisal and identification of resources

Stage 4 – accessibility plan preparation

Stage 5 – performance monitoring

3.2   As part of the strategy officers will be using the accessibility mapping software provided by the Department of Transport. The destinations to be measured are places of employment, educational establishments, health services, shopping and leisure facilities.   As previously stated there has so far been a two month delay in obtaining this software, which has meant that the commencement of mapping of accessibility has been delayed. However, work has started to identify the immediate priorities. Officers are using their existing knowledge of the area as well as information on car ownership, demographic and economic data to highlight the issues.

3.3   Existing knowledge of the local area suggests that residents in the rural areas and socially deprived wards have particular difficulty in accessing services. Some of these issues have been addressed through the Rural Bus Challenge. In addition, the recruitment of a Rural Transport Officer will help to develop this work. Information on car ownership has also been used to identify areas where high proportions of residents have no access to a car. These are mainly socially deprived wards in urban areas but this needs to be offset against the transport services and location of facilities in the area, which is the purpose of accessibility mapping.

3.4   An independent consultant has been employed to establish initial partnerships and identify their immediate priorities. Links have been made with health, education, local employers and key groups accessing services. It is intended that officers will develop this work and an area

network of partners will be established who will work together to improve accessibility issues.

3.5   As part of the strategy officers intend to establish the main priorities and work on one area at a time. The area wide issues will also be taken into account at each stage. As well as looking at public and community transport issues officers will be looking at accessibility through walking and cycling and for those residents who have impaired mobility. The relative accessibility of sites will also be considered for all significant planning applications. Developers will be expected to ensure that their site is accessible and improve accessibility where appropriate through planning agreements.

3.6   Government guidelines suggest the need to work across local authority boundaries and this is evident in the Medway area. The local Primary Care Trust covers Swale as well as Medway and patients are regularly travelling to the Medway Maritime Hospital from as far away as the Isle of Sheppey. Officers also need to look at where Medway residents are accessing services. Food and leisure services located outside of the Medway area may be more accessible for some residents.

3.7   A provisional accessibility strategy will be submitted with the Local Transport Plan in July 2005. A full version will be submitted to the Department of Transport by the end of November 2005.

4.   Review Team terminology

4.1   The Member Review Team decided to concentrate on access to work, education, healthcare, leisure and shopping with the intention of complementing the work being done by officers in this regard.

4.2   The Environment and Front Line Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the option of workplace charging, as part of the findings from the Traffic and Road Safety Best Value review in April 2003. Although this option was part of the review it was subsequently discarded by the Cabinet in January 2004.

4.2.1   **Medway Mobility (dial-a-ride)**

The Member Review Team discussed the above scheme with a number of witnesses who attended to give evidence.

- *Medway Mobility (dial-a-ride) is*

  A weekly bus service specially designed for people in the Medway area who:

  ❖ Are frail and elderly
  ❖ Have a disability

Medway Mobility is operated by A.S.D. Coaches on behalf of Medway Council.

- *How it works*

  Medway Mobility takes people from their home to the centres of Chatham, Rochester, Strood or Gillingham and also services Medway Maritime Hospital and Hempstead Valley. It operates from a different area each day of the week. The bus collects the passenger from between 09.30 and 10.00 and returns between 12.30 and 13.30. The experienced driver will give help getting on or off the bus and the buses are wheelchair friendly, having easy access. The journey needs to be booked, by telephone, at least a day in advance.

- *Who can use it*

  Any person living in Medway who has difficulties using ordinary buses may apply. The initial application must be by completing an application form (available from council offices). The form then needs to be signed by the person's District Nurse, Care Manager, Warden or someone similar. Once it is returned to Medway Council a pass is issued. Medway 20:20 (concessionary fare) card holders may use the service at the normal fare of 20p single trip and 40p return.

- *The areas it covers*

  Monday
  Grain, Stoke, Allhallows, St Mary Hoo, High Halstow, Hoo and Chattenden, Twydall, Gillingham and Brompton

  Tuesday
  Cliffe, Cliffe Woods, Cooling, Wainscott, Lodge Hill and Upnor, Parkwood and Rainham

  Wednesday
  Halling, Cuxton, Strood and Frindsbury, Hempstead, Wigmore and Gillingham

  Thursday
  Borstal, Rochester and Chatham (West)

  Friday
  Walderslade, Lordswood, Wayfield, Princes Park, Luton and Davis Estate

4.2.2 **Shopmobility**

- *Who can use it*

  This is a scheme whereby anyone with a disability is able to hire a wheelchair or scooter from the Brook car park in Chatham at no cost.

- *How it works*

  The scooter or wheelchair may be pre-booked up to one week in advance and there is no limit to the length of time that shoppers use them. They can be used to allow members of the public to shop in any part of the Medway towns but they do need to be returned to the Brook car park between the hours of 9.30 and 4.30 Monday to Saturday.

  Staff at the Brook car park ensure that the scooters are fully charged when hired out and that they are cleaned and maintained to ensure they are in good working order.

METHODOLOGY AND INFORMATION GATHERING EVENTS

1. It was agreed that there would be four evidence sessions which are set out below with evidence sought from the persons mentioned:

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12 October 2004

Debasish Sen – MIR -Representative of small businesses
Derek Lynch - Medway Access Group
Surinder Dhindsa - Ethnic Minority Forum (did not attend)
Daniel Painter - Medway Youth Parliament
Phil Crowe – Clinical Services Manager - Medway Ambulance Trust

26 October 2004

Kay Sharp - Kent Association for the Blind (did not attend – comments sent to Debasish Sen)
Ralph Tebbutt - Medway Pensioners Forum
Mathew Macdonald - Representative from Health and Community
Professor Reed - University of Greenwich (sent written comments)

11 November 2004

Sue Wood -BAE Systems (as a major employer) – did not attend
Ray Blackwell - Sustrans
Kevin Hawkins - Arriva
A representative from Tesco invited but did not attend

18 November 2004

Ian Buck - Medway Cycle Forum
Bill Gillespie - Medway Primary Care Trust (sent written evidence)
Linda Russell - Job Centre (sent written evidence)
Teresa Curteis – Regional School Travel Advisor
Geoff Walters - Public Transport Manager (sent written evidence)
Neil Vincent – Transport Planning Assistant
Keith Hanshaw – Head of Traffic Management, Safety and Parking

On **23 November 2004** a meeting of the task group was held to consider the written evidence provided by the following and to form conclusions on the review:

Parish Councils
Geoff Walters
Job Centre
Medway Primary Care Trust
University of Greenwich

MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.   Access to Work

1.1.   Many jobseekers experience difficulties accessing interviews and attending their jobs for various reasons, however, the availability and affordability of transport is a key issue. In some cases problems with staff recruitment and retention can be a result of lack of transport to employers' sites. Similarly, lack of access to appropriate and convenient transport can be the barrier that prevents individuals from returning to work.

1.2   The objective of Jobcentre Plus, the delivery arm of the Department for Work and Pensions, is "to promote opportunity and independence for all" and help deliver the welfare to work agenda. It does this by helping people of working age to find work and get any benefits they are entitled to, and by offering a dedicated service to employers to fill their vacancies quickly and effectively. Jobcentre Plus has also signed an accord with the Local Government Association (LGA) to promote the importance of partnership working between Jobcentre Plus offices and local authorities, and is in the process of developing a toolkit on partnership working, which was due to be launched in June 2004. Having checked with the LGA recently, however, this document has not yet been produced.

1.3.   Jobcentre Plus Districts and local offices have an important role to play in the delivery of accessibility planning. They can do this by: working with local authority transport officers to identify accessibility problems that are making it difficult for jobseekers to secure employment; working with them to secure funding, deliver and monitor sustainable and locally appropriate solutions to transport problems and sharing and extending good practice.

1.4.   The Review Team took evidence from the chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses in Medway and received written evidence from the Job Centre.

> *"The issues faced start from when we are looking to attract people to an interview. There are access problems. Sometimes they don't get to the interview or when they are offered a job they have problems due to the fact that public transport is difficult from where they live. A lot of people I have been employing are young people who don't have their own car so they are reliant on public transport which is infrequent"*.
> *Debasish Sen, Chairman Federation of Small Businesses*

> *"Medway City Estate only has good links between the towns at peak times. A poor service during the day limits part time workers. Training on the estate for instance often starts at 10.00 a.m. and finishes early which means it is difficult for clients to attend".*
> *Debasish Sen, Chairman Federation of Small Businesses*

> *"Better, affordable, public transport is needed".*
> *Dr Anita Sims, Medway NHS*

"We have diversified from just building cycle lanes. We do Travelsmart programmes, like I mentioned has happened in Frome, where we work with an authority and talk to everyone in an area, say for instance somewhere like Hempstead. We would first measure how much cycling and walking takes place, then we go in and explain what could be done, make people aware of routes etc. and then monitor how this progresses".

Ray Blackwell, Sustrans

"Work accessibility – a lot of people have to use taxis but these are a very expensive alternative and few people can afford them. This is due in part to the poor reliability and irregularity of other public transport. It doesn't allow the choice of independent travel even though disabled people may be capable of achieving it. That in turn often means that paid employment could not be a viable proposition".

Derek Lynch, Medway Access Group

Recommendations:
That officers work on the feasibility of the following and report their findings to the November 2005 meeting of the Environment and Frontline Services Committee:

(1)   A fully costed proposal is developed by the Transport for Medway (TfM) Programme Manager and Public Transport Manager working with bus companies, setting out options for improving the bus service to areas of employment, in particular Medway City Estate, Knight Road estate and Gillingham business park.

(2)   Partnerships be built with major local employers to promote alternatives to private cars for journeys to work and develop work place travel plans.

(3)   The introduction of a Travelsmart scheme in an area in Medway, working in partnership with Sustrans, suggesting ways of attracting funding for such a scheme.

Financial implications:
It would be proposed that part of the funding for the above would be through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding and other capital and revenue sources to be identified.

Timescale:
(1)   To fit in with TfM study programme
(2)   Ongoing within LTP period, with progress being monitored by the Local Transport Partnership
(3)   Within LTP period

Government target/strategy:
(1)   Improving transport availability[1]
       Contributes to priorities set out in Medway's Economic Strategy (1999-2010)

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[1] p63 Guidance on accessibility planning in local transport plans

2. Access to Healthcare & Leisure

2.1 Providing health services that are of consistently high quality and responsive to the needs of the patient lies at the heart of the Government's vision of a modern and dependable health service. Ensuring that people can access those services when they need them is crucial to good health.

2.2 Improving access to health care, particularly for those from disadvantaged groups and areas, can contribute to good health by helping to ensure that appointments are not missed and that medical help is sought at an early opportunity. It is also recognised that, for some, the inability to access work and key services contributes to poor health and reinforces health inequalities and other forms of disadvantage that persist across England.

2.3 Improving access to leisure facilities, and promotion of cycling and walking, can help to encourage a healthier lifestyle and support the government's aim to increase levels of physical activity for both adults and children. The Department of Health and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport launched a consultation, C*hoosing Health? Choosing Activity*, on these issues in May 2004.

2.4 *Tackling Health Inequalities: A Programme for Action*, published in July 2003, emphasises that health service providers, with primary Care Trusts in the lead, will have a key role in supporting transport planners and contributing to the accessibility planning process.

2.5 In order to understand the issues of access to healthcare the Review Team took account of written evidence from the Chief Executive of Medway's Primary Care Trust. Evidence was also taken from a representative from Medway Cycle Forum, a representative of Health and Community Services Directorate's Mental Health Team and a representative from the Ambulance Service.

"The Medway Maritime Hospital is fairly well served by a regular, though not always reliable, bus service. Unfortunately many visually impaired individuals have to travel to Maidstone General Hospital which, without a car, is a nightmare journey. Many of these people are over 80 years old. This can result in an individual paying as much as £30 to travel using a volunteer from HANDS (a volunteer group based in New Road, Chatham)."

Derek Lynch, Medway Access Group

"At work we have a huge problem providing healthcare in respect of access. The Ambulance Service performance target as laid down by central government is that we have to attend `red calls' within 8 minutes. This is achievable but very tight. If there is a problem on the M20 which corresponds to the M2 and then to the A2 Medway Towns is a no-go area.

The worst time of day for us is between 7.00-9.30 a.m. and then 4.00-6.30 p.m."

Phil Crowe, Clinical Services Manager, Ambulance Service

"I think we can work together in partnership (referring to the Ambulance Service). I have been trying to make inroads into coming along to your planning meetings to give an input with the other two services (Fire and Police). We have come up against a full stop. Swale Council are pretty effective in this. Unfortunately in Medway we don't seem to be getting that input. It would be helpful to be invited along when there are planning issues/housing developments as they can encroach on free access of the highways."

Phil Crowe, Clinical Services Manager, Ambulance Service

" I understand that 10% of outpatient appointments are missed due to problems with public transport. That costs the NHS £250m a year nationally, this will also have a very obvious effect on people's health. There could be something around setting a benchmark around missed appointments as a result of poor transport and look at improving that."

Matthew Macdonald, Mental Health Co-ordinator, Medway Council

"For the NHS it is important that both workforce and patients are able to access safe, reliable and reasonably priced services."

Dr Anita Sims, Medway NHS

"There will also be a need for a service to transport the increasing number of students to their leisure `haunts' in the region during the evenings."

Professor Reed, University of Greenwich

"We have a good and active voluntary sector in Medway to provide services to the community. Often they are just lacking a bit of pump priming to this and there is no-one to co-ordinate it and promote it."

Matthew Macdonald, Mental Health Co-ordinator, Medway Council

"To be quite frank although we appreciate we should contact students promoting cycling but have not pursued this yet – we recognise we should do. I think this is a missed opportunity."

Neil Vincent, Senior Transport Planner (Accessibility), Medway Council

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Recommendations:

That officers work on the feasibility of the following and report their findings to the November 2005 meeting of the Environment and Frontline Services Committee:

(4)   A proposal for working in partnership with bus companies, the voluntary sector and the health service be developed on the issue of access to healthcare with a view to responding more adequately to patients' transport needs.

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(5)   The Ambulance Service being afforded the same access to planning applications as other emergency services in order that they may make their own comment on them.

(6)   A partnership being set up with further education providers and the bus companies to assess the transport needs of students and develop proposals to address those needs.

Financial implications:

(4)   It would be proposed that part of the funding for the above would be through the Local Transport Plan funding and other capital and revenue sources to be identified.

(5)   No financial implications

(6)   No specific financial implications other than officer time.

Timescale:

(4)   To fit in with the Transport for Medway study programme

(5)   Immediate

(6)   Within Local Transport Plan timescale, with progress being monitored by the Local Transport Partnership

Government target/strategy:

(4)   Improving the bus network and coverage[2]

(5)   Improved information and better partnership working[3]

(6)   Improving the bus network and coverage[4]

3.   Access to Education

3.1   The government is committed to an inclusive education system that provides all pupils with the opportunity to meet their full potential. The ability to access educational facilities is central to the aim of ensuring that pupils and students are able to participate and remain in education and achieve the results they deserve. The principles of accessibility planning can help local authorities and their partners meet these aims by improving access to schools and Further Education institutions, by public transport, walking and cycling, and other locations such as those providing pre-school learning, adult education and skills training.

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[4] p47 Making the Connections: Final report on Transport and Social Exclusion
[5] p56 Making the Connections: Final report on Transport and Social Exclusion
[6] p47 Making the Connections: Final report on Transport and Social Exclusion

3.2   Travel costs may cause financial difficulties for families on low incomes that are not entitled to free transport (ie within 3 miles from their nearest suitable school), and where there are concerns about children's ability to walk or cycle safely, particularly where there are several children. Also, increasing numbers of families exercise 'parental preference' and do not send their children to the nearest appropriate school. Lack of support for children of parents exercising parental preference effectively means that those from low-income families are less able to exercise choice. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) wants children to attend their neighbourhood school: that is why their policies are focused on improving every school so that parents are satisfied with standards. There is an obvious conflict of policy between government departments with education encouraging greater choice in schools, therefore encouraging potentially longer journeys and more complex patterns of movement associated with the school run. In contrast there is a government transport policy requiring reduction in congestion and promotion of more sustainable modes of transport.

3.3   DfES is encouraging schools to offer a much wider range of activities outside the standard school day. This includes breakfast clubs, after school sport and clubs and study support. It is also introducing greater flexibility into the 14-19 education system. Providing improved accessibility, including through improved transport services, would provide greater equality for pupils whose parents do not have access to private transport.

3.4   The availability of services that link students to institutions is a major factor in wider participation in further education. The Education Act 2002 places a requirement on Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to develop a 16-19 transport policy following consultation with key partners, including Highway Authorities where appropriate. Partnerships are required to publish their policies for provision of transport services and financial help for students. New criteria stipulated that no individual should be prevented from participating in further education because of a lack of services or support. Recent guidance for these partnerships provides an update on the requirements that fall to LEAs and their partners, and emphasises that:

- a partnership approach within local authorities is essential to ensure that the work of the LEA in developing transport services and support for students is complementary to the strategies established in the authority's Local Transport Plan; and

- LEAs, together with Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) and others, will be key partners in accessibility planning and should work closely with transport planners to consider accessibility both through improvements in local transport services, the built environment and changes to the delivery or location of services.

3.5   Evaluation of 70 initial 'pathfinders' showed that, for about 65% of sampled authorities, a prime focus for their efforts would be to improve participation for disadvantaged people (students with special needs or coming from families living in areas with high levels of social deprivation). Other educational objectives included providing students with a greater choice as to where they could attend further education, improving student achievement and ensuring higher attendance rates.

3.6   LSCs are in the process of undertaking strategic area reviews (StARs) of all LSC-funded learning and skills provision across England in response to *Success for All*, the government's reform strategy for further education and training. StARs aim to meet learner, employer and community needs, and to improve the choice and quality of post-16 education and skills provision.

3.7   Local LSCs are responsible for leading StARs and ensuring that the review is effectively managed, stakeholders are engaged and that the timetable is met and outputs are achieved. By 31 March 2005, following all review activity, local LSCs will put in place and publish a plan for reform outlining clear actions for meeting needs and improving choice. This will be incorporated into their strategic plan. Local authorities and LSCs should seek the opportunity to incorporate transport and accessibility considerations within these StARs, to ensure that changes in learning and skills provision do not result in adverse accessibility implications.

3.8   Medway Council spends £1m on transporting school children to and from mainstream schools, £2.6m for transporting children with special needs and £100,000 transporting college students. The Education and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be looking at school transport as a review commencing in January 2005.

3.9   The Review Team spoke to one of the council's Regional School Travel Plan Advisors, and also to the Public Transport Manager about problems with accessibility to education. Written comments were also received from Professor Reed – University of Greenwich.

> *"As a solution to school time congestion - maybe you could raise awareness of the distance that it might be appropriate for a child to walk to school. You could stress how sociable and environmentally friendly it is and emphasise that children could make friends on their way to school. A leaflet would be a good idea to explain how much damage is caused to the environment from smoke emissions from cars and how much petrol is wasted sitting at traffic lights because of congestion that could affect how people commute".*
>
> *Daniel Painter, Medway Youth Parliament*

> *"Schools could look at addresses of their students to find clusters of families who could car share".*
>
> *Daniel Painter, Medway Youth Parliament*

"Understand Featherby have a walking bus but have never seen any information from that school, which my granddaughter goes to, about it".
Ralph Tebbutt, Medway Pensioner's Forum

"Sometimes parents take their children to school by car for their children's safety but by doing so they are a danger to other people's children".
Peter Nassan, Medway Pensioner's Forum

"A target is for the shared campus (University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University College) to have between 6000-7000 students by the end of the decade. Although there will be some growth in car parking this will be limited and, based on current projections, will not meet demand. It is clear that public transport will be required to play an increasing role in terms of getting both staff and students to and from the campus, particularly in terms of connecting with the bus and trains stations in Chatham town centre".
Professor Alan Reed, University of Greenwich

"A few ward councillors have become involved which has been helpful in encouraging schools to take the idea forward"
Teresa Curteis, School Travel Plan Co-ordinator, Medway Council

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Recommendation:

That officers work on the feasibility of the following and report their findings to the November 2005 meeting of the Environment and Frontline Services Committee:

(7)   Working in partnership with schools, to draw up a plan to extend the walking bus scheme to schools, publicising the benefits more widely.

(8)   Asking the School Travel Plan Advisers to work with schools to produce a programme of awareness of the social and environmental benefits of pupils walking to school.

(9)   All secondary schools in Medway having travel plans in place by 2010.

(10)   Working with a secondary school on a pilot to encourage cycling to school, including the provision of appropriate storage and facilities at the school to assess the impact on journeys to school.

(11)   Creating partnerships with further education establishments to work with the council to deliver improvements to encourage walking, cycling and public transport initiatives.

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> **(12)** Requesting all councillors involved in school governing bodies in Medway to promote with their governing body the development of School Travel Plans.
>
> **Financial implications**:
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> The majority of the proposals involve officer time. Sponsorship could be sought for the walking bus scheme and government grants sought for the school travel plans. Local Transport Plan funding could possibly be used for the cost of infrastructure in recommendation (10).
>
> **Timescale:**
>
> (7) Ongoing
> (8) Ongoing
> (9) 2010
> (10) Within Local Transport Plan period
> (11) Within Local Transport Plan period
> (12) Immediate
>
> **Government target/strategy:**
>
> (7) and (8) Improving the provision for walking and cycling[7]

[7] p67 Guidance on accessibility planning in local transport plans

4. Access to Shopping

4.1   Shopping patterns over the past two decades have undergone dramatic changes with the rapid growth in `out-of-town' development challenging the traditional role of town centres as the main focus of retail activity. This trend has been brought about by the growth of car ownership and changes in the retail industry itself, such as the trend towards larger stores with substantial parking provision which are less easily accommodated in existing centres.

4.2   However, town centres (and to an extent district and local centres) provide a range of other services and facilities as well as shops, enabling different needs to be met in a single trip. They also offer greater accessibility by alternative means of travel, including public transport, walking and cycling. In addition, shopping underpins the wider role of existing centres, supporting other activities, and providing a focal point for the local community. For these reasons, existing centres provide for a more sustainable pattern of retail activity.

4.3   The Member Review Team questioned all those who gave written and verbal evidence about issues concerning access to shopping in Medway. Concern was expressed that providing access to the larger supermarkets out of town denied people the opportunity to shop locally and many people wished to support independent traders in town centres rather than going to the out of town supermarkets. There is a need to access both out-of-town and local shops – people should have the right to have a choice and access to both should be provided. Below are a section of comments:

"Not sure how many people are aware of the dial-a-ride and shopmobility schemes. Was reading on their website that the dial-a-ride service is available for anyone having a 20:20 pass and there is a 40p fee for their return journey. I thought that was very good and gives people an introduction to a specialist service".

Matthew Macdonald, *Mental Health Co-ordinator, Medway Council*

"Some people have become very disengaged particularly those who are losing their motor skills and are becoming confused. Some areas are providing training for them explaining how to access public transport and what to do. I think it has been run by Learning and Skills Council with part of their life skills training. This was aimed not just at people with mental health problems but generally for vulnerable people. The council is good at attracting external money through the Corporate Bidding Unit (Mark Dent) and maybe this could be sought to help the voluntary sector to provide the sort of services that are needed".

Matthew Macdonald, *Mental Health Co-ordinator, Medway Council*

"Park and ride is worthwhile exploring further to keep cars out of the centre. It needs to be well advertised".

Ralph Tebbutt, Medway Pensioner's Forum

"No-one is going to pay 60p an hour to park in an out of town car park if they can park in the centre town car park for the same price. It doesn't pay you to park out of town. If there was an out of town car park that was free I would use that. You could make the inner town car park at a much higher level and if people still want to use it that is up to them".

Ralph Tebbutt, Medway Pensioner's Forum

Recommendation:

That officers work on the feasibility of the following and report their findings to the November 2005 meeting of the Environment and Frontline Services Committee:

(13)   As part of the review of the council's transport information strategy that proposals be brought forward to positively promote the dial-a-ride and shopmobility services.

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(14) The council works in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council to develop life skills training to assist vulnerable groups to access transport in the area.

Financial implications:

(13) Officer time and cost of publicity material
(14) Revenue cost to be investigated further by officers

Timescale:

(13) Ongoing
(14) Within Local Transport Plan period

Government target/strategy:

(13) Improving travel information and awareness[13]
(14) Improving physical accessibility[14]

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[13] p68 Guidance on accessibility planning in local transport plans
[14] p66 Guidance on accessibility planning in local transport plans

OTHER ISSUES

1.   General

1.1   During the gathering of evidence members of the Review Team questioned those attending about two potential measures to aid congestion in Medway, which were the implementation of higher parking charges and congestion charging. Of those questioned the majority were in favour of the implementation of higher parking charges as opposed to the congestion charging measures. This issue is reflected in recommendation (15) below.

1.2   Another issue which the Review Team discussed related to the provision of bus priority measures and in particular the provision of bus lanes in Medway. This proposal was welcomed by all those who gave evidence. This is reflected in recommendation (16) below.

1.3   Concern was expressed by the Review Team during the discussion with the Head of Traffic Management, Traffic Safety and Parking that the council's own staff did not always comply with the same stringent regulations expected of statutory undertakers. This is reflected in recommendation (18) below.

"Urban Traffic Management Control links all the traffic signals together and this reduces congestion significantly.   If you include bus priority into urban traffic management control. What you don't need is miles and miles of bus lanes or cycle lanes because congestion does not happen between junctions but at the junction. If you give priority at the junctions you solve the problem".
Keith Hanshaw, Head of Traffic Management, Traffic Safety and Parking, Medway Council

"We are one of the worst culprits when we do our own work. We have good strong rules for statutory undertakers and would have no problem telling them when they are doing wrong but we are not as forthcoming in being robust in our enforcement with our own staff cutting grass and working on the highwa ys etc. This is something we need to tackle".
Keith Hanshaw, Head of Traffic Management, Traffic Safety and Parking, Medway Council

"There are two ways in which partners might help to improve the range of services available to improve accessibility to destinations in the area. One of these is by taking measures in the road network to encourage the efficient unhindered operation of buses, to enable the operators to make good use of their resources. This is particularly important with new developments such as Rochester Riverside and Chattenden where there is an opportunity to build a new road layout which takes the needs of bus services into account. It is more of an issue with smaller scale developments elsewhere as the existing road network is too constrained to allow significant bus priority measures to be provided".
Geoff Walters, Public Transport Manager, Medway Council

Recommendation:

That officers work on the feasibility of the following and report their findings to the November 2005 meeting of the Environment and Frontline Services Committee.

(15)   The Transport for Medway Programme Manager and Head of Traffic Management, Traffic Safety and Parking reporting the implications of increasing the price of long-stay car parking in Chatham at the same time as implementing an adequate and quality park and ride system to serve that area.

(16)   Developing a proposal for extending the bus priority measures, with the inclusion of bus lanes at peak times across Medway.

(17)   Developing the Urban Traffic Management Control systems to improve congestion and aid the public to know where car parking spaces are still available.

(18)   Putting measures in place to ensure that when the council's staff and contractors are undertaking highways work they adhere to the same standard expected of statutory undertakers in the way that they carry out their work

Financial implications:

(15)   Income from revenue could be used to further public transport improvements

(16)   Potentially there would be initial capital costs and costs associated with enforcement, the full costs to be identified when the proposal is drawn up.

(17)   Officer time

(18)   None

Timescale:

(15) and (16) To coincide with the Council's adoption of the Transport for Medway strategy for public transport

(17)   As above

(18)   Immediate

Government target/strategy:

(15)   To contribute to the reliability of buses

(16)   To increase public transport patronage and reduce congestion

Access for all – Local Transport Plan
Environment and Front Line Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Guidance on Accessibility Planning in Local Transport Plans - Department for Transport

Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion – Report by the Social Exclusion Unit, Office of the deputy prime minister February 2003

Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 summary of panel hearings

Department for Transport summary report – social exclusion and public transport – 2000

Bus Partnership Forum – understanding customer needs – final report – February 2003

Choosing Health? Choosing Activity consultation document, Department of Health and Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Tackling Health Inequalities – A programme for Action, July 2003

Summary conclusions from evidence gathering on:

12 October 2004
26 October 2004
11 November 2004
18 November 2004

Written evidence from:

University of Greenwich
Medway Job Centre Plus
Medway Primary Care Trust