Identifying Issues and Specific Objectives

3

Chapter 3 Contents

3 Identifying Issues and Specific Objectives

INTRODUCTION

3.1 This chapter outlines the existing transport situation in Leicestershire and identifies current transport issues.

3.2 The consideration of transport issues has led to the need for the development of Specific Objectives. Progress towards achievement of each Specific Objective will contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Primary Objectives outlined in Chapter 2.

3.3 In addition there are links between the Specific Objectives to the extent that progress towards achievement of any one of them will contribute to the achievement of a number of the others.

3.4 In this chapter:

- the background to the consideration of the specific issues is explained;
- each of the Primary Objectives and the transport issues relating to them are considered ;
- one or more Specific Objectives are identified for each issue;
- related Specific Objectives are identified.

BACKGROUND

POPULATION

3.5 The area of Leicestershire covered by this LTP has a population of about 370,000. The population distribution is shown in Table 3.1.

3.6 From this table it can be seen that the population of the rural areas comprises over a third of the total population of the LTP area, and, therefore, rural issues are an important consideration in this LTP.

Table 3.1: Population Distribution

Loughborough including Shepshed	70,000
Hinckley including Earl Shilton, Burbage and Barwell	60,000
Coalville including Whitwick and Thringstone	33,000
Melton Mowbray including Asfordby	28,000
Market Harborough	18,000
Ashby-de-la-Zouch	12,000
Lutterworth	8,000
Soar Valley villages	25,000
Rural Areas	116,000
POPULATION OF LEICESTERSHIRE LTP AREA	370,000
Population in Leicestershire part of Central Leicestershire LTP area	230,000
LEICESTERSHIRE POPULATION	600,000

3.7 Transport issues that exist in most of the LTP area are very different to those in Central Leicestershire and larger conurbations. Therefore, whilst most elements of the LTP will have relevance throughout the county, individual Area Strategies, as outlined in Chapter 6, have been developed to implement the LTP strategy effectively.

3.8 The travel patterns in the area of Leicestershire surrounding Leicester City are heavily influenced by the City Centre. Consequently, the Central Leicestershire LTP includes those parts of Leicestershire where a substantial proportion of work, shopping and leisure journeys is related to Leicester City. The City does, however, influence travel patterns beyond the Central Leicestershire LTP boundary.

TRAFFIC AND TRAFFIC GROWTH

3.9 The effect of traffic and traffic growth can have an adverse impact on the environment, and on business in terms of delay caused by

congestion, and reduced accessibility. The growth in road traffic over several decades has been relentless, and at the same time use of public transport, walking and cycling has declined. Traffic growth is driven by many factors, including changes in population, land use and lifestyles and, as the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment (SACTRA) report demonstrated, by new road construction and increases in capacity. However, the most significant factor is increased prosperity, which is reflected in both higher car ownership and increased use of each car. Periods of high economic growth result in higher levels of traffic and traffic growth.

3.10 National Road Traffic Forecasts (NRTF) 1997 suggests that by 2025 traffic will increase by between 31% and 72% over the 1996 level. The traffic forecast for Leicestershire over the period 1996 to 2025 ranges from 35% to 72%, which is approximately 2% higher than the average for the East Midlands.

3.11 This growth will not happen solely in the urban areas. Due to higher car ownership, traffic growth is also felt in rural areas, with increased concern over road safety and speed of traffic. It was evident from the LTP participation exercise that more needs to be done to make people aware of how much traffic is predicted to grow and the impact that could have, particularly on increased congestion.

3.12 In the past it has been attempted to match increases in road traffic by increases in road capacity, particularly on the trunk and motorway networks. However, more of the road network is now congested for longer periods. Once a road reaches capacity, quite small increases in traffic result in very significant increases in congestion. The 1997 NRTF recognised for the first time that traffic growth would be constrained in some areas by the limited capacity of the road network. However, even in the most congested areas there is surplus capacity in the road network outside peak periods, and this has led to “peak period spreading”.

3.13 Congestion has a restraining effect on traffic growth in some areas; however, it contributes to pressure for development in less congested areas, leading to more car traffic. Congestion also encourages traffic to use unsuitable roads, and significantly increases some types of air pollutant.

3.14 The Government's fuel duty escalator, which in the past increased the duty on fuel by 6% per annum in real terms, had only a limited effect on reducing traffic growth. Research produced in conjunction with the NRTF forecasts suggests that a 13% increase in fuel price is required to reduce traffic by 1%.

EXISTING TRANSPORT NETWORK

3.15 Leicestershire’s main road and rail communication network, including its wider strategic links, is shown in Figure 1.1.

Road Network

3.16 The western half of the county is bordered by the M1, A42 and A5 and is served by other Principal Roads, such as the A511, A444 and A447. It is relatively well connected to the national road network.

3.17 The eastern part of the county has until recently been isolated from the M1 and the core national road network. The A14(T), which passes to the south of Market Harborough, has improved links to the east and provided some relief to the A4304, which connects the town to the M1. In the case of Melton Mowbray the completion of the A46(T) Leicester Western Bypass has improved access to the M1 and the western part of the county.

3.18 The LTP will need to ensure that the main road network continues to carry traffic safely and efficiently whilst minimising the environmental impact of the traffic it carries.

Rail Connections

3.19 At present, Central Trains Ltd. and Midland Main Line Ltd. provide train services to the county. The former operates on routes from Birmingham to Peterborough, Coventry to Nottingham and Nottingham to Grantham. Rail services are provided from intercity railheads at Loughborough, Market Harborough and Leicester, with local stations at Bottesford, Hinckley, Narborough, South Wigston, Syston, Sileby and Barrow upon Soar. The last four of these have been funded by the County Council

with the help of Government grant. The County Council has also been responsible for the opening of Stage 1 of the Ivanhoe Line, which is served by a shuttle train service between Leicester and Loughborough, funded by the County and City Councils.

3.20 Service frequencies, particularly on the route to London, have increased significantly in recent years, with corresponding increases in patronage. These link Leicestershire communities to main urban areas in Leicester, Nottingham, the West Midlands and London. These recent increases in train service levels have contributed significantly to increasing the attractiveness of rail as an alternative to the car.

Bus Network

3.21 Despite the long-term decline in public transport patronage, Leicestershire retains sound basic networks of both bus and train services. Patronage decline is a result of historical trends and the pattern of built development, and the previous emphasis on provision for the car. The County Council currently provides over £1m a year of support for public and community transport, recently supplemented by £0.5m of rural bus grant, with an additional £2m a year for concessionary travel.

3.22 The overall pattern of bus services may be described as follows:

Inter-urban corridors

- relatively frequent bus services on most inter-urban corridors, particularly those radiating from Leicester;
- high frequency routes operating quarter-hourly and weakest services providing one bus an hour;
- most services operating commercially, and services contracted to the County Council where demand is lower;
- the County Council, in partnership with operators, has provided grants to help develop some routes towards commercial viability at higher frequencies;
- few evening and Sunday services.

Towns

- networks providing daytime buses within a 400 metre walk of most residents;
- services in the larger towns are mostly commercially operated; but in the smaller towns some operate under contract to the County Council;
- few evening and Sunday services.

Rural Areas

- in the rural areas the County Council guarantees minimum service levels, such that all communities over 50 population now have at least a weekly shopping service;
- all communities over 250 population have at least a daily shopping service;
- all communities over 500 population have at least a daily commuter service plus a choice of shopping services;
- a high proportion of all rural bus services are subsidised by the County Council;
- a number of communities, particularly those lying on inter-urban routes, have much more choice of service.

3.23 Community transport provision is also important, and is currently focussed on the needs of elderly people and mobility impaired, through dial-a-ride type services and voluntary sector car and minibus schemes. Work has been going ahead so that community and taxi-based services are used for general-purpose public transport.

ACCESSIBILITY OBJECTIVE

BUS SERVICES

3.24 The LTP participation exercise highlighted concerns about existing bus services throughout the county, and many people felt that more powers and funding would be required to make a significant difference.

3.25 In recognition of these concerns there are three main public transport issues that will be addressed through the LTP. These are:

- levels of service that are not good enough in most cases to offer adequate access opportunities to people who do not have a car available;
- a combination of cutbacks in commercially run services, and rising tender prices for contract bus services, makes it increasingly difficult to afford to maintain even the present network;
- services in Leicestershire main towns and on the main inter-urban corridors, where there is most potential for attracting users from cars, do not yet offer the overall quality necessary to be effective in attracting additional users.

3.26 It is apparent that, though rural bus service provision is as high as it has been for a long time, the growth in expectations of personal mobility, brought about by increasing car ownership and resulting wider employment catchment areas, means that these levels do not meet most people's needs. There are particular difficulties in meeting the widely dispersed demand for access to work as a result of a much wider range of work centres and highly varied pattern of start and finish times. There are also difficulties in meeting the demand for evening and leisure services, where dispersed demand makes it hard to provide cost-effective transport services.

3.27 The LTP participation exercise revealed support for more community transport, and many communities expressed a desire to be more involved in developing transport provision and services to meet their local needs. The rural bus grant has already helped to guarantee baseline services and enhance some inter-urban routes; an experiment funded by the Rural Bus Challenge Scheme is testing the potential for taxi-feeder services to a main high frequency inter-urban bus route. The opportunity in this area lies in an increased role for community transport, linked to greater community involvement in transport provision. Preliminary indications are that the scheme shows potential. Even though demand is thinly spread and can be difficult to accommodate, innovation gives the potential to create valuable improvements in access opportunities.

3.28 The County Council has a long term commitment to maintaining bus services, and has succeeded in maintaining overall service levels almost unaltered since bus de-regulation in 1986. However, recent cutbacks in commercially operated services, together with increasing prices for subsidised services, have significantly increased the cost.

3.29 Whilst subsidies are vital, particularly in the rural areas, paying subsidies is not the only way the County Council maintains and develops the bus services network; Quality Bus Partnerships and other measures can contribute a great deal.

3.30 Quality standards on urban and inter-urban services have improved, but consultation and research shows that passenger expectations are increasing faster. At present, with some exceptions, service quality and quantity are not generally sufficient to attract new passengers. There needs to be direct improvement in these areas, plus work to remove some of the other negatives associated with bus travel. This includes bus priorities to help overcome the effects of traffic congestion, better passenger information, and better interchange and through ticketing for multi-stage journeys.

3.31 For each of these problems there are corresponding opportunities, many likely to be enhanced when the Transport Bill becomes law. The problem with funding bus services might be helped by the enhanced role for Local Authorities provided for in the Bill. Although there is relatively little the County Council can do to influence the market price for contract services, it may be possible to be more pro-active in trying to establish the boundaries between commercial and subsidised operation. If it proves possible to secure bus company commitment, in some cases through quality partnerships, to the maintenance of core commercial networks, this will significantly reduce the problem.

3.32 The provisions for quality partnerships and quality contracts in the Transport Bill provide an enhanced opportunity to drive up overall service quality and to build on the work already being undertaken by the established quality partnerships in Loughborough and Hinckley. These partnerships, particularly that in Loughborough which has been established some years, are already beginning to have an impact through the joint investment programmes. The opportunity now is to increase the pace through linked work on bus

priorities, information systems, terminals, the buses themselves and standards of operation. With linked work on other traffic management and parking measures, this should improve journey times.

3.33 In addition, the National Public Transport Information System (PTI) 2000 initiative gives the opportunity, to bring about a marked improvement in the provision of passenger information as outlined in Chapter 4. The County Council is playing a leading role within the East Midlands consortium, which is on course to achieve an integrated call centre system by July 2000, with internet access and other developments soon afterwards.

3.34 The County Council is working towards improving public transport integration through better interchange and through-ticketing. There have been a number of initiatives, notably with bus/rail integration in Loughborough and taxi-bus/bus integration with the Rural Rider service, but provisions in the Bill will help to accelerate the pace.

Specific Objective:

Increase bus passenger journeys.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve social inclusion through the availability of public transport.
- Improve personal security.
- Increase awareness of public transport travel opportunities.
- Make public transport interchange more effective.
- Continue to remove the barriers to free movement by disabled people.
- Reduce car travel to school.
- Promote less car use.
- Reduce car commuting by managing parking.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

3.35 Providing effective public transport information is a major challenge. Many bus services tend to follow complex routes, and may vary throughout the day. In the past, finding out fare information and service connections was difficult, although this has been addressed to some extent by the "Busline" service as explained in Chapter 4.

3.36 The National Public Transport Information System (known as Traveline in the East Midlands) will further help in this respect, and the County Council is fully involved in its development. This must be complemented by further developments of other types of passenger information.

Specific Objective:

Increase awareness of public transport travel opportunities.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve social inclusion through the availability of public transport.
- Increase bus passenger journeys.
- Make public transport interchange more effective.
- Increase rail passenger journeys.
- Reduce car travel to school.
- Promote less car use.
- Continue to remove barriers to free movement of disabled people.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.

TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

3.37 Interchange from bus to bus or between modes is presently a considerable disincentive to travel. However, successful interchange can increase the versatility of the public transport network and make buses and

trains more able to replicate the freedom of movement available to car users. The County Council's strategy is to experiment with means of overcoming the problems of interchange, then to build on proven good practice.

3.38 A qualitative appraisal of the county networks shows that many interchanges are currently small scale, ad-hoc with virtually no facilities. Therefore, to maximise returns key interchange points have been identified for priority action:

- town centre bus stops and bus stations;
- rail/bus interchange at the main stations in the county towns;
- bus to bus interchange at a limited network of important nodes on inter-urban bus routes.

3.39 Improved interchange will require addressing a number of key areas through Quality Bus Partnerships:

- integration of services;
- through ticketing;
- information;
- interchange facilities.

Specific Objective:

Make public transport interchange more effective.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve social inclusion through the availability of public transport.
- Improve personal security.
- Increase bus passenger journeys.
- Increase rail passenger journeys.
- Continue to remove barriers to free movement by disabled people.
- Promote less car use.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO2 from transport.

PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES

3.40 The County Council has long been committed to the development of the local rail services network. The key local rail problem, however, is the cost of supporting them.

3.41 The County Council has been responsible for the opening of four new stations, at South Wigston in 1986 and at Syston, Sileby and Barrow upon Soar in 1994. The latter three formed Stage 1 of the Ivanhoe project between Loughborough and Leicester, and have been served since opening by a shuttle train service funded by the County and City Councils.

3.42 The introduction of the Ivanhoe Stage 1 service in 1994 has demonstrated that local trains can be effective in attracting car users - around 30% of Ivanhoe passengers used to travel by car. However, the one train on that service costs the County and City Councils over £350,000 a year to subsidise. The County Council's proportion of this equates to approximately a fifth of its total bus services support budget.

3.43 Further extension of the Ivanhoe line from Leicester to Burton on Trent (Stage 2) has been central to the County Council's plans to develop local rail services, and was supported locally during the participation exercise. However, increased operating costs associated with Stage 1, reduced forecast patronage and increased costs brought about by restructuring of the railways under the Railways Act 1993, undermined the finances of the project.

3.44 The introduction of the Rail Passenger Partnership Fund announced in the 1998 Transport White Paper offered the opportunity to reconsider the case for Ivanhoe Stage 2. Increased funding for local transport, together with the rail franchise re-negotiations, also offered the opportunity to consider the case for extending Ivanhoe Stage 1 service from Leicester to Nuneaton.

3.45 In considering the case for improved local rail services the following are key considerations:

- the extent of subsidy necessary to introduce any new or improved service;

- the value for money offered by any new or improved service;
- the potential for opening new stations on existing or enhanced services.

Specific Objective:

Increase rail passenger journeys.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve social inclusion through the availability of public transport.
- Improve personal security.
- Make public transport interchange more effective.
- Continue to remove the barriers to free movement by disabled people.
- Reduce car commuting by managing parking.
- Reduce road casualties.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO2 from transport.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

POWERED TWO-WHEELERS

3.46 The Government's Integrated Transport White Paper recognises that there is a role for motorcycling in sustainable transport. Mopeds and motorcycles can provide an alternative for many trips and, particularly in the more rural areas, can provide an affordable alternative to the car. The environmental benefits are less clear and would be eroded if people switched from walking, cycling and public transport. The main issue is therefore to identify and develop the role of powered two wheelers in a sustainable transport policy.

3.47 There is a growth in the popularity of powered two wheelers both for leisure and as a means of transport for many journeys where public transport is limited and walking or cycling unrealistic. However, motorcyclists represent a large proportion of road casualties in relation to their numbers. Nationally motorcyclists make up less than 1% of road traffic, but are 14% of deaths and serious injuries.

3.48 The establishment of Leicestershire Motorcycle Forum and initiatives such as Bikesafe 2000 along with better training and testing should help to make motorcycling safer than it is now.

Specific Objective:

Identify and develop the role of powered two wheelers in a sustainable transport policy.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Strategy.

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND DISABLED PEOPLE

3.49 There are groups of individuals who experience social exclusion, due to lack of available transport options. Many communities, such as villages, do not have adequate local facilities or job opportunities. Local facilities have decreased with increasing car ownership and the rise of the superstore, and while some settlements have expanded considerably, often there has been no commensurate improvement in local facilities.

3.50 The loss of facilities may be an inconvenience for car owners, but to those who do not have a car available it can lead to an inability to access basic facilities.

3.51 The LTP needs to address this issue, and seek appropriate accessibility for disabled people and those without access to a car

Specific Objective:

Improve social inclusion through the availability of public transport.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Increase bus passenger journeys.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.

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Specific Objective:

Continue to remove the barriers to free movement by disabled people.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve social inclusion through the availability of public transport.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase bus passenger journeys.
- Increase public transport interchange.
- Increase rail passenger journeys.

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

3.52 As the local Highway Authority in Leicestershire, the County Council is responsible for maintaining 4,019 km of road, comprising:

- 298 km 'A' class Principal Roads of which 128 km are Primary Routes;
- 270 km 'B' class roads;
- 1269 km 'C' class roads;
- 2182 km unclassified roads.

3.53 In addition there are:

- 4,300 km of footway and cycleways;
- 2416 km of footpaths.

3.54 Also within Leicestershire there are 112 km of motorway and 143 km of all purpose Trunk Roads. These are currently the responsibility of the Highways Agency. However, the Government is proposing to de-trunk the A6 and A47 during the LTP period. The latest target timetable for de-trunking is as follows:

- A6, south of Leicester City 1st April 2002, (20 km);
- A6, north of Leicester City 1st April 2004, (27 km);
- A47, east of Leicester City 1st April 2002, (18 km).

3.55 These dates are subject to review, and will add a further 65 km of Primary Roads to the county's network. The County Council will continue to liaise with the Highways Agency and adjoining Highway Authorities to achieve a smooth hand-over of responsibilities.

3.56 It is vital that the network is maintained to a standard which provides for the safe and efficient movement of traffic. In doing so it is important to ensure that the structure of the carriageway does not deteriorate to the extent that excessive revenue funds are needed to continually patch the road, and that timely strengthening is undertaken to minimise costly reconstruction. The county Principal Road network is currently in a significantly worse structural condition than the national average, and more funds are needed to treat this backlog of work.

3.57 The network also requires substantial funds to carry out routine maintenance (e.g. grass cutting, sweeping and snow clearance), and these funds have to be effectively managed. The strategy for road maintenance needs to contribute to making cycling and walking more attractive, improving road safety and reducing traffic noise from the road surface.

Specific Objective:

Maintain the County Council's highway network to a standard that provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, and does not inhibit walking and cycling.

Specific Objective:

Reduce the extent of worn out or short life carriageways

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Continue to remove the barriers to free movement by disabled people.
- Reduce road casualties.
- Facilitate the efficient and sustainable movement of road freight on the most suitable routes.
- Concentrate traffic movements and growth on the safest and most suitable roads.

BRIDGE MAINTENANCE AND STRENGTHENING ISSUES

3.58 There are nearly 600 bridges on the County Council's highway network. Weight limits imposed for the protection of these bridges are frequently detrimental to the interests of industry, agriculture and the local community. This is particularly so in the more rural areas of the county. Consultation processes have demonstrated that, even where the route carried is not considered of strategic importance, sustainable objections to weight limits are commonplace on the grounds of:

- severance of agricultural holdings;
- disruption of local lorry routes for milk collection, crop harvesting and similar purposes;
- detours and delays for emergency vehicles;
- disruption to both public and school bus services.

3.59 Restrictions on the more strategic routes can have a serious economic effect in terms of delays and increased journey length.

3.60 Over recent years funds have been concentrated on tackling problems identified following assessments of bridges for strengthening to meet EU commitments; however, now it is necessary to direct more funding towards the repair of the County Council's bridge stock.

Specific Objective:

Reduce the number of bridges needing repair or strengthening.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Facilitate the efficient and sustainable movement of road freight on the most suitable routes.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE

3.61 Economic issues are important to consider as part of the LTP, as generally a buoyant economy results in increases in traffic. Regionally, the East Midlands has an unemployment rate of around 3.5%. Leicestershire's is lower than this, at 2.2%, with a female rate of 1.5% and a male rate of 2.6%, which indicates that the county is generally economically buoyant. However, this masks a variation across the county, with Charnwood and North West Leicestershire having overall unemployment rates of 2.8% and 2.5%, with one ward in Loughborough having a rate of nearly 8% and a ward in Harborough with a rate of 0.1%.

3.62 Distribution and transport related activities are very important to the Leicestershire economy, and have served as engines of growth over the past few years. Whilst this sector is often seen as employing relatively few people, in Leicestershire it provides over 35,000 jobs, representing 9% of all employees. Growth of the East Midlands Airport to its current position as Britain's third largest freight airport has also been a key feature of Leicestershire's growth in this sector of industry.

3.63 Several parts of the LTP area have seen a decline of traditional manufacturing industry, and the closure of the deep mining coal industry has had a significant effect on the economy of North-West Leicestershire, an issue which is still being addressed. There is also concern over the continuing decline in the textile and hosiery industry, which could affect employment rates. There is pressure for the release of land for high quality employment uses, and this has led to the development of a number of sites close to junctions on motorways and other main highway routes, where most people arrive by car. The challenge now is to find sites where growth can occur in a more sustainable way. In addition there will be a need to consider lower parking provision in new development, and on-street parking controls.

3.64 There are, however, potential tensions between an economic strategy, which seeks economic growth and regeneration of deprived areas, and a transport strategy, which seeks to reduce the need to travel and reduce the reliance on the private car. These can be addressed to some extent by the targeting of transport improvements in those locations where economic growth may be greatest.

3.65 It will also be necessary to ensure that economic growth does not compromise the goal of more sustainable transport provision,

and transport factors will be important in the selection of suitable sites.

TOWN CENTRES

3.66 Town centres reflect the strength of the local economy, as well as the vitality and civic pride of the local community. Investment in their infrastructure is essential to ensure that they can prosper and become self-sustaining.

3.67 In many cases town centres are facing a challenge to survive against the dispersal of activity brought about by the increasing dependence on the private car and changing patterns of work, shopping and leisure. This can lead to a decline in investment, with the tell tale signs of vacant shops, temporary lettings and neglected property.

3.68 The town centre has many functions. It provides public places, acts as a focal point for trading and entertainment, and it must facilitate the movement of pedestrians and vehicles between land uses and attractions. A balance must be struck between the often-conflicting demands of attractions, accessibility and amenities. PPG6 states that the vitality of town and district centres depends upon:

- retaining and developing a wide range of attractions and amenities;
- creating and maintaining an attractive environment;
- ensuring good accessibility to and within the centre;
- attracting continuing investment in development or refurbishment of existing buildings.

3.69 Increasing traffic growth and congestion have detracted from the attractiveness of town centres, and there is a fear that the introduction of parking strategies which seek to discourage car use to those centres could undermine them. The LTP participation exercise highlighted the introduction of car parking charges as a particular concern. It is important therefore, as part of a balanced approach to strategy development, to ensure that town centres remain attractive places, free as far as possible from unnecessary traffic and with improved access for walking, cycling and public transport.

3.70 Local regeneration programmes have sought to enhance the attractiveness and roles of town centres in Coalville (SRB1) and Loughborough (SRB2). The "Bridging the Communities" SRB6 Bid in June 2000 seeks to secure the support of emda for a range of activities that will increase the vitality and viability of the centres of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Lutterworth, Hinckley and Melton Mowbray.

Specific Objective:

Enhance the attractiveness and viability of town centres.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve personal security.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.
- Make public transport interchange more effective.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Continue to remove the barriers to free movement by disabled people.
- Reduce road casualties.
- Reduce vehicle speeds in sensitive areas.
- Reduce car commuting by managing parking.
- Concentrate traffic movements and growth on the safest and most suitable roads.

FREIGHT

Road Freight

3.71 Leicestershire is located near the centre of the country at the heart of the national motorway network. It is possible for lorries to make a return journey within a day to most of the country. This has resulted in a growth of distribution centres, which together with several very large quarries in the county, generate high volumes of heavy goods vehicles.

3.72 Leicestershire County Council has been at the forefront in developing lorry action plans to confine lorries to suitable routes. However, there are still some routes that carry unacceptable volumes of heavy traffic where suitable alternatives do not exist. The LTP participation highlighted continued concerns about the impact of lorries on the road network.

Road Freight Specific Objective:

Facilitate the efficient and sustainable movement of road freight on the most suitable routes.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Concentrate traffic movements and growth on the safest and most suitable roads.
- Reduce the number of bridges needing repair or strengthening.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

Rail Freight

3.73 The Leicestershire rail network is important for freight movement, particularly on the east-west axis. There is a limited number of non-operational rail freight facilities in the county, which could be brought back into use. The nearest terminals for long-distance and international traffic are outside the county at Birmingham (Hams Hall) and Daventry (DIRFT), although both are within easy reach via the motorway network.

3.74 Rail freight is important in terms of Leicestershire's main hard rock quarries. Four quarries are rail linked, with 20%-30% of total sales transported by rail. This equates to approximately 14 million tonnes per annum. The main rail links for quarry freight are with the west and south-east Midlands and the north-west of England.

3.75 Given the current relative competitive position of road and rail freight, there is little opportunity to transfer freight from road to rail. The main opportunities exist through planning permissions, and the County Council has put in place Structure Plan policies that encourage industrial and distribution development locations with rail access.

Rail Freight Specific Objective:

Increase rail freight tonnage.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

Waterways Freight

3.76 A number of river navigations and canals pass through the county. These include the Ashby Canal, currently with a restoration scheme extending the limits of navigation towards its original terminus near Moira; the Leicester Section of the Grand Union Canal, with branches to Market Harborough and Welford; and the River Soar. The Grantham Canal also passes through the north of the county, and although currently partly closed to navigation there are active schemes for continuing restoration and re-linking it to the River Trent.

3.77 Recent successes within the LTP area include the regeneration of the Grand Union Canal Basin in Market Harborough in a partnership with public authorities, business representatives and voluntary organisations, and the conservation/tourism related scheme at Foxton Locks.

3.78 The Freight Quality Partnership considers that 250 tonne barges are the most viable on waterways. The River Soar-Grand Union Navigation from Nottingham could accommodate a 30-40 tonne maximum, with a 25 tonne maximum south of Leicester. There is clearly only limited scope for transferring freight to the waterways. This use may conflict with leisure and other uses, and particular care will need to be taken in any application of policy. Nevertheless, where opportunities do exist they need to be actively pursued.

Waterways Freight Specific Objective:

Facilitate the use of waterways for the carriage of freight where this will not conflict with other uses and the waterway environment.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.

HEALTH OBJECTIVE

3.79 The Government places a high priority on health, and has put forward proposals in the White Paper " Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation" aimed at:

- improving the health of the population as a whole;
- improving the health of the worst off in society and to narrow the health gap.

3.80 To achieve these aims the Government has produced a national contract for better health, which looks to the local community and individuals to work in partnership with the Government to improve health.

AIR QUALITY

3.81 Research carried out for the Government shows that the most effective air quality measures will be those that seek to reduce traffic related pollution. Local Authorities are likely to have a key role in ensuring adherence to more stringent emissions criteria. To assist with this task, the Government has recently published a revised Air Quality Strategy – "Working Together for Clean Air" which describes its plans to improve and protect ambient air quality in the UK in the medium term. Objectives for seven pollutants have been set with dates for when the standards are to be achieved. These pollutants are benzene, 1,3-butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter (PM_{10}) and sulphur dioxide.

3.82 Local Authorities have a major role to play in achieving these objectives. However, it is first necessary to quantify the local situation. Once this has been carried out, it will be possible to target measures to reduce pollution levels. Air Quality Reviews, carried out by District Councils, have highlighted a number of areas where air quality gives cause for concern. These are on roads with high traffic volumes and congestion, especially town centre roads.

3.83 Within Leicestershire, the District Councils began their first stage of assessment during 1998. This involved compiling a list of potentially significant pollution sources to identify those pollutants where there is a risk of the objectives being exceeded. In the second stage of the assessment further screening was carried out, using models or monitoring to determine whether there is a significant risk of the target levels being exceeded. In the third stage, an accurate and detailed assessment of current and future air quality is now being carried out. The process is due to be completed shortly.

3.84 This will enable the District Councils to declare Air Quality Management Areas where the Review and Assessment process has shown that the target values are likely to be exceeded. The preliminary findings to date are shown in Table 3.2.

3.85 Research has shown that road transport is a major source of air pollution, especially in urban areas. Reductions in emissions will come from changes in vehicle technology and from traffic management techniques to reduce delay and congestion, and reduce car use.

3.86 The District Councils will carry out a further round of "Review and Assessment" in 2003. At this time the success of the strategy can be assessed.

Specific Objective:

Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Strategy.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Promote less car use.
- Increase bus passenger journeys.

Table 3.2 Air Quality Management Areas - Review and Assessment Status

Authority	CO	PM_{10}	NO_2	SO_2	Benzene	1,3-Butadiene	Lead
Blaby DC	1	1	1	1	X	X	X
Charnwood BC	1	1	1	1	X	X	1
Harborough DC	1	1	1	X	X	X	1
Hinckley & Bosworth BC	1	1	1	1	X	X	X
Melton BC	X	1	1	1	X	X	X
North West Leics DC	X	1	1	1	X	X	1

1 = Pollutant needing Second or Third Stage Review; X = Pollutant that will meet objectives

- Increase awareness of public transport travel opportunities.
- Make public transport interchange more effective.
- Increase rail passenger journeys.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Reduce car travel to school.
- Enhance the attractiveness and viability of town centres.
- Concentrate traffic movements and growth on the safest and most suitable roads.
- Reduce car commuting by managing parking.
- Increase rail freight tonnage.
- Facilitate the use of waterways for the carriage of freight.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

WALKING

3.87 There are very few people who are not a pedestrian for part of every journey they make, which makes walking an important travel mode. However, despite its importance, walking has traditionally been, at best, undervalued and at worst, frequently dismissed in transport planning. Walking is especially suitable for making shorter local journeys in urban and suburban areas but is also, crucially, an essential part of multi-modal travel, being aptly described by the Pedestrian Association as the “glue” of transport.

3.88 Evidence suggests that walking as a mode of transport is generally in decline in this country. Recent studies suggest that in heavily trafficked urban areas the perceived dangers of traffic are adversely affecting lifestyles by restricting independent mobility, particularly amongst the very young and elderly. The decline in the number of children walking and cycling to school is of particular concern. The LTP participation exercise revealed support for more measures to assist walking and a recognition that this could be linked to routes to school. A safer and more pleasant walking environment can assist in stemming the drift

towards greater car dependency, with all of its health and pollution implications.

3.89 In Leicestershire walking accounts for around 12% of journeys to work (1991 census). In mileage terms, it accounts for 3% of distance travelled. Walking along the public highway is, however, in decline and the national travel survey showed the average number of journeys walked per person per year fell by 12% between 1985/86 and 1993/95. Walking to work has fallen particularly sharply, by over one-third since 1985/86. In contrast, the number of walking-for-pleasure journeys actually rose by 6% between 1985/86 and 1993/95 and walking off the public highway has also increased over recent years.

3.90 Many local journeys currently made by car could readily be made either wholly or partly on foot. In Leicestershire, existing journey patterns for other modes of transport show that more than half of all trips are less than two miles in length. Walking more of these journeys would give positive benefits to the environment through reduced vehicle emissions.

3.91 Health would be improved both by these reduced emissions and through improved personal fitness. Moreover, more positive encouragement would help to stem the drift to reliance on the car for short school runs, a factor which is held to contribute towards the general decline in children's health through lack of exercise and which reinforces the car-based lifestyle into future generations.

3.92 Walking also has social and community benefits. It can:

- promote neighbourliness, social interaction and reduce feelings of loneliness;
- increase feelings of independence;
- be socially inclusive - it is the only mode of transport available to most regardless of income, age or location;
- help reduce traffic congestion, and in particular help reduce short distance car tips which can have a disproportionately damaging effect on the environment;
- help create better access to education, employment and social activities.

Specific Objective:

Increase safer walking.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve social inclusion through the availability of public transport.
- Improve personal security.
- Continue to remove the barriers to free movement by disabled people.
- Reduce road casualties.
- Reduce car travel to school.
- Reduce vehicle speeds in sensitive areas.
- Promote less car use.
- Reduce car commuting by managing parking.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

CYCLING

3.93 Cycling, as a mode of transport, is available to many members of the community, offering a widely accessible, healthy, convenient and non-polluting means of travel. It is especially suitable for making shorter local journeys in urban and suburban areas, and is also an increasingly popular recreational activity. However, cycling has been in decline in this country. Both the real and perceived dangers of traffic are stifling independent mobility in heavily trafficked urban areas, adversely affecting lifestyles, especially of the very young and elderly. The decline in the number of children cycling to school is of particular concern. The LTP participation exercise highlighted support for more measures to assist cycling, and a recognition that this could be linked to routes to school. A safer and more pleasant environment in which to cycle is required to help halt the drift towards greater car dependency.

3.94 Though there are an estimated 15 million cyclists in the UK, cycling accounts for fewer than 4% of journeys, far fewer than

many of our European neighbours (e.g. Netherlands 29% of journeys, Denmark 18%, Germany 11%). Through introduction of positive, well-resourced cycle strategies they have managed to increase cycling and improve cycling safety.

3.95 Many local journeys currently made by car could readily be made by cycle. In this country, seven out of ten trips are shorter than five miles, with half being shorter than two miles.

3.96 There is above average cycle use in some of the towns, notably Loughborough, due to the strong cycle tradition among its industrial base, its high student population and relatively flat topography. This has been consolidated and built upon through the development of an extensive cycleway network in the former TPP Loughborough/Shepshed Package area, which is outlined in more detail in Chapter 5a.

Specific Objective:

Increase safer cycling.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve personal security.
- Reduce road casualties.
- Reduce car travel to school.
- Reduce vehicle speeds in sensitive areas.
- Promote less car use.
- Reduce car commuting by managing parking.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

SAFETY OBJECTIVE

ROAD CASUALTY REDUCTION

3.97 Road Casualty Reduction is a key element in virtually all of the transport strategies, particularly road safety education, speed reduction, school travel, walking and cycling.

3.98 Not only do road casualties cause personal grief and suffering, the cost to the community is immense, and fear of accidents inhibits walking and cycling.

3.99 In 1999/2000 road casualties within the LTP area were distributed amongst the various user groups as shown in Table 3.3:

Table 3.3 1999/2000 Road Casualties by User Group

User Group	Casualties				
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	All	%
All Road Users	49	248	2115	2412	100
Pedestrians	4	21	134	159	7
Cyclists	3	1	127	131	5
M/Cyclists	10	46	170	226	9
Car Driver	20	120	960	1100	46
Car Pass.	6	35	482	523	22
Bus Occs.	1	5	74	80	3
Goods Occs.	5	17	156	178	7
Others	0	3	12	15	1

3.100 The causes of accidents generally fall into three basic categories: road deficiencies, road user error and vehicle defects. The County Council is able to address road deficiencies and road user error through the application of appropriate engineering measures, and road user behaviour through safety education initiatives.

3.101 Analysis of Leicestershire road traffic accidents underlines the fact that excessive or inappropriate speed contributes directly to almost one third of all injury accidents. When other contributory factors closely associated with speed are taken into account then the figure is significantly higher - over two thirds of all road traffic accidents resulting in injury to one or more of those involved. These factors include, for example, misjudging the speed of other vehicle, loss of control on a bend, error in overtaking and following too close.

3.102 Of particular concern are injury accidents which involve children and the more vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists). It is important that these accidents

continue to fall if people are to be encouraged to make fewer journeys by car.

3.103 Great Britain has a particularly poor child pedestrian fatality rate (per head of population) in comparison with other European nations, and within Leicestershire this is reflected in the 9% of injury accidents (1999/2000) involving children. They are a particularly vulnerable group, and deserving of special attention. In 1999/2000 the distribution of child (15 year olds and younger) casualties is as shown in Table 3.4:

Table 3.4 1999/2000 Child Casualties by User Group

User Group (children)	Fatal	Serious	Slight	All
All Children	1	10	212	223
Pedestrians	1	6	45	52
Cycle			38	38
Motorbike Passengers			2	2
Car Passengers		2	83	85
Bus Passengers		2	40	42
Goods Vehicle Passengers			2	2
Other			2	2
Seat Belt Used		2	56	58
Seat Belt Not Used			2	2
No Seat Belt Available			2	2

3.104 In addition to the more general safety measures to be employed, child casualties need to be targeted through education within schools and the ongoing provision of safer routes to schools.

Specific Objective:

Reduce road casualties

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve personal security.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Reduce vehicle speeds in sensitive areas.
- Reduce car travel to school.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION

3.105 Fear about road danger on the journey to schools is one of the main reasons parents give for driving children to school. Local road safety issues are being identified and addressed as part of School Travel Plans, which aim to increase travel to school by more sustainable modes. To support this initiative, and to ensure that parents and children feel safe crossing roads and cycling and walking to school, the County Council has a comprehensive education-training programme. The education programme needs to teach children the importance of transport other than the car, in an effort to break the current car culture.

Specific Objective:

Promote road safety through training, education and awareness.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Reduce road casualties.
- Reduce vehicle speeds in sensitive areas.
- Reduce car travel to school.
- Promote less car use.

SPEED REDUCTION

3.106 As stated earlier, speed is a major contributory factor in many road accidents. The LTP participation exercise highlighted considerable concern about excessive speeds, particularly in rural areas. Support for traffic calming schemes, however, was mixed with criticism of some schemes but praise of others. The County Council is developing a Speed Reduction Strategy, which aims to reduce the effect of excessive speed, and tackle difficulties with enforcement.

3.107 This is not to say that the roads with the highest vehicle speeds are necessarily the most dangerous. Per mile travelled, motorways are by far the safest roads in the country, carrying 15% of the traffic and accounting for just over 3% of the casualty accidents. The fatality rate on motorways is less than one third of that on built up roads. The majority of deaths and serious injuries occur on roads with a 30 mph limit. The major problem is one of driving too fast for the type of road and its prevailing conditions. The term 'speed' must therefore be considered in relation to the circumstances, surroundings and, especially, to the risks faced by road users at a given location.

3.108 The specific objective focuses on managing vehicle speeds in sensitive areas; however, the County Council aims to manage speeds countywide. Child pedestrians and cyclists are particularly vulnerable to excessive speed, and this can be addressed by training children to recognise and manage road danger, as well as influencing the use of the car to provide an environment in which the effects of speed are significantly reduced.

Specific Objective:

Reduce vehicle speeds in sensitive areas.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve personal security.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Reduce road casualties.
- Reduce car travel to school.

STREET LIGHTING

3.109 There are nearly 60,000 street lights on the County Council road network. In the past street lighting was mainly provided to improve road safety for motorists. Lighting is now recognised as important to the overall safety and security of an area. Poor lighting deters pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable transport users from using facilities during the hours of darkness. Perceived fears and concern over leaving vehicles or cycles in unlit areas reduces the use of a facility. Lighting of transport interchanges, footways, cycle routes and pedestrianised areas in town centres are of particular importance.

3.110 An additional concern is the current state of lamp columns, and the need for significant funds to carry out a comprehensive replacement programme.

Specific Objective:

Maintain and improve street lighting.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve personal security.
- Make public transport interchange more effective.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Reduce road casualties.

PERSONAL SECURITY

3.111 There is an important link between personal security and the achievement of the LTP objectives, as fear and perceived fear of crime is a deterrent to use of public transport, cycling and walking, and discourages more vulnerable transport users from travelling at night. This is especially true for females, and for young, elderly and disabled people, who have a higher perception of crime. Fear of crime can lead to car dependence, and in some instances social exclusion, in cases where journeys are not made through fear of crime. Some of the main issues which contribute to increased fear of crime, related to transport, are:

- lack of help points, poor lighting and lack of timetable information at public transport waiting facilities and interchanges;
- security at car parks;
- secluded areas, poor lighting, and lack of directional signing on walk and cycle routes.

Specific Objective:

Improve personal security.

Identifying Issues and Specific Objectives

3

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Increase bus passenger journeys.
- Make public transport interchange more effective.
- Improve social inclusion by the availability of public transport.
- Increase rail passenger journeys.
- Maintain and improve street lighting.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.

ENVIRONMENT OBJECTIVE

NETWORK MANAGEMENT

Highway Network Improvement

3.112 The achievement of the LTP objectives requires greater use of the alternatives to the car. However, traffic, particularly in the more rural areas, will continue to grow, and some communities will continue to suffer from the adverse environmental impact of high volumes of through traffic. In these situations, and where congestion is causing traffic to divert onto environmentally sensitive routes, targeted improvements to the highway network may be the only feasible solution to the problems.

3.113 The participation indicated that there was no general support for more road building, but that there was still support for bypasses as the only viable solution to traffic problems in some of the county towns, and their were suggestions that road building should not be ruled out for the smaller villages which experience heavy through traffic.

Intelligent Transport Systems

3.114 The Area Traffic Control (ATC) centre in Leicester provides Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) systems for both Leicester and Leicestershire. The Centre ensures the efficient management and development of the transport network. Recent investment has focussed on incorporating facilities for non-motorised users into the management of the network, as well as priority and information facilities for public transport. There will, however, remain an important role for UTC to ensure the efficient operation of the network for all users, and the SCOOT system has been refined to provide a dynamic system of traffic control which further enhances the performance of the existing highway network.

3.115 The use of the systems has increasingly moved from maximising car capacity to a wider role of ensuring that all modes of travel are adequately catered for. This will need to continue if the LTP objectives are to be met.

Trunk Roads

3.116 Following the Trunk Road Review carried out in 1998, DETR announced a number of significant changes relating to the Trunk Road network:

- a core network of about 60% of the previous Trunk Road network is to be retained by the Government;
- the responsibility for the remaining 40% (non-core routes) will be passed to Local Highway Authorities once negotiations with those authorities have been completed, a process known as de-trunking;
- the introduction of “virtual de-trunking” of the non-core network in April 1999 to allow greater involvement of Local Authorities;
- a programme of 37 major highway schemes over the next seven years;
- a programme of major studies (many of which will be multi – modal) to consider the most pressing problems not addressed by the programme of schemes.

3.117 The main impact of these measures on Leicestershire can be summarised as:

- the passing of control of the A6(T) and A47(T) to Leicestershire;
- the construction of the A6 Great Glen Bypass to start work in 2000/01 (within the Central Leicestershire LTP);
- studies on the M1 corridor, the A453(T) centred on M1 Junction 24, the A42(T), and M1 Junction 19. (The County Council is taking an active role in these studies.)

Core Routes

3.118 In the Leicestershire LTP area the Trunk Road core network consists of sections of the M1 and M69 motorways, A5(T), A46(T), A42(T), A50(T), and very short lengths of the M42, M6, A52(T), A453(T),and A14(T).

3.119 Significant developments are planned along the A5(T). The County Council has concerns about the existing safety record on this route, particularly at the junction with the A47 west of Hinckley, and there is a clear need for comprehensive works to address this. There are also significant concerns regarding the low bridge over the A5(T) in the same area. Both these issues are being considered in a Highways Agency study of the route, details of which are given in the Hinckley and Earl Shilton Area Strategy in Chapter 5b.

De-trunking of Non-Core Routes

3.120 In the LTP area the Trunk Road non-core routes are the A6(T) and the A47(T).

3.121 The County Council supports the de-trunking of the non core routes, and meetings have been held with the Highways Agency to establish and agree the role of the County Council prior to their formal de-trunking, particularly in relation to scheme identification and development control.

3.122 In recognition of the continuing importance of these two routes, a number of schemes, mainly on the A6, have been included in the Highways Agency programme to be completed prior to de-trunking.

3.123 Further non-safety related schemes on the remaining non-core network will be considered on the same basis as the existing non-trunk roads for which the County Council is Highway Authority.

3.124 The route along which there are most issues is the A6(T) between Leicester and M1 Junction 24, which passes through the centres of Loughborough, Hathern and Kegworth.

3.125 The issues relating to Loughborough and Hathern, principally involving improvements in and around Loughborough, are discussed in the Loughborough-Shepshed-Soar Valley Area Strategy in Chapter 5a.

3.126 Kegworth issues, mainly involving the Kegworth Bypass, are dealt with in the Castle Donington and Kegworth Area Strategy in Chapter 5d. This is in turn an element within the M1 multi-modal study which is also discussed in that Area Strategy.

3.127 The de-trunking will take effect during the course of the LTP period. Although this will lead to an increase in the mileage for which the County Council will be responsible, the additional funding required has not been estimated in the LTP, as discussions are still taking place with the Highways Agency. No allowance has, therefore, been made in the Implementation Programme for the cost implications of transferring the de-trunked parts of the road network from Highways Agency to County Council control. This will be determined following negotiations between the County Council and the Highways Agency prior to de-trunking.

Multi-modal and Other Studies

3.128 Significant delays on the motorway and Trunk Road network have inevitable consequences for the local roads as traffic diverts to them. This is particularly the case on the A6 (T) through Kegworth and other minor roads through Castle Donington, Diseworth and Long Whatton.

3.129 It is, therefore, vital that decisions are taken as a consequence of the M1 study in particular as soon as practicable, because of the wide ranging impact on the local network.

3.130 The M1 Junction 19 study is detailed in Chapter 5e: Rural Areas and County Towns.

Specific Objective:

Concentrate traffic movements and growth on the safest and most suitable roads.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Ensure transport and land-use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Reduce road casualties.

- Facilitate the efficient and sustainable movement of road freight on the most suitable routes.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

SCHOOL TRAVEL

3.131 Perceived fear over children's safety on their journey to school has resulted in increasing numbers of parents driving their children to school by car, and this creates particular traffic and safety problems around schools. It also encourages unhealthy car-dependant lifestyles, and reduces children's freedom. It has been estimated that during term time in urban areas, between 8am and 9am, about one car in eight was on the school run, and that one in five was on the school run at the peak time of 8.50am.

3.132 Concerns were expressed throughout the LTP participation exercise about school travel and the associated congestion it causes, particularly outside the schools.

3.133 The County Council currently spends around £5 million each year on the provision of home to school bus travel, some of which is in excess of statutory requirements. However, parental choice in the education system has allowed parents to choose schools outside the catchment area, and this further increases the proportion of journeys made by car. There is scope for reviewing travel arrangements for all school journeys as part of a comprehensive programme, including environmental and health issues. This will need to address the provision and cost of out of catchment bus travel, as well as the standard of vehicles. In the past many of these have been quite old, which may have created an unfavourable impression of bus travel among school children.

Specific Objective:

Reduce car travel to school.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve personal security.
- Increase bus passenger journeys.
- Increase awareness of public transport travel opportunities.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Reduce road casualties.
- Promote less car use.
- Reduce vehicle speed in sensitive areas.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.

TRAVEL AWARENESS AND BUSINESS TRAVEL PLANS

3.134 The 1997 Labour Force survey, reported in Transport Statistics Great Britain 1998, showed that 75% of journeys to work in the East Midlands were made by car. There is significant congestion at certain times in the larger towns, although this is less extensive than that found in Leicester and the larger conurbations. Much of this congestion results from car commuters, and leads to environmental problems, particularly in and around the town centres.

3.135 There is an opportunity to decrease car travel and the problems it brings through the implementation of Business Travel Plans and raising awareness of the alternatives. Companies need to consider how staff and car owners travel in the future, and the benefits that less car travel might bring. These can be summarised as:

- reduced congestion, reduced demand for car parking, improved access for employees visitors and deliveries;
- a healthier, more motivated work force;
- less impact on the local community and reduced over-spill parking in residential areas;
- improved environment in terms of air quality, noise and global warming.

3 Identifying Issues and Specific Objectives

Specific Objective:

Promote less car use.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Quality Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.
- Increase bus passenger journeys.
- Increase awareness of public transport travel opportunities.
- Increase rail passenger journeys.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Reduce car commuting by managing parking.
- Promote road safety through training education and awareness.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

PARKING

3.136 Types of car parking can be categorised as:

- private non residential (PNR);
- private residential parking;
- public off street car parking;
- on street parking.

3.137 Local Authority control of parking is split between the County Council and the District Councils. Whilst the former has the power to introduce on-street parking restrictions, most other controls are exercised by the District Councils. This is through the management of the public car parking in their ownership and through the planning system, by controlling parking provision at new developments. However, the vast majority of off-street parking is outside Local Authority control. This encompasses private spaces at businesses and leisure locations (PNR parking), residential parking and privately operated public car parks.

3.138 The availability of parking can be an important factor in choice of transport, particularly for trips to town centres and for shorter journeys. National policies seek to deter commuter parking whilst ensuring that enough good quality short stay parking is available to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres.

3.139 The LTP participation exercise revealed significant concerns about the introduction of restraint-based parking policies, particularly before significant improvements are made to the alternatives. The development and implementation of parking strategies will have to have due regard to those concerns, to ensure that appropriate measures are introduces with public support and in a phased way with other transport improvements.

Specific Objective:

Reduce car commuting by managing parking.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Ensure transport and land-use planning are consistent and complementary.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.
- Increase bus passenger journeys.
- Increase rail passenger journeys.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Promote less car use.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

CLIMATE CHANGE

3.140 Since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the effect of greenhouse gases on change in climate has been of great concern. The Government is currently drafting a Climate Change Programme, and the recommendations will be taken into account in future LTP strategies. The Government's objectives are to reduce emissions of six greenhouse gases to 12.5% below 1990 levels

by 2012. There is also a goal to reduce CO_2 emissions by 20% below 1990 levels by 2010.

3.141 Measures that reduce CO_2 emissions will also benefit the general air quality in an area. Initiatives to improve the fuel efficiency of vehicles will have the greatest impact. Reducing overall traffic growth and tackling congestion will also have important benefits.

Specific Objective:

Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Promote less car use.
- Increase bus passenger journeys.
- Increase awareness of public transport travel opportunities.
- Make public transport interchange more effective.
- Increase rail passenger journeys.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Reduce car travel to school.
- Enhance the attractiveness and viability of town centres.
- Concentrate traffic movements and growth on the safest and most suitable roads.
- Reduce car commuting by managing parking.
- Increase rail freight tonnage.
- Facilitate the use of waterways for the carriage of freight.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Strategy.
- Ensure that transport and land use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

NOISE

3.142 For a large number of locations in the county, the predominant source of noise will be that from road traffic. The World Health Organisation (WHO) set down some recommended maximum noise levels for daytime and night-time inside dwellings, and for daytime in gardens and amenity areas. Planning Policy Guidance note 24 sets out noise levels, against which development proposals should be assessed, which correlate with the WHO values.

3.143 A UK national survey in 1992 (BRE 1992) found that 56% of homes were exposed to daytime noise levels exceeding the WHO recommended daytime noise level and that 7% were above the qualifying noise level for noise insulation regulations (which apply to new roads). They also observed that road traffic noise was noticeable outside over 90% of dwellings, even though only about 5% of their sample faced main roads.

3.144 Noise from traffic is a combination of tyre, engine, exhaust, brakes, vibration and body-rattle noise. It is accentuated by braking and accelerating, high speed and travelling in low gears. It is usually perceived as a problem when there are noticeable peaks against the ambient background.

3.145 Whilst small changes in traffic levels do not impact greatly on traffic noise, steps can be taken to minimise noise by:

- taking traffic out of the most sensitive areas;
- reducing traffic speeds;
- using low noise surface materials and improving the maintenance of the road surface.

3.146 These measures are considered in the relevant sections of Chapter 4.

INTEGRATION OBJECTIVE

3.147 There is a need to improve integration of transport policy and strategies, both with other related policy areas and between modes of transport. Many of the issues surrounding integration have already been covered in the preceding sections, but of particular importance is the need for effective integration between land use and transport planning.

3 Identifying Issues and Specific Objectives

LAND USE/TRANSPORT INTEGRATION

Policy Background

3.148 Leicestershire County Council is the Strategic Planning Authority for the County of Leicestershire, and is responsible for the preparation of the Structure Plan. The adopted Structure Plan is currently under review, and the Deposit Draft of the new Structure Plan was placed on deposit in May 2000. Although the timescale of the LTP and the Structure Plan are not identical, due to the statutory requirements of the Structure Plan process, they are sufficiently close to ensure that the two documents are fully compatible.

3.149 The District Councils are responsible for the determination of the majority of planning applications, and for control over the implementation of most land-use planning policies. Therefore, working in partnership with them is important to ensure integration of land use and transport policies.

3.150 The Structure Plan sets out strategic land-use and transportation policies, and the transportation policies in the Deposit Draft of the Structure Plan embody the objectives of Government policies.

3.151 The Transport White Paper was published too late for the Local Plans to include specific references to it, but in most instances the Local Plans include policies that accord with, and are complementary to, those objectives.

Land Use Dispersal

3.152 The growth of car ownership and company cars has given people more freedom to choose where to shop or work, and greatly facilitated car-intensive lifestyles.

3.153 A significant proportion of past development has taken place in locations that may have had few or no local facilities. Where facilities have been provided as part of a development they have often been very basic. Developments of this type tend to be car dependent, and people would need to own at least one car, and possibly two, to meet their transport needs.

3.154 Policies in the adopted Structure Plan seek to locate development in locations that can be served by a range of transport modes. The planning process through the Deposit Draft Structure Plan is being used to ensure that site selection is rigidly controlled to secure better integration between land use and transport to bring about lower car use. It requires that development be allocated in the following priority order:

- within or adjoining the central area of Leicester City and within or adjoining other town centres of the main towns;
- other town centres within Leicester and its adjoining settlements;
- other locations within the urban areas of Leicester and its adjoining settlements, and the main towns where there are good public transport, walking and cycling links with central areas and other more local centres;
- locations which adjoin the urban areas of Leicester and its adjoining settlements, and the main towns where there are good public transport, walking and cycling links with central areas and other more local centres;
- if required to meet any remaining development requirements, locations within and adjoining other settlements where there are good public transport links to Leicester City and / or main towns.

3.155 Developments in the latter two locations will only be permitted provided commercial public transport services to defined standards are secured.

Mitigating The Impact Of New Development

3.156 Current Local Plans run to 2006, to tie in with the adopted Structure Plan. All will require revision once adopted to tie in with the revised Structure Plan. This will offer the opportunity to ensure consistency with transport policies included in this and future LTPs. The improved management of Local Plan preparation proposed by the Government in PPG12 should help Local Authorities reduce the time taken to reach adoption when current plans are reviewed and rolled forward.

3.157 The planning system allows Local Authorities to seek improvements to mitigate the impact of developments through Government Circular 1/97 "Planning Obligations". Through planning obligations opportunities can be taken to improve access to developments by the more sustainable modes.

Specific Objective:

Ensure that transport and land-use planning strategies are consistent and complementary.

Main Links with other Objectives:

- Improve social inclusion through the availability of public transport.
- Increase bus passenger journeys.
- Increase rail passenger journeys.
- Increase safer walking.
- Increase safer cycling.
- Facilitate the efficient and sustainable movement of road freight on the most suitable routes.
- Increase rail freight tonnage.
- Reduce car commuting by managing parking.
- Concentrate traffic movements and growth on the safest and most suitable roads.
- Promote less car use.
- Reduce road casualties.
- Comply with the Air Quality Regulations 1997 and the National Air Strategy.
- Reduce emissions of CO_2 from transport.

FUNDING

3.158 Government funds for Local Authority capital expenditure have been falling over many years. It is quite clear that this has seriously inhibited the ability of Local Authorities to address the ever-increasing growth in traffic by implementing measures to make the alternative modes of travel more attractive and to mitigate the more serious impacts of traffic in sensitive areas.

3.159 This has been particularly the case in the more rural parts of the country, outside the main conurbations. Revenue funds have also been, and will continue to be, under pressure, and authorities have found it difficult to carry out activities that would support the objectives that are set out in the Transport White Paper.

3.160 A number of financial opportunities have been provided by the Transport White Paper and the introduction of LTPs:

- a recognition that if the problems of transport are to be addressed, it must be given a high priority for competing funds;
- an increase in funds provided nationally as a result of the three year comprehensive spending review;
- a change to a single block allocation to Local Authorities to allow greater flexibility in determining priorities locally;
- the introduction of the Rural Bus Grant for support for non-commercially viable rural services;
- the introduction of a Rail Passenger Partnership Fund to support proposals where a commercial case cannot be made.