



**Topic Paper**

**Transportation**

**Version 2  
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## 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This document is one of a number of topic papers produced as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy for North Dorset. It provides a general overview of transportation in North Dorset, summarising the relevant evidence base which informs the policies in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD. It sets out the policy background - at national, regional and local levels - against which the Core Strategy is set. The Paper is a working document which will be updated as evidence is acquired and the consultation process proceeds.
- 1.2. This revision takes into account changes to the national planning framework, notably through the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

## 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1. While the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides guidance for local planning authorities in drawing up plans, it does not change planning law which requires that planning applications must still be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the NPPF is not only a material consideration in planning decisions but must also be taken into significant account when preparing Local and Neighbourhood Plans.
- 2.2. The great majority of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Minerals Planning Guidance (MPG) issued by the government over previous years has been replaced by the NPPF.
- 2.3. One significant PPS replaced by the NPPF was PPS 12 'Local Spatial Planning'. It set out the importance of spatial planning in helping to achieve the objectives of Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS). Every local authority had to prepare a SCS and the Community Strategy for Dorset (DSCS)<sup>2</sup> is the SCS both for the County and for North Dorset. The DSCS provides the means for considering and deciding how to address crosscutting issues such as accessibility and the social and economic future of Dorset.
- 2.4. The NPPF has similar objectives in having at its core a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As stated in the NPPF:

*"All plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally."<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Shaping Our Future: The Community Strategy for Dorset 2010 - 2020 - Dorset Strategic Partnership (November 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Para 15, National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).

- 2.5. The Department for Transport has, over the years, published various specific guidance and notes on highways, traffic and transport issues<sup>4</sup> but such guidance has not been replaced by the NPPF and is still valid.
- 2.6. In addition, a number of broader publications provide guidance on dealing with a variety of issues<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.0 Background

3.1. North Dorset is an area of market towns with surrounding villages set within rural hinterlands, categorised as 'very rural' in terms of population distribution<sup>6</sup>. The rurality of North Dorset can be further refined with regard to sparseness, as Figure 1 illustrates. The generally dispersed nature of development and spread of population within the District means that transportation is a particularly important crosscutting issue, with social, economic and environmental impacts.

| Urban | Rural       |         |           |        |         |           | Total         | % rural     |
|-------|-------------|---------|-----------|--------|---------|-----------|---------------|-------------|
|       | Less Sparse |         |           | Sparse |         |           |               |             |
|       | Town        | Village | Dispersed | Town   | Village | Dispersed |               |             |
| 0     | 29,758      | 26,338  | 6,012     | 0      | 0       | 0         | <b>62,108</b> |             |
| 0.0%  | 47.9%       | 42.4%   | 9.7%      | 0.0%   | 0.0%    | 0.0%      |               | <b>100%</b> |

**Figure 1: Figure 1: Population Distribution in North Dorset 2009<sup>7</sup>**

3.2. Three large roads traverse the District, namely A30, A350 and A354 while A303 and A31 touch the District in the north and south respectively. These roads are supported by a wide network of smaller roads to serve North Dorset's settlements. Many of these roads are of restricted width, frequently with bends and hills.

<sup>4</sup> For example, DfT's Local Transport Note 1/08 offers guidance on designing traffic management schemes to minimise their impact on the streetscape.

<sup>5</sup> Manual for Streets - Department for Communities and Local Government and Department for Transport (March 2007) and Manual for Streets 2 - Department for Transport (September 2010), for instance, provide guidance on dealing with all users of streets, not only cars.

<sup>6</sup> The DEFRA classification system uses the following breakdown:

- 'Very rural': if 80% or more of their population live in either rural settlements or market towns. A 'rural settlement' is any settlement of less than 10,000 people and a 'market town' is a settlement of 10,000 to 30,000 people providing certain functions and services to its wider rural hinterland.
- 'Mostly rural': if between 50% and 80% of their population live in rural settlements or market towns.
- 'Part rural': if between 26% and 50% of their population live in rural settlements or market towns.
- 'Major urban': if not any of the above but either at least 50% or at least 100,000 of their population live in an urban area with a total population of 750,000 or more.
- 'Large urban': if not any of the above but either at least 50% or at least 50,000 of their population live in an urban area with a total population of 250,000 or more.
- 'Other urban': if not any of the above.

<sup>7</sup> Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs 2009. Settlements of over 10,000 inhabitants are classified as 'urban'; others are 'town and fringe', 'village or hamlet' and 'dispersed' depending on size, based on residential densities in 1 hectare cells across England and Wales. Density is also used to assess sparseness.

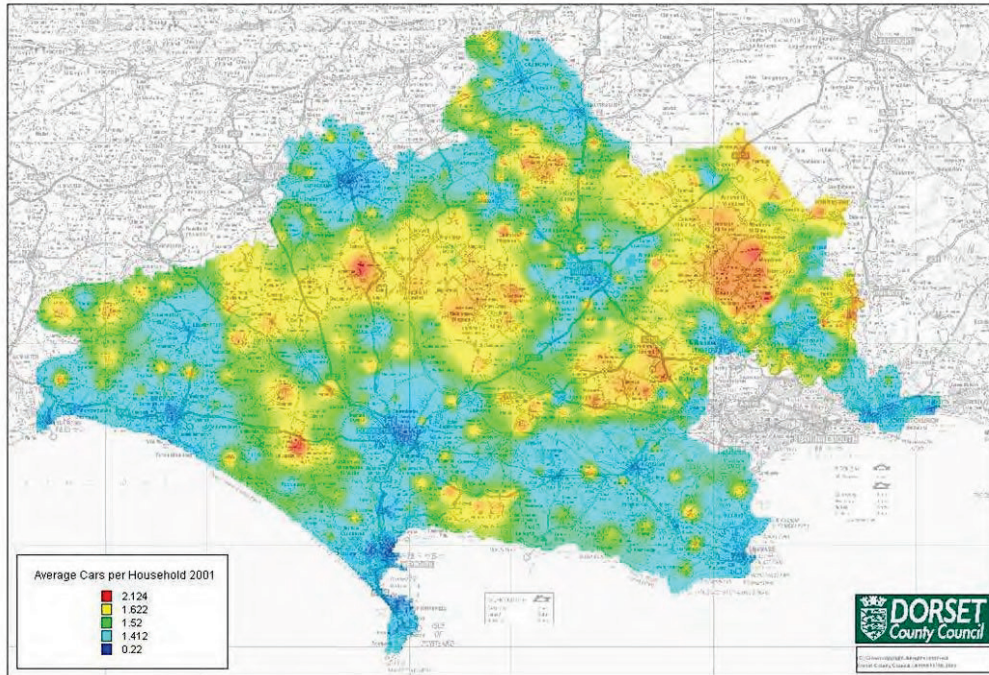
- 3.3. The general character of many of the roads in North Dorset can be surmised from the fact that only 8% of the District's roads are classified as A. Around 8% of the District's roads are of B classification, about 37% are class C and some 45% are unclassified. Problems created by increasing levels of traffic are compounded by the use of often unsuitable roads: unsuitable by the nature of the roads themselves (narrow, bendy and with obscured sightlines on bends) and by the nature of the traffic using them (commuters, commercial vehicles, buses and large agricultural vehicles and machinery). Combination of these two factors leads to a range of problems, including damage to road surfaces and verges, road safety hazards and congestion.
- 3.4. Car ownership and usage in the District is relatively high outside the towns (Figures 2 and 3), reflecting the dispersed population and the poor provision, or complete lack, of public transport in many parts of the District. While a certain amount of this stems from car dependence, much relates to car reliance, in other words, without a car people cannot travel to work, health facilities and so on<sup>8</sup> easily or at all.

| Number of cars or vans |           | No car or van | 1      | 2     | 3     | 4 or more |
|------------------------|-----------|---------------|--------|-------|-------|-----------|
| <b>Urban</b>           |           | 0             | 0      | 0     | 0     | 0         |
| <b>Rural</b>           | Town      | 2,613         | 6,322  | 3,363 | 677   | 218       |
|                        |           | 73.6%         | 54.9%  | 42.9% | 39.3% | 36.0%     |
|                        | Village   | 803           | 4,334  | 3,597 | 810   | 301       |
|                        |           | 22.6%         | 37.6%  | 45.8% | 47.0% | 49.7%     |
|                        | Dispersed | 133           | 858    | 888   | 235   | 87        |
|                        |           | 3.7%          | 7.5%   | 11.3% | 13.6% | 14.4%     |
| <b>Total</b>           |           | 3,552         | 11,514 | 7,848 | 1,722 | 606       |
| <b>Total %</b>         |           | 100%          | 100%   | 100%  | 100%  | 100%      |

Figure 2: Vehicle Ownership in North Dorset 2001.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The Commission for Integrated Transport identifies these two categories of car users - those who have a 'habit' of car use who do not consider other modes of transport and those for whom other modes of transport are impracticable : Planning for Sustainable Travel - CFIT (October 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Although the 2001 Census figures are now somewhat dated, there is no reason to suppose that the basic distribution of ownership levels has significantly changed.



**Figure 3: Average Car Ownership per Household 2001**

3.5. The reliance of workers in North Dorset on the private car to travel to work can be inferred from Figure 4, where the relatively high proportion of home working may also reflect the lack of public transport and the increasing costs of private car ownership.

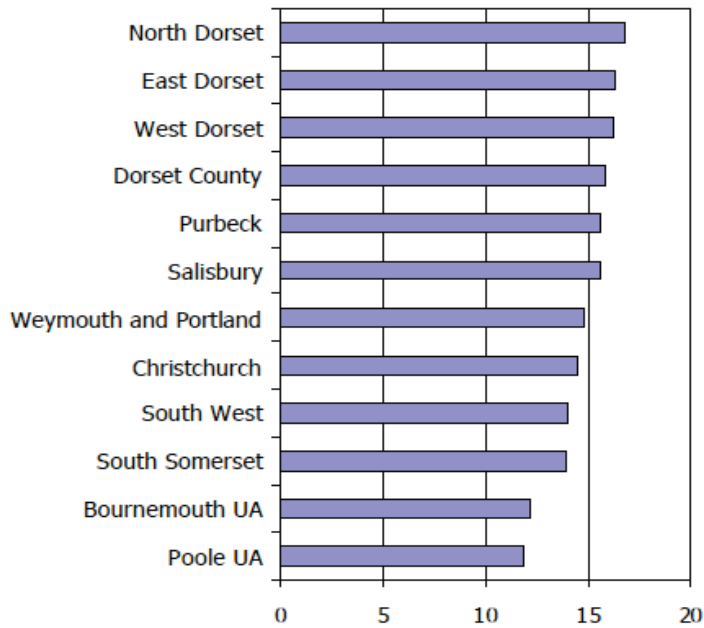
|                                        | England & Wales |        | North Dorset  |               |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| All people aged 16-74 in employment    | 23,627,754      |        | <b>28,730</b> |               |
| People who work mainly at or from home | 2,170,547       | 9.19%  | <b>4,052</b>  | <b>14.10%</b> |
| Driving a car or van                   | 13,050,529      | 55.23% | <b>16,667</b> | <b>58.01%</b> |
| On foot                                | 2,364,633       | 10.01% | <b>4,583</b>  | <b>15.95%</b> |
| Bus; Mini Bus or coach                 | 1,747,683       | 7.40%  | <b>400</b>    | <b>1.39%</b>  |
| Passenger in a car or van              | 1,477,211       | 6.25%  | <b>1,469</b>  | <b>5.11%</b>  |
| Train                                  | 964,642         | 4.08%  | <b>256</b>    | <b>0.89%</b>  |
| Underground; metro; light rail; Tram   | 710,083         | 3.01%  | <b>34</b>     | <b>0.12%</b>  |
| Bicycle                                | 650,977         | 2.76%  | <b>725</b>    | <b>2.52%</b>  |
| Motorcycle; Scooter; moped             | 258,344         | 1.09%  | <b>302</b>    | <b>1.05%</b>  |
| Taxi or minicab                        | 122,478         | 0.52%  | <b>82</b>     | <b>0.29%</b>  |
| Other                                  | 110,627         | 0.47%  | <b>160</b>    | <b>0.56%</b>  |

**Figure 4: Mode of Travel to Work 2001**

3.6 Although the 2001 Census showed that about 70% of the working age



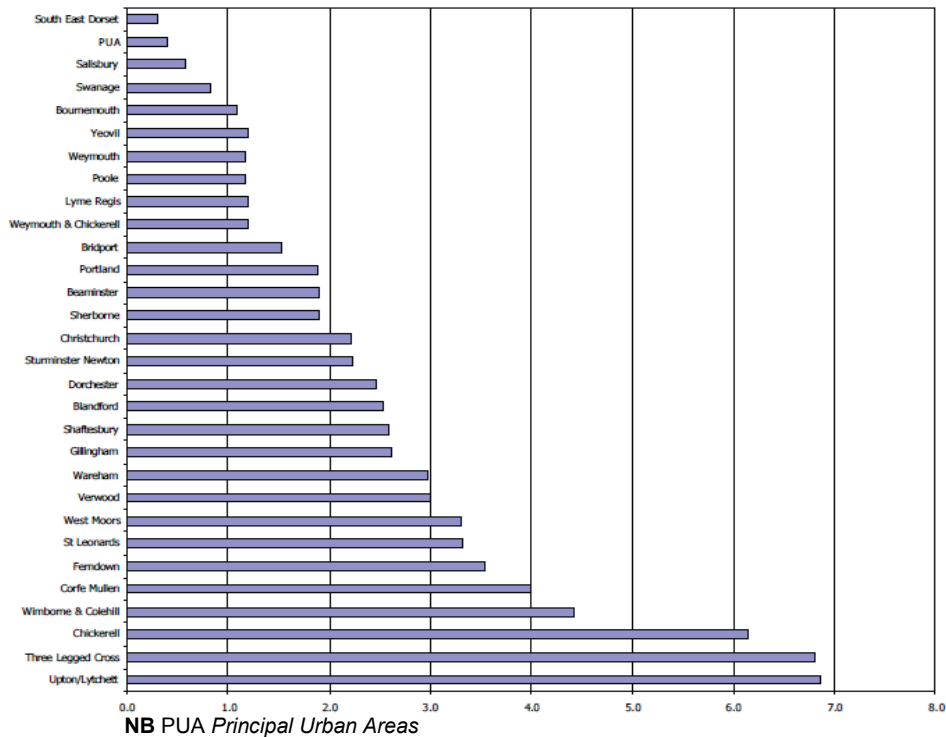
population both lived and worked in North Dorset, it also showed that North Dorset had a net loss of over 3,000 workers who travelled to work destinations outside the District. These destinations were mainly in other parts of North Dorset, Wiltshire and Somerset but commuting to the South East Dorset conurbation from Blandford and the southern part of the District was also an issue. The linked provision of homes, jobs and services was a key element of regional policy. It remains an important issue for North Dorset now that regional policy is being abolished, especially since in North Dorset as commuters in the District travel on average further (17 km) than in any other part of Dorset and the South West region (16km and 14km respectively).



**Figure 5: Average Distance (km) Travelled by Commuters**

3.7 The containment index<sup>10</sup> shown in Figure 5 for Dorset towns reflects the extent of commuting. It is noticeable that the market towns in North Dorset are grouped together as being relatively less contained than a number of other similarly sized settlements in Dorset.

<sup>10</sup> This is obtained by dividing the number of people of working age and in employment who live and work in each town by the total number of in- and out-commuters. Scores under one indicate a settlement is more self-contained (fewer people commute to and from the town than commute within it), scores above one indicate a settlement is less self-contained.



**Figure 6: Containment Index for Dorset Towns 2001**

- 3.8 Transport infrastructure can impact on social exclusion. If employment opportunities and services (particularly new developments) are in locations that are poorly served by transport then they will be inaccessible to parts of the population. Socially excluded people may be prevented from accessing employment and services because they have no access to private transport, cannot afford the fares or because there are inadequate public transport services and connections<sup>11, 12</sup>. On the other hand, accessibly located new developments, or changes to existing business and services locations, together with improvements to transport, can help to increase social inclusion.
- 3.9 Generally, transport costs in rural areas bear down proportionally more than in urban areas. In villages and hamlets, transport costs represent 18.4% and 17.7% of total household expenditure compared with 14.5% in urban areas<sup>13</sup>. Given that the gross median weekly earning figure in North Dorset is only 80% of the national figure and the second lowest in Dorset<sup>14</sup>, transport costs are clearly a matter of concern.
- 3.10 People living in the most rural areas, including North Dorset, travel 53% further than those living in urban areas, mainly by car. In 2009, 42% of households in the most rural areas had a regular bus service close by

<sup>11</sup> 'Finding Work in Rural Areas : Bridges and Barriers' , S Monk, J Dunn, M Fitzgerald and I Hodge - Joseph Rowntree Foundation (September 1999).

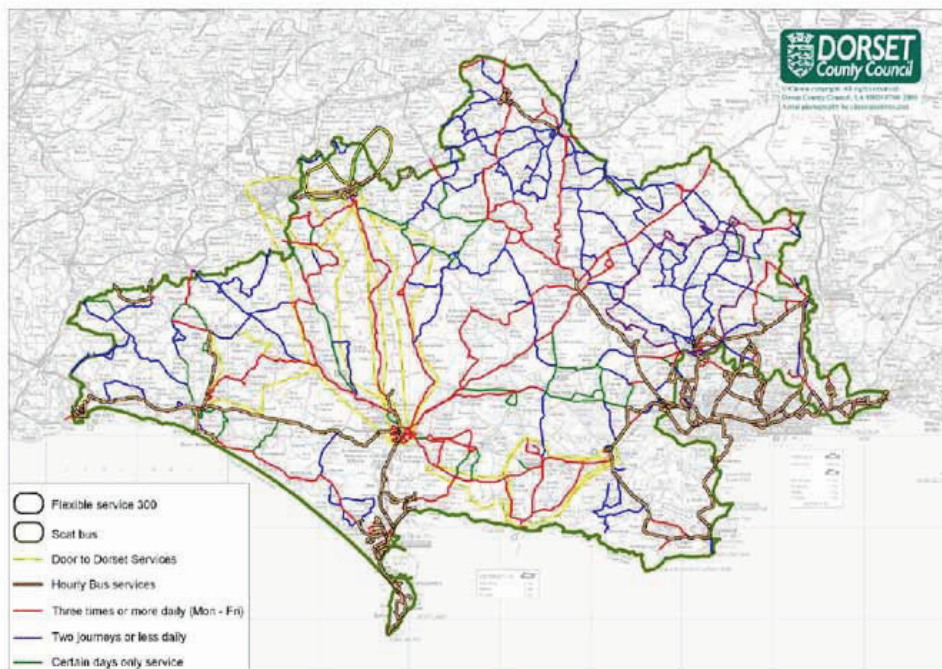
<sup>12</sup> 'Young People and Transport in Rural Areas' , P Storey and J Brannen - Joseph Rowntree Foundation (July 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Statistical Digest of Rural England 2012 - DEFRA (2012).

<sup>14</sup> The Office of National Statistics uses the median or mid-point value as it is less affected by extreme values.

compared to 96% of urban households<sup>15</sup>. Some 17% of members of households in rural areas are likely to face a walk of over 14 minutes to the nearest bus stop which offers a bus at least every hour. This compares with less than 4% of those in towns and larger villages. This situation has worsened in rural areas since 2000, when the figure was 13%.

- 3.11 The travel picture in North Dorset generally conforms to this national depiction. Much of Dorset is poorly served by bus routes, apart from services within Dorset's main towns and on key inter-urban routes. The District's only railway station is located at Gillingham on the London to Exeter main line. Figure 6 shows the paucity of bus services in North Dorset.



**Figure 7: Bus Services in Rural Dorset.**

- 3.12 In terms of volumes of traffic, North Dorset's roads have seen fairly constantly rising levels for many years. For example, A30 east of Shaftesbury saw traffic levels rise by 6% between 2000 and 2009. East of Gillingham, B3081 saw the volume of traffic rise by 16% during the same period. Blandford experienced a traffic increase of around 20% on the by-pass (A354). Use of C13 as an alternative to the A350 route between Blandford and Shaftesbury has become more noticeable since 2000. Traffic on the former increased by 17% between 2000 and 2009 while traffic increased on the Blandford-Shaftesbury section of A350 by only 3%. An increase of 8% was recorded on A357 between Blandford and Sturminster Newton.

<sup>15</sup> DEFRA op cit.

- 3.13 The impact of such levels of increase in use of the transport network is felt not only in levels of air pollution but other ways, such as noise and visual intrusion experienced by people living close to major routes and in the countryside. It may also be felt in the severance of rural communities, the pollution of watercourses by runoff from roads, the disturbance of wildlife and habitats and an increased risk of accidents and additional congestion.

## 4.0 Context for Transportation Policy

### *National*

- 4.1. Key influences in framing the Core Strategy are to be found in the NPPF, although other relevant guidance may also be found in other publications such as White Papers and government reports. In particular, the 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites'<sup>16</sup> sets out the government's policy for traveller sites.
- 4.2. Essentially, the NPPF sets out a number of 'core planning principles' which Local Plans must embrace with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. One of these is to:
- "actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable."*<sup>17</sup>
- 4.3. Local Plans must address the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change within the NPPF's overall guidance. Local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 4.4. As set out in the NPPF, one of the objectives for local planning authorities is to improve the conditions in which people travel by promoting sustainable transport. Consequently, when drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should seek to:
- take up opportunities for sustainable transport modes in order to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
  - achieve safe and suitable access to sites for all people; and
  - explore whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of development.
- 4.5. While stressing that developments which generate significant levels of movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport mode can be maximised, the NPPF refers to the need to support the rural economy by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development in rural areas.

<sup>16</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Para 17, National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

- 4.6. Reference is made in the NPPF to the location and design of new development being accommodating to pedestrian and cycle movements as well as giving access to high quality public transport facilities. The transport needs of people with disabilities are also highlighted.
- 4.7. The NPPF looks to Travel Plans and Transport Assessments to assist in dealing with new development to ensure that sustainability is properly embraced.
- 4.8. It is stressed in the NPPF that local planning policies should be looking to achieve a balance of land uses so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities. In terms of larger scale developments, policies should promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities, including work, within the area of the development. Key facilities, such as primary schools and local shops, should be located within walking distance of most properties wherever possible.
- 4.9. Parking is an issue given attention in the NPPF, covering both residential and non-residential parking. In particular, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure.
- 4.10. Where local parking standards for residential and non-residential development are set, local planning authorities should take into account:
  - the accessibility of the development;
  - the type, mix and use of development;
  - the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
  - local car ownership levels; and
  - an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles
- 4.11. It is noteworthy that local planning authorities are encouraged to identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.
- 4.12. The Department for Transport (DfT) has a number of strategic objectives, one of which is to promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, seeking to achieve a fairer society. As a result, DfT is working towards enhancing social inclusion and the regeneration of deprived or remote areas by improving connections with employment opportunities, key local services, social networks and goods. It is doing this with respect to transport infrastructure by seeking improvements in accessibility, availability, affordability and acceptability. Legislation, policy and good practice publications range across these areas of concern.
- 4.13. For example, the Traffic Management Act 2004 focusses on efforts to tackle congestion and disruption on the road network. The Act places a duty on local traffic authorities to ensure the efficient movement of traffic on their road network and those networks of surrounding authorities. As well as network management, the Act gives authorities the means to better manage parking, for example.

- 4.14. The DfT also publishes Traffic Advisory Leaflets on a range of matters, including cycling and walking, and Local Transport Notes concerned with issues such as shared space<sup>18</sup> and Cycle Infrastructure Design. Various Notes are also published by the DfT - Local Transport Note 1/08 offers guidance on designing traffic management schemes to minimise their impact on the streetscape, for example.
- 4.15. Other guidance has also been produced by the government, such as Manual for Streets<sup>19</sup> and Manual for Streets 2<sup>20</sup> which provide guidance on dealing with all users of streets, not only cars.
- 4.16. A number of other publications have relevance. The Eddington Study<sup>21</sup> found, amongst other things, clear evidence that a comprehensive and high-performing transport system is an important enabler of sustained economic prosperity. Network delays and unreliability have a direct impact on people and businesses. The Study stated that key inter-urban corridors are showing signs of increasing congestion and unreliability. For sustained productivity into the future, transport policy must reflect the economic and structural changes that are shaping the country's transport needs.
- 4.17. In response to the Eddington Study, the government published 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System'<sup>22</sup> in which five goals were presented:
- support economic growth;
  - tackling climate change;
  - contribute to better safety, security and health;
  - promote equality of opportunity;
  - improve quality of life.
- 4.18. These goals are all relevant at the local level, especially when elements such as connectivity and accessibility are highlighted. The report acknowledges that there are some tensions between the goals set out and that the maintenance and improvement of transportation infrastructure will involve some difficult choices. However, it is pointed out that some goals can become more significant in some circumstances than others, such that consideration of local factors will help determine priorities.

### **Regional**

- 4.19. The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)<sup>23</sup> previously provided a draft regional policy framework within which the draft Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) drew out transportation elements. It is recognised that with the abolition of regional planning the emerging

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<sup>18</sup> 'Shared space' is a design approach that seeks to change the way streets operate by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles, primarily through lower speeds and encouraging drivers to behave more accommodatingly towards pedestrians.

<sup>19</sup> DCLG and DfT op cit.

<sup>20</sup> DCLG and DfT op cit.

<sup>21</sup> Transport's role in sustaining the UK's productivity and competitiveness (December 2006).

<sup>22</sup> Delivering a Sustainable Transport System - DfT (November 2008).

<sup>23</sup> The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West incorporating the Secretary of State's proposed changes (July 2008).

RSS will not now be taken forward to adoption. Nevertheless, much of the evidence that underpinned the draft policies remains relevant.

- 4.20. In the emerging RSS, Policy SD4 'Sustainable Communities' stated, most notably, that growth and development should be planned and managed so as to create and maintain sustainable communities by:
- Linking the provision of homes, jobs and services based on role and function so that cities, towns and villages and groups of places have the potential to become more self contained and the need to travel is reduced;
  - Promoting a step change in public transport, taking steps to manage demand for travel, and promoting public transport.
- 4.21. The NPPF effectively restates the essence of this broad view:
- "Local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development..."<sup>24</sup>*
- 4.22. Aspects of policies and key parts of policies in the draft RTS still have relevance to North Dorset, especially:
- **Corridor Management** - making provision to manage the demand for long distance journeys and reduce the impacts of local trips on corridors of regional importance, in order to improve the reliability and resilience of journey times and to develop opportunities to facilitate a modal shift.
  - **Parking** - implementing measures to reduce reliance on the car and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes. To this end, relevant plans and strategies should include policies and proposals for parking standards relating to parking provision and parking charges.
- 4.23. A report on connectivity<sup>25</sup> was published in 2009 which the former South West Regional Assembly<sup>26</sup> had commissioned to examine the close relationship between economic prosperity and the transport network. It followed an earlier report prepared for the Regional Development Association<sup>27</sup> which concluded on the basis of the evidence collated during this research that inter-regional connectivity is more important to economic growth in the South West than intra-regional connectivity.
- 4.24. The study identified a number of regionally significant transport corridors in the region, two of which affect North Dorset, as shown in Figure 7:
- The Exeter – London (via Taunton and/or Salisbury) Corridor which includes the A303 (which passes across the very northern edge of the District at Bourton) and the Exeter to London Waterloo railway line (which passes through Gillingham) - the

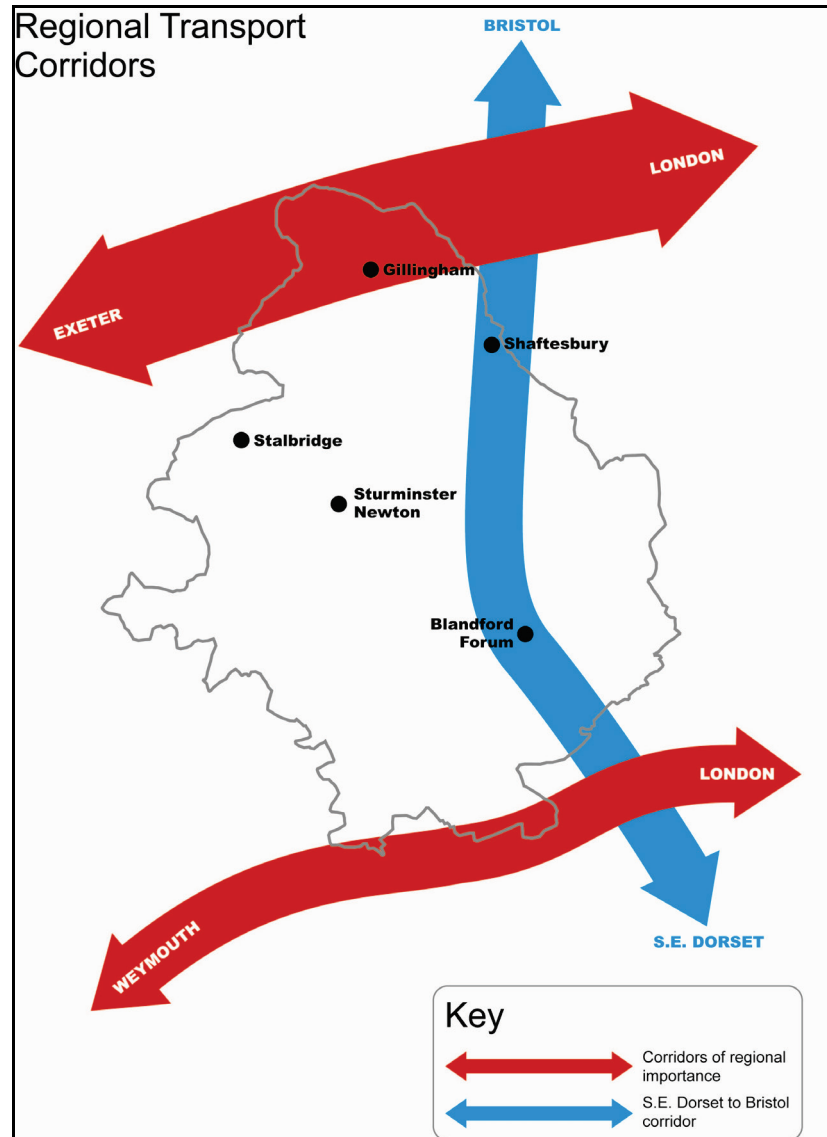
<sup>24</sup> Para 31, National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).

<sup>25</sup> 'Connectivity Problems, Challenges and Issues for the Region - Unlocking Economic Potential via Improve Connectivity' - South West Regional Assembly (March 2009)

<sup>26</sup> The Regional Assembly was abolished in May 2009.

<sup>27</sup> 'Intra-regional Connectivity in the South West - Final Report' South West of England Regional Development Association (April 2005).

- A30 (which passes through Shaftesbury) lies just to the south of these two main routes; and
- The Weymouth – London (via South East Dorset) Corridor which includes the A31 (touching the very southern edge of the District at Winterborne Zelston) and the A35 (which runs just outside the District to the south of Milborne St. Andrew).



**Figure 8: Major Transport Corridors affecting North Dorset**

4.25. The 2009<sup>28</sup> report acknowledged the South East Dorset to Bristol Corridor as one of three highway links of importance connecting the Bournemouth/Poole area with the M4 corridor and Bristol. It is also identified in the North and north East Dorset Transport Study<sup>29</sup> as an important north-south route, particularly for freight.

<sup>28</sup> SWRA op cit.

<sup>29</sup> North and north East Dorset Transport Study - Buro Happold (November 2008 to November 2011).



- 4.26. A report prepared for South West Councils<sup>30</sup> found that in terms of accessing jobs and training, the second most important barrier facing people in rural areas is transport, mainly the provision and availability of public transport. The issue of accessibility to employment, goods and services as well as leisure and the importance of transport infrastructure is also highlighted in the DSCS (see below).

### **County and Local**

#### Dorset Sustainable Communities Strategy

- 4.27. The Dorset Sustainable Communities Strategy (DSCS)<sup>31</sup> sets the community framework for the Core Strategy and the draft was prepared to be in close alignment with the priorities set out in the DSCS. The strategy seeks better access to services, employment and leisure and sees improvements to the county's transport infrastructure as key to achieving that objective. The strategy also wishes to encourage greater use of alternatives to the private car.
- 4.28. The Strategy highlights a number of issues, including:
- the poor standard of north-south routes;
  - congestion on the main routes crossing North Dorset, in part due to long stretches of single carriageway road;
  - the limited nature of the bus network in the rural and some urban parts of the County and the fact that it is beyond the resources available to the County Council to provide a frequent, high quality, countywide, bus service;
  - use of the private car still being the main means by which Dorset people get to work;
  - low levels of self containment in some settlements, resulting in high volumes of commuter traffic;
  - the location of services affecting accessibility as well as the availability of transport;
  - the environmental impact of roads such as A350 on the villages through which it passes.

#### South East Dorset Strategy

- 4.29. The South East Dorset Strategy<sup>32</sup> was drawn up particular to assist in the formulation of the South West Regional Strategy. It was supported by a number of technical papers which focussed on certain key issues. These included transportation<sup>33</sup> and commuting<sup>34</sup>. While relating primarily to the urban areas of Poole and Bournemouth, it took into account the close relationship with North Dorset via the important highway links which exist between the two areas, principally A350, and

<sup>30</sup> Significance of Transport Availability and Cost in Limiting Access to Jobs and Training - Fauber Mansell for SW Regional Assembly (May 2005).

<sup>31</sup> Shaping Our Future: The Community Strategy for Dorset 2010 - 2020, Dorset Strategic Partnership (November 2010).

<sup>32</sup> South East Dorset Strategy (November 2006) - Bournemouth Borough, Borough of Poole and Dorset County Councils.

<sup>33</sup> South East Dorset Strategy (November 2006) - Technical Paper SED08 Transportation - Bournemouth Borough, Borough of Poole and Dorset County Councils.

<sup>34</sup> South East Dorset Strategy (November 2006) - Technical Paper SED09 Commuting - Bournemouth Borough, Borough of Poole and Dorset County Councils.

the economic relationship which is reflected in commuting patterns between North Dorset and the conurbation.

#### Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan

4.30. The Local Transport Plan (LTP), prepared by the County Council and Bournemouth and Poole unitary authorities, is of significance in setting out the authorities' local transport strategies and policies together with an implementation programme. The current LTP<sup>35</sup> (known as LTP3) is for the 15 year period 2011-2026. It is through LTP3 that many of North Dorset's transport policy objectives will be achieved. LTP 3 sets a number of goals under the overarching core principle of sustainability which echo the DfT's goals in Delivering a Sustainable Transport System<sup>36</sup>:

- economic growth
- reduction in carbon emissions
- equality of opportunity
- improved safety, security and health
- improved quality of life for residents.

4.31. These priorities will be tackled by, amongst other things, widening choice, improving infrastructure, managing demand and making better use of existing assets. LTP3 has been developed within the framework of the Core Strategies and Local Plans which districts in Dorset are developing to set out a complementary strategy by:

- reducing the need to travel;
- managing and maintaining the existing network more efficiently;
- enhancing choices for active travel and 'greener' travel;
- providing realistic public transport alternatives to the private car;
- car parking;
- making travel safer;
- improving the strategic transport infrastructure.

4.32. The problems and challenges facing Dorset are set out in LTP3 in some detail, especially in terms of accessibility and use of the private car allied to the provision of public transport. In particular, measures are proposed to increase accessibility in the area and increase/improve alternatives to the private car. A suite of supporting strategy documents, covering topics such as rural transport and road safety, underpins LTP3.

4.33. LTP3 contains 3 year implementation plans<sup>37</sup> which detail the programmes for schemes to deliver the strategy. In the first period, programmes involving North Dorset include:

- improving rail-bus integration (with particular reference to Gillingham station);
- supporting rural and market town bus services;

<sup>35</sup> Dorset (Excluding South East Dorset) Local Transport Plan - Dorset County Council (April 2011) - referred to as LTP3.

<sup>36</sup> DfT op.cit.

<sup>37</sup> The 3 year Implementation Plans each sets out a three-year programme of actions and schemes which link the LTP priorities with available financial resources for delivery, including the LTP funding allocation from government. Indicators and targets will monitor the performance of delivery.

- improving rural accessibility;
- improving rural footways, cycle ways and the Trailway;
- reducing road casualties;
- maintaining highways.

#### Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

- 4.34. The Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership<sup>38</sup> (LEP) includes within its aims and objectives the intention to improve accessibility and infrastructure, including north-south transport links. One of the LEP's objective is to improve physical connectivity across the County.
- 4.35. An increasingly strong relationship is likely to develop between the work of the LEP and the LTP.

#### North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan

- 4.36. The current Local Plan<sup>39</sup>, adopted to 2011 but with many of its policies now 'saved', included a number of aims and objectives relating to transportation which look:
- to seek adequate and safe highways, including provision for walking, cycling and public transport;
  - to minimise the need to travel by locating services and employment opportunities in existing local centres, thereby protecting and enhancing the viability and utility of these centres;
  - to locate development relative to the highway and public transport network.

#### Local Studies

- 4.37. The Council has been a partner in three key studies sponsored by the County Council as Highway Authority. The first of these, the North and north East Dorset Transport Study<sup>40</sup>, forms part of the preparatory work which will inform the LDF process. Taking into account likely amounts of new residential development and its location, the Study identifies issues especially relating to accessibility, car usage, commuting and settlement self-containment, parking, public transport and road capacities (both physical and environmental). Consideration of these leads to a set of recommendations intended to enable the transport network in Dorset to begin to adapt to the levels of growth anticipated to 2026 and beyond. These recommendations relate to demand management, utilisation of the highway network, public transport, and walking and cycling.
- 4.38. The second study, the Dorset Residential Car Parking Study<sup>41</sup>, examines residential parking in Dorset and likely demand to 2026, leading to the development of appropriate parking standards to use when assessing new development.

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<sup>38</sup> Set up in June 2011 embracing Dorset County Council and the unitary authorities of Poole and Bournemouth.

<sup>39</sup> North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (First Revision) - North Dorset District Council (January 2003)

<sup>40</sup> The North and north East Dorset Transport Study: various documents – Buro Happold for Dorset County Council (November 2008 to November 2011).

<sup>41</sup> The Dorset Residential Car Parking Study - Dorset County Council (March 2010)

- 4.39. The A350 Corridor Study was completed in 2006<sup>42</sup> and aimed to determine appropriate transport policies for the improvement of the A350 Corridor and to mitigate the impacts on the local communities as a result of the growth in the volume and weight of traffic using the route. Most of the councils and the road user groups consulted were in favour of constructing the Spetisbury, Charlton Marshall and Sturminster Marshall and Outer Eastern Shaftesbury bypasses and an upgraded C13 with Melbury Abbas bypass. However, as this road has to date not been considered to be a strategic route, funding for improvements has not been available. A continuing lack of improvement to A350 is likely not only to result in even longer journey times along the road but is also likely to create more pressure on the A31 as traffic travelling north from the conurbation will use the A31/M27/ M3/A34 route as an alternative to A350.
- 4.40. The location and design of new developments will be crucial in promoting sustainable transport and accessibility to employment and services. The Commission For Integrated Transport sees the location of activities - homes, workplaces, health and other facilities - as acting as the physical 'structuring framework' for travel<sup>43</sup>. In 2009 the Council partnered the County Council in a study of Gillingham<sup>44</sup> to assess the potential of the town to accommodate new development to 2026 and beyond, where accessibility is an important element of the study<sup>45</sup>. The future growth scenarios developed within the study significantly reflect transportation and accessibility matters.
- 4.41. In 2010 the Council produced the North Dorset Local Accessibility Study<sup>46</sup>, which examined the accessibility of local services and facilities across the district.
- 4.42. The rural parts of the District are embraced by the Dorset Rural Roads Protocol<sup>47</sup> which emerged from the publication of Reclaiming Our Rural Highways<sup>48</sup>. It sets out the way in which road management will respect the nature of rural roads in their landscape and streetscape settings together with their function in serving and connecting settlements in a more local and intimate way as well as catering for longer distance travellers.

## 5.0 Stakeholder and Community Consultation

- 5.1 In June/July 2007 the Council undertook consultation<sup>49</sup> on the issues

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<sup>42</sup> The A350 Corridor Study - Burro Happold (2007).

<sup>43</sup> Planning for Sustainable Travel - CFIT (October 2009).

<sup>44</sup> Developing a Vision for the Growth of Gillingham - Atkins Ltd for Dorset County Council (December 2009).

<sup>45</sup> "Planning for a more effective location and form of development is at the heart of the challenge to achieve sustainable travel": Planning for Sustainable Travel - CFIT (October 2009).

<sup>46</sup> North Dorset Local Accessibility Study (March 2010) - North Dorset District Council.

<sup>47</sup> Dorset Rural Roads Protocol - Dorset County Council April 2008.

<sup>48</sup> Reclaiming Our Rural Highways - Dorset AONB Partnership (2005).

<sup>49</sup> The Council then decided to produce a Development Plan Document (DPD) containing both the Core Strategy and a limited number of development management policies.

- and options<sup>50</sup> for a core strategy.
- 5.2 Clear support was shown for parking standards to restrain the levels of residential and destination car parking but it was suggested that this should vary spatially according to accessibility to facilities, accessibility to other forms of transport and promotion of dual use of car parks. The lack of car parking at Gillingham train station was also highlighted.
  - 5.3 Responses to the issue of reducing reliance on unsustainable modes of transport showed strong support for all the options to locate, encourage and design facilities that positively provide for pedestrian and cycle access and encourage forms of public transport. It was expressed that a combination of all of the options would be most effective in tackling the issue. It was suggested that low key and local facilities be provided within suburban residential estates to discourage the need to travel and this suggestion links with support shown for mixed use developments. Again, the Trailway was identified as a catalyst to reduce reliance on unsustainable modes of transport.
  - 5.4 Other elements of the evidence base have involved consultation with stakeholders and the wider public in various ways, the outcomes of which have informed those studies and strategies. For example, the Residential Car Parking Study involved developers and other stakeholders providing input, the LTP has been prepared in active consultation with parish and town councils and the wider community, the report on growth in Gillingham<sup>51</sup> drew on community aspirations and development of the DSCS involved many community groups and organisations.
  - 5.5 Further consultation was undertaken in March 2010 on 'The New Plan for North Dorset', embracing the draft core strategy and development management policies for the district. A large number of responses covered a wide variety of issues, of which transport infrastructure and transportation issues figured large, and many concerns echoed those of the 2007 consultation exercise.
  - 5.6 The latter included parking provision and management as well as the number of large vehicles using rural roads. Traffic congestion at certain times in the market towns was also raised as an issue, often in conjunction with parking, as was the volume of traffic on certain through routes.
  - 5.7 The lack of public transport in the rural parts of the district was a major concern to many people. This related to routes and frequency of service and to actual timings in some cases, where outward and return journeys did not allow sufficient time for shopping or other activities to be undertaken satisfactorily or included large amounts of waiting time. Integrated timetabling for trains/buses was raised as an issue together with better interchange facilities and opportunities.
  - 5.8 There was a general concern about the need to discourage use of the private car and a desire to see better cycling facilities.

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<sup>50</sup> Core Strategy: Issues and Alternative Options - North Dorset District Council (June 2007)

<sup>51</sup> Atkins Ltd op cit.

## 6.0 Key Issues

- 6.1. Certain common features are readily apparent in national policy and guidance and identified in regional and local studies. Reducing the need to travel by car is one significant element, improving accessibility is another. The NPPF elaborates this while stressing the need to integrate land use and transport planning and highlighting the importance of parking policies. The Council will need to address these matters and the further issues arising from them. The NPPF also implicitly acknowledges that public transport does not extend into all rural areas and the Council is aware of the issues surrounding dealing with rural transport needs in areas of scattered communities and population.
- 6.2. In the regional context, the evolving RSS clearly set out the aim of linking homes, services and employment in such a way as to reduce the amount of necessary travel while improving public transport and managing travel demand. The draft RTS elaborated this within overall corridor management and drew out the importance of parking management in helping to reduce car use and support more sustainable modes of transport.
- 6.3. LTP3 sets out the main priorities for tackling transportation issues on a county-wide basis, acknowledging especially the crucial link between transportation and economic well-being, the need to address rural public transport and the environmental impact of traffic, amongst other things.
- 6.4. The objectives of the current Local Plan are still relevant, seeking to provide for safe adequate roads and for walking, cycling and public transport as well as minimising the need to travel.
- 6.5. These various issues can be tackled primarily by managing travel demand and developing and implementing appropriate spatial planning policies.

### ***Managing Travel Demand***

- 6.6. Managing travel demand<sup>52</sup> involves both reducing the need to travel and encouraging a shift from the private car to other means of transport, especially public transport. In North Dorset, travel needs to be addressed in terms of:
  - sub-regional movements, that is, journeys crossing the District boundary;
  - District movements, where trips are made between the settlements of North Dorset; and
  - local movements, within and around the towns and villages of North Dorset.
- 6.7. Sub-regional road movements primarily affect the A303, A30, A31 and A350 but also, to a lesser extent, the A354 and A357 / A3030 routes.

<sup>52</sup> North Dorset District and Dorset County Councils share responsibility for the activities involved here - for instance, the County Council brings forwards transport schemes through the Local Transport Plan while the District Council exerts influence when dealing with planning applications and managing car parking in the District (location, capacity and pricing).

Longer distance trips can also be made by rail from Gillingham to Yeovil, Salisbury and beyond. However, these routes are unlikely to be significantly enhanced over the next 20 years, even though parts of the A31 and A303 will exceed their capacities within this timeframe. Improvements to the A303 are not envisaged by the Highway Agency, although the Council has urged<sup>53</sup> the Agency to upgrade a section of the road to dual carriageway standard. Somerset County Council is also currently promoting a 'corridor improvement package' for A303/A358/A30.

- 6.8. The capacity of the rail line passing through Gillingham has been improved to some extent in recent years through the construction of a 'passing loop' in the Axminster / Chard area. However, the major upgrade which would result from the dual tracking of the railway is unlikely to take place in the foreseeable future<sup>54</sup>.
- 6.9. Growth in the District, particularly at Gillingham, will need to be planned with regard to the regional approach to transport and the likelihood that the major regional routes affecting North Dorset will not be significantly upgraded. Demand management will need to try and reduce pressure on the regional routes and make the best use of more local transport networks, where possible.
- 6.10. The District's main roads still have some capacity<sup>55</sup> to meet forecast demand to 2026, both technical (carrying) and environmental. However, there are 'pinch points' which restrict overall capacity (for example narrow highways and buildings close to the road in locations such as the B3092 in Sturminster Newton and the A357 through Stalbridge). Increases in traffic levels will need careful management to deal with these issues.
- 6.11. The outstanding issue involving movements within the District is that of accessibility - most notably to employment, to services, to education and to leisure facilities. At Gillingham, and elsewhere in the District, measures can be taken to make key routes more effective links for public transport, especially the Gillingham-Shaftesbury route and the Blandford Forum-Poole route. The North and north East Dorset Transport Study advocates a range of measures which can be examined to assist on this, building on existing solutions such as the NORDCAT<sup>56</sup> scheme and developing other demand responsive services to improve accessibility in all parts of the District. The

<sup>53</sup> On 30 January 2009 the Council resolved to call on the Highways Authority to dual the A303 trunk road between Mere and Wylve and also urged Dorset County Council and Wiltshire County Council to make representations to this effect.

<sup>54</sup> Connecting Local Communities: Route Plans 2009 – Route 4 – Wessex Routes, produced by Network Rail in March 2009 states that '*The expectation that both passenger and freight demand will double in the next 30-year period from 2007 will most likely be met on Strategic Route 4 by the operation of longer trains, or by exploiting paths which are not currently utilised, rather than by significant enhancements to infrastructure*'.

<sup>55</sup> The North and north East Dorset Transport Study: Working Towards a Transport Strategy - Buro Happold for Dorset County Council (March 2010).

<sup>56</sup> North Dorset Community Accessible Transport is a charitable organisation which provides a dial-a-ride door-to-door service in the North Dorset area primarily for the elderly, disable and socially excluded. It has vehicles based in Blandford Forum, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton.

continuing development of the North Dorset Trailway offers a non-car link between an increasing number of settlements.

- 6.12. The number of local movements within the District's towns and villages which are non-car borne will be encouraged by the appropriate location and layout of new development and the availability of appropriate public transport. The North and north East Dorset Transport Study examines the accessibility of SHLAA sites while the Gillingham Growth Study examines internal links in the town.
- 6.13. The impact of freight movement and planning for freight movement is important. Freight movements are dominated by road transport<sup>57</sup> and although rail freight has increased significantly over the last decade, road freight is still dominant. Around 70% of road freight has its origin and destination within the same region and, with a relatively limited rail network in Dorset and only Gillingham station in North Dorset, there is little opportunity for modal shift.
- 6.14. Cycling and walking facilities can be included when green infrastructure networks are being considered and when new developments are being planned. At present, progress can be sought by better utilising public transport and providing better cycling and walking opportunities, such as the Jubilee Link in Sturminster Newton.
- 6.15. In addition, the adoption of parking policies to manage parking in town centres will assist in promoting sustainable transport choices and reducing people's reliance on the car for work and other journeys.

#### ***Policy Development and Implementation***

- 6.16. Travel demand between settlements, and thus commuting, can be reduced if settlements are more self-contained, that is, are able to provide sufficient employment opportunities and service and education facilities to meet their residents' needs. The emerging RSS recognised that linking the provision of homes, jobs and services meant that settlements have the potential to become more self-contained and the need to travel is reduced. However, this requires a step change in the provision of public transport as well as promoting public transport and managing demand for travel.
- 6.17. Other Topic Papers<sup>58</sup> address the matter of the location of new development and the need to relate it properly to the transport network. Commuting, for example, is an issue raised in the Economy Topic Paper. Policies in the Core Strategy will therefore reflect the clear linkage of new homes, jobs and travel and deal with the location of new development, public transport and the encouragement of non-car modes of transport.
- 6.18. Implementation of these policies will be carried out by a number of means:

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<sup>57</sup> Network Analysis of Freight Traffic - MDS Transmodal Ltd for DfT (September 2009).

<sup>58</sup> Particularly relevant are the Topic Papers dealing with the Spatial Strategy, Economy and Housing.



- Planning conditions. The use of planning conditions to achieve planning objectives is well established and a key element of policy implementation.
- Planning obligations. Improvements to transport infrastructure and public transport provision can be achieved by careful use of planning obligations.
- Negotiation with developers. In the course of pre-application discussions, the LPA can influence new development schemes at an early stage to achieve more sustainable patterns of transport.
- Properly assessing development impact. Preparation of Travel Plans and Travel Assessments can help raise awareness of transport issues and achieve more sustainable transport. They can also encourage developers to properly consider the transport impact of their proposals as part of the overall design process.
- Parking control/management. The application of on and off-street parking controls, including charges, can encourage the use of public transport.
- Traffic management. Well designed traffic management measures, undertaken in conjunction with other planning and transport measures, can help in promoting walking, cycling and public transport and the introduction of residents' parking schemes can produce local environmental benefits.
- Partnership working and supporting other plans/strategies. In order to achieve its objectives, the Council will need to work with others especially where it does not hold a primary responsibility in areas which it is seeking to influence other plans and strategies, such as the LTP. Working with local communities and groups will ensure that the most appropriate and feasible courses of action are adopted.

## 7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1. Managing travel demand will be key to achieving more sustainable transport patterns in North Dorset and will be achieved by a combination of means. The requirements of different types of vehicles and use of particular routes by various types of traffic need to be taken into account.
- 7.2. Given the nature of the transport system and network within North Dorset, there are very limited opportunities to tackle problems arising from the movement of freight vehicles, especially the larger ones.
- 7.3. Opportunities exist for achieving more sustainable transport patterns within the existing physical fabric in North Dorset but the location of new development must be determined within the existing transport framework.
- 7.4. A range of measures can be deployed to encourage a shift from car use in the main towns and villages. The Council will need to work with partners to implement these measures. However, the particular needs

of many rural settlements with a lack of public transport facilities must be recognised.

- 7.5. Leading on from the above, accessibility in the more rural parts of the District away from the main settlements rests heavily on use of the private car, which will pose challenges for the Council. Community led transport schemes and other innovative ways of working will be required alongside more conventional public transport provision to meet these challenges.
- 7.6. The District Council will have to work with the County Council in order to confront the issue of use of the rural road network, in terms of its use by increasing numbers of cars and commercial vehicles and the environmental impact of such use. Route management will be increasingly important as traffic levels grow.
- 7.7. Cycling and walking in towns require specific facilities to avoid conflict with vehicles, as do cycle routes between settlements. Opportunities do exist to improve existing facilities and create new ones.
- 7.8. The Trailway offers the prospect of sustainably linking a number of settlements in the District. Links within settlements could be created on a similar basis when 'green corridors' are considered as part of 'green infrastructure' plans.