



**Topic Paper**

**Transportation**

**Version 1**  
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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 Local Development Framework for North Dorset. It provides a general overview of transport in North Dorset, summarising the 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 LDF is set. The Paper is a working document which will be updated as evidence is acquired and the consultation process proceeds.

## 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1. Amongst other things, Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12 'Local Spatial Planning' sets out the importance of spatial planning, via Local Development Frameworks (LDFs), in helping to achieve the objectives of Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS). Every local authority must prepare a SCS and the Community Strategy for Dorset (DSCS)<sup>1</sup> is the SCS both for the County and for North Dorset. The strategic vision in the DSCS is linked into the overarching regional strategy. 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.
- 2.2. The nature of North Dorset is one of market towns with surrounding villages set within rural hinterlands. The whole District is categorised as 'rural' in terms of population distribution<sup>2</sup>. A network of smaller roads serves North Dorset's settlements with a very few larger roads traversing the district. The generally dispersed nature of development in North Dorset means that transportation is a particularly important crosscutting issue, having social, economic and environmental impacts.

**Figure 1: Population Distribution in North Dorset 2001<sup>3</sup>**

Urban	Rural						Total	%rural
	Less Sparse			Sparse				
	Town	Village	Dispersed	Town	Village	Dispersed		
0	29,679	26,251	5,975	0	0	0	<b>61,905</b>	<b>100%</b>
0.0%	47.9%	42.4%	9.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		

- 2.3. Car ownership and usage in the District is relatively high outside the towns, reflecting the dispersed population and the poor provision, or complete lack, of public transport in many parts of the District in 2001<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'Shaping Our Future: The Community Strategy for Dorset 2007 - 2016' Dorset Strategic Partnership (June 2007)

<sup>2</sup> Census 2001 - Office of National Statistics. Settlements of over 10,000 inhabitants are classified as 'urban'; others are 'town and fringe', 'village or hamlet' and 'dispersed' depending on size. The definition is based on residential densities in 1 hectare cells across England and Wales. Density is also used to assess sparseness.

<sup>3</sup> Census 2001 and Access to Rural services : Focus on Rural Areas - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (October 2004)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 2: Vehicle Ownership 2001**

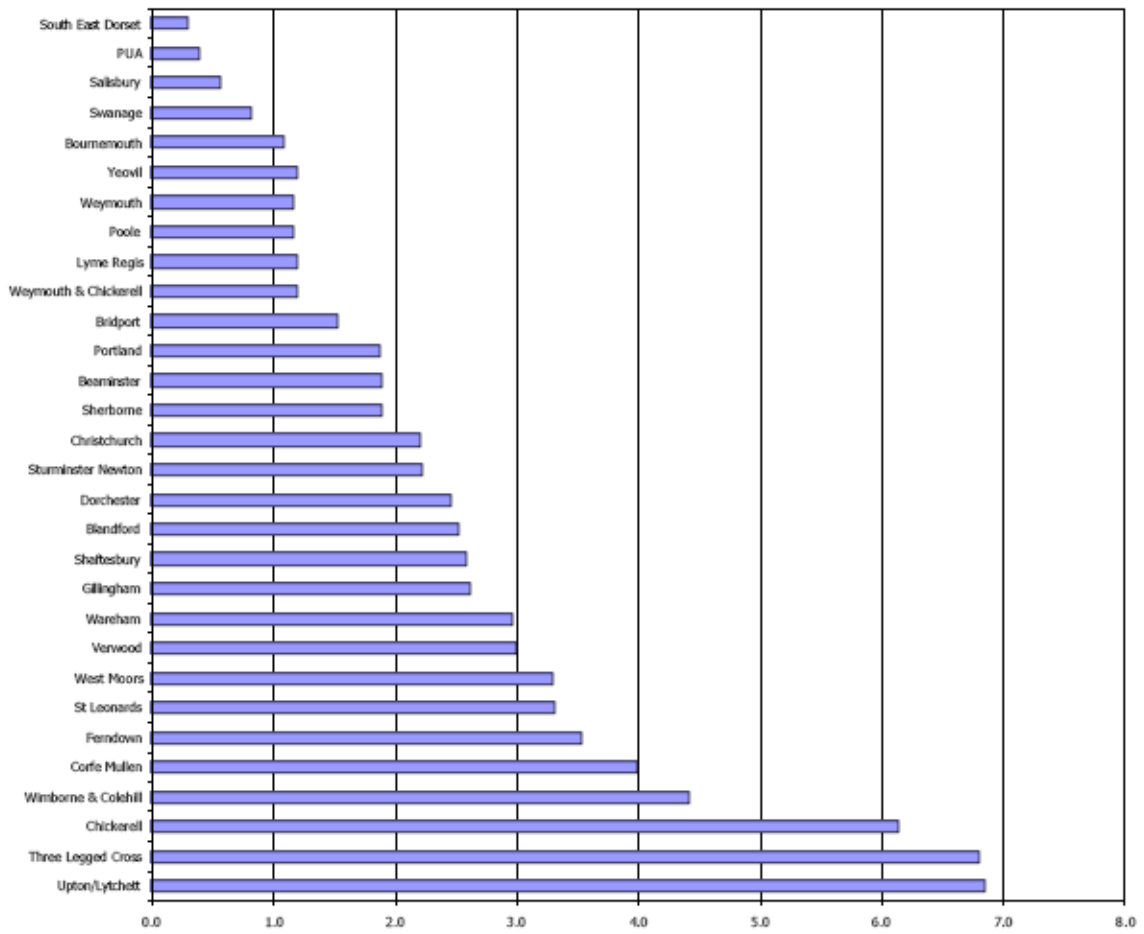
Number of cars or vans		No car or van	1	2	3	4 or more
Urban		0	0	0	0	0
Rural	Town	2,613	6,322	3,363	677	218
		73.6%	54.9%	42.9%	39.3%	36.0%
	Village	803	4,334	3,597	810	301
		22.6%	37.6%	45.8%	47.0%	49.7%
	Dispersed	133	858	888	235	87
		3.7%	7.5%	11.3%	13.6%	14.4%
<b>Total</b>		3,552	11,514	7,848	1,722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

**Figure 3: Mode of Travel to Work 2001**

	England & Wales		South West		North Dorset	
<b>All people aged 16-74 in employment</b>	23,627,754		2,286,108		<b>28,730</b>	
<b>People who work mainly at or from home</b>	2,170,547	9.19%	251,408	11.00%	<b>4,052</b>	<b>14.10%</b>
<b>Driving a car or van</b>	13,050,529	55.23%	1,343,333	58.76%	<b>16,667</b>	<b>58.01%</b>
<b>On foot</b>	2,364,633	10.01%	278,298	12.17%	<b>4,583</b>	<b>15.95%</b>
<b>Bus; Mini Bus or coach</b>	1,747,683	7.40%	115,568	5.06%	<b>400</b>	<b>1.39%</b>
<b>Passenger in a car or van</b>	1,477,211	6.25%	143,882	6.29%	<b>1,469</b>	<b>5.11%</b>
<b>Train</b>	964,642	4.08%	21,171	0.93%	<b>256</b>	<b>0.89%</b>
<b>Underground; metro; light rail; Tram</b>	710,083	3.01%	1,916	0.08%	<b>34</b>	<b>0.12%</b>
<b>Bicycle</b>	650,977	2.76%	76,430	3.34%	<b>725</b>	<b>2.52%</b>
<b>Motorcycle; Scooter; moped</b>	258,344	1.09%	34,516	1.51%	<b>302</b>	<b>1.05%</b>
<b>Taxi or minicab</b>	122,478	0.52%	6,867	0.30%	<b>82</b>	<b>0.29%</b>
<b>Other</b>	110,627	0.47%	12,719	0.56%	<b>160</b>	<b>0.56%</b>

2.4. 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 is a key element of regional policy<sup>5</sup>. The containment index<sup>6</sup> shown in Figure 4 for Dorset towns reflects the extent of commuting.

**Figure 4: Containment Index for Dorset Towns 2001**



2.5. 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

<sup>5</sup> Policy SD4 : Sustainable Communities in The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West incorporating the Secretary of State's proposed changes (July 2008)

<sup>6</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.



have no access to private transport, cannot afford fares or there are inadequate public transport services and connections. 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.

- 2.6. The environmental impact 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 and the disturbance of wildlife and habitats.

### 3.0 National, Regional and Local Policy Context

#### National Policy Guidance

- 3.1. A key influence in framing the Core Strategy is to be found in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) documents and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), although it is also to be found in other publications such as White Papers and government reports.

#### PPS 1: Sustainable Development

- 3.2. PPS1 puts sustainable development at the heart of spatial planning. Local Planning Authorities are urged to *'encourage patterns of development which reduce the need to travel by private car, or reduce the impact of moving freight'*. In particular, the PPS urges that Local Planning Authorities should seek to *'provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car, while recognising that this may be more difficult in rural areas'*.
- 3.3. When bringing land for development forward in plans, PPS1 requires that local authorities will be *'taking into account issues such as accessibility and sustainable transport needs'*. PPS1 also states that *'In preparing development plans, planning authorities should seek to ... reduce the need to travel and encourage accessible public transport provision to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development'*.

#### PPG 13: Transport

- 3.4. The key national policy context for transport is to be found in PPG13 which highlights planning's key role in delivering integrated transport. The main objectives are to integrate planning and transport at all levels to:
- promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight;
  - promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling; and
  - reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

#### Draft PPS 4: Planning for Prosperous Economies

- 3.5. The consultation edition of the draft PPS4 sees shaping travel demand by promoting sustainable travel choices and having appropriate parking policies as crucial in making the most efficient and effective use of land. Additionally, in rural areas, local planning authorities are expected to recognise that accessibility - whether by private transport, public transport, walking and cycling - is a key consideration. Some aspects of PPG13 are drawn into this new PPS - specifically, paragraphs 53, 54 and Annex D dealing with the use of maximum parking standards.

### PPS 3: Housing

- 3.6. When Local Planning Authorities are assessing proposed development, PPS3 expects them to ensure that it will be easily accessible and well-connected to public transport and community facilities and services.

### PPG 4: Economic Development

- 3.7. The importance of adequate parking and the need for accessible transport are stressed in PPG 4 as being factors underlying the efficient and effective use of land. In setting car parking standards, the PPS highlights the need to encourage cycling, walking and sustainable modes of transport. When looking at economic development proposals in rural areas, LPAs should recognise *'that accessibility – whether by private transport, public transport, walking and cycling – is a key consideration'* but that *'a site may be an acceptable location for development even though it may not be readily accessible by public transport'*. Further, *'LPAs should also support proposals which foster a strong and diverse rural economy, recognising that not all development in rural areas can be accessed by public transport'*.

### PPS 6: Town Centres

- 3.8. The government sees town centres as fundamental in promoting economic growth and this is elaborated in PPS 6. To support this objective, the government sees a subsidiary objective being that of improving accessibility, ensuring that existing or new locations are, or will be, accessible and well-served by a choice of means of transport. Underlying this is the government's basic sustainability theme of reducing the need to travel and providing alternatives to car use. In rural areas, such as North Dorset, PPS 6 acknowledges that retail and service development should be focussed on market towns and large villages, where there is potential to maximise accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling. At the same time, though, local authorities should ensure that the lack of public transport facilities does not preclude small-scale retail or service developments in other locations where these would serve local needs.

### PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

- 3.9. PPS 7 restates government policy set out in other PPGs and PPSs as it relate so sustainable development in rural areas. Good quality, carefully-sited accessible development within existing towns and villages should be allowed where it benefits the local economy and/or community and the local environment without conflicting with other planning policies. Generally, the government intends that accessibility should be a key consideration in all development decisions.

### Manual for Streets

- 3.10. There are other elements of guidance available at the national level which assist local policy making. The 'Manual for Streets'<sup>7</sup> looks at

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<sup>7</sup> 'Manual for Streets' - Department for Transport (2007)

streets as more than simple traffic corridors dealing with the movement of motor vehicles. The document gives guidance on how streets can be designed, built and managed as part of an overall residential environment. The quality of residential life is affected by streetscape, layout and connectivity as well as physical elements such as street signs, lighting and signage which can all be provided to a high standard. Consequently, communities can become stronger and safer as well as being more attractive.

### Sustainable Distribution - A Strategy

3.11. In 'Sustainable Distribution - A Strategy'<sup>8</sup> it is appreciated that land use planning can have a significant impact on distribution, not only through the provision of major transport infrastructure but also more widely through policies and decisions on patterns of development, such as on the location and design of housing, shops, offices and industry. In the Strategy, the government looks at how freight transport can be better integrated with land use and transport planning. Essentially, this involves development plan preparation including consideration of non-road freight movements, locating industry and housing close to rail accessible locations and examining freight services infrastructure needs.

### Government White Paper: The Future of Transport

3.12. The government published a White Paper in July 2004<sup>9</sup> setting out its transport proposals to 2030. The main themes of the strategy were set out as:

- Sustained investment over the long term;
- Improvements in transport management; and
- Planning ahead.

3.13. These themes underpin the government's objective of balancing the need to travel with the need to improve quality of life. In seeking improvements in transport, the government will particularly be seeking efficiency and value for money. In addition, parking is an issue which has been highlighted nationally, especially in PPG 13 which urges the use of parking policies to promote sustainable transport choices and reduce reliance on the car for work and other journeys.

## **Regional Policy Framework**

### Regional Spatial Strategy

3.14. The Regional Spatial Strategy<sup>10</sup> (RSS) provides the regional policy framework within which is the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) at

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<sup>8</sup> 'Sustainable Distribution - A Strategy' - Department of Transport (January 2004).

<sup>9</sup> 'The Future of Transport' - Department for Transport (July 2004)

<sup>10</sup> The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West incorporating the Secretary of State's proposed changes (July 2008)

Section 5 - Regional Approach to Transport. This replaces the original RTS published in 2001 and developed and updated in 2004.

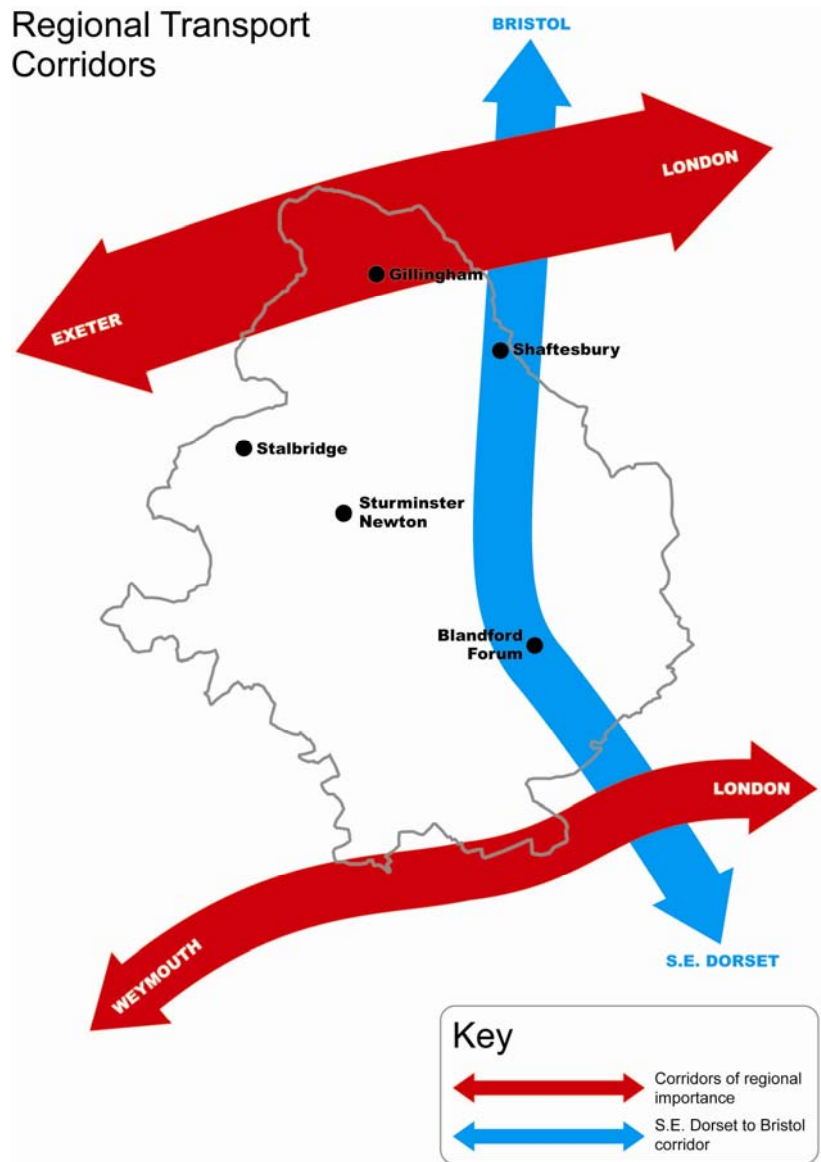
- 3.15. In the RSS, Policy SD4 'Sustainable Communities' states, most notably, that growth and development will be planned and managed so as to create and maintain sustainable communities by:
- Linking the provision of homes, jobs and services based on role and function so that cities, towns and villages 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.

#### RTS Policies

- 3.16. The RTS is integral to the RSS and has specific objectives directed towards supporting economic development by maintaining and improving the reliability and resilience of communications links to other regions (particularly the South East and London) and connectivity within the region; addressing social exclusion by improving accessibility to jobs and services; and reducing the negative impacts of transport on the environment including climate change.
- 3.17. The policies and key parts of policies in the RTS which are of most relevance to North Dorset are:
- **RTS1 - Corridor Management** This policy look to make 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.
  - **RTS3 - Parking** The STS proposes that measures should be implemented 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**
      - Parking provision
      - Parking charges
  - **RTS4 - Freight and the Primary Route Network** This policy is directed towards managing freight movements and related facilities. The policy advises that the primary route network (including motorways and trunk roads) should be promoted for use by HGVs in preference to other roads. The routes should be signed appropriately. Relevant plans and strategies should include policies and proposals for rest and service areas for freight vehicles.
- 3.18. The RTS identifies a number of regionally significant transport corridors in the region, two of which affect North Dorset, as shown in Figure 5:

- 3.19. 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 A30 (which passes through Shaftesbury) lies just to the south of these two main routes; and
- 3.20. 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).

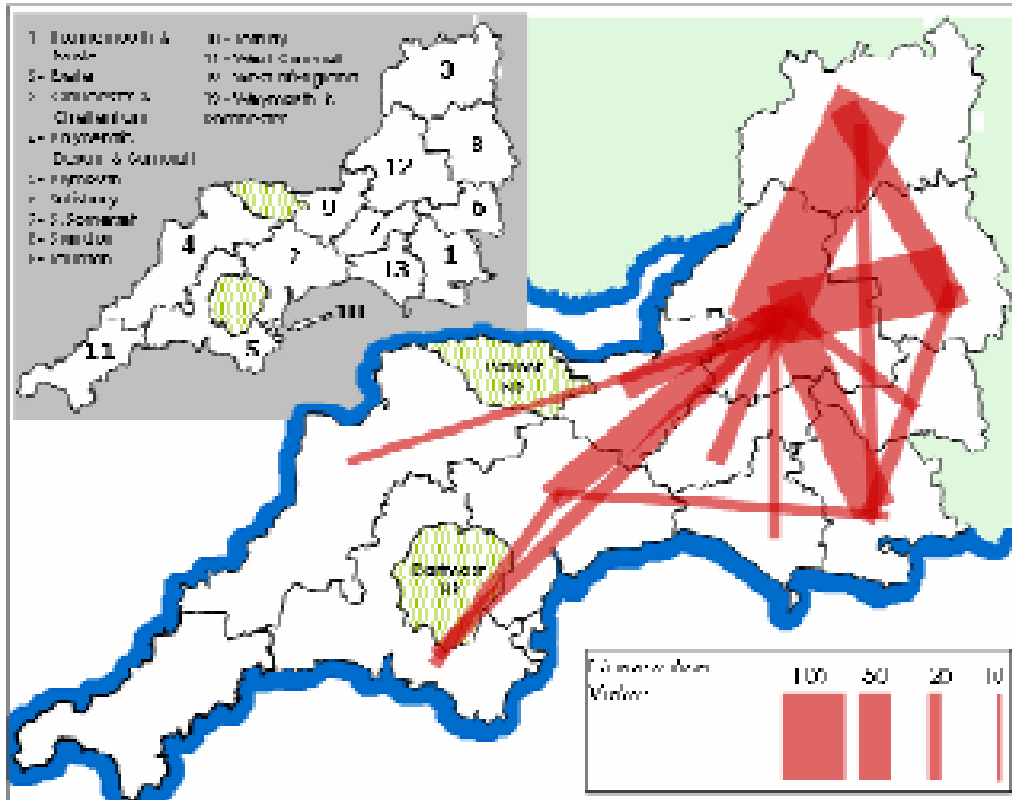
**Figure 5: Regional Transport Corridors in North Dorset**



- 3.21. The South East Dorset to Bristol Corridor is not formally identified in the RTS as ‘a corridor of regional importance’. However, a report published

in March 2009 by the South West Regional Assembly<sup>11</sup> acknowledges it 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>12</sup> as an important north-south route, particularly for freight.

**Figure 6: Fifteen Most Important Connections Between HMAs**



3.22. The Regional Economic Strategy<sup>13</sup> (RES) helps underpin the RSS and, amongst other things, stresses that the growth of businesses in rural areas should be focussed on the most sustainable and accessible locations. In that respect, one of the regional priorities (Priority 3A) sets out in the RES is crucial, that is, to improve transport networks. As the RES points out, *“In terms of rural accessibility, 20% of households in the region still have no regular bus service within walking distance – the highest level in the UK”*. Further, *“Our cities and towns cannot realise their economic potential and accommodate the projected population and economic growth without better transport networks”*.

<sup>11</sup> 'Connectivity Problems, Challenges and Issues for the Region - Unlocking Economic Potential via Improved Connectivity' - South West Regional Assembly (March 2009)

<sup>12</sup> North and north East Dorset Transport Study - Buro Happold (in preparation)

<sup>13</sup> Regional Economic Strategy for South West England 2006 - 2015 - South West of England Regional Development Association (May 2006)

- 3.23. The Regional Assembly's report on connectivity<sup>14</sup> looked at the close relationship between economic prosperity and the transport network. It carried forward policy thinking on the basis of:
- A sound economic basis for prioritisation;
  - A combination of economic and transport criteria;
  - An approach that reflects the spatial planning and growth agenda for the region; and
  - The forecast changing growth and activity distribution across the South West, and between the region and the rest of the UK.
- 3.24. This followed an earlier report prepared for the Regional Development Association<sup>15</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.

## County and Local Context

### Dorset Sustainable Communities Strategy

- 3.25. The Dorset Sustainable Communities Strategy (DSCS)<sup>16</sup> sets the community framework for the Core Strategy. Preparation of the Core Strategy must be in close alignment with the priorities 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.

### Dorset Multi Area Agreement

- 3.26. In 2008 a Multi Area Agreement (MAA) was agreed between Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council, the Borough of Poole and central government - North Dorset plays a part in this. Amongst the concerns which it was set up to tackle was the need to address transport issues which included connectivity within Dorset and urban congestion. A primary outcome is thus a sustainable, reliable and efficient transport system. Achieving this will require a sound delivery programme for major transport improvements.

### Dorset Local Area Agreement

- 3.27. North Dorset Council is a partner in the Dorset Local Area Agreement (LAA) which has been agreed for 2008-2011. Councils may enter into a Local Area Agreement (LAA), normally a three year agreement based on the SCS vision that sets out improvement targets for the priorities of a local area. The spatial components are delivered through the LDF. Within the LAA's improvement aspirations are accessibility targets

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<sup>14</sup> 'Connectivity Problems, Challenges and Issues for the Region - Unlocking Economic Potential via Improve Connectivity' - South West Regional Assembly (March 2009)

<sup>15</sup> 'Intra-regional Connectivity in the South West - Final Report' South West of England Regional Development Association (April 2005)

<sup>16</sup> Shaping Our Future: The Community Strategy for Dorset 2007 - 2016, Dorset Strategic Partnership (June 2007)



which include access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling and use of public transport.

#### Dorset (excluding South East Dorset) Local Transport Plan

3.28. The Local Transport Plans (LTPs) prepared by the County Council are of significance, each covering a five year period and setting out the authority's local transport strategies and policies together with an implementation programme. The current LTP<sup>17</sup> is for the period 2006/7-2010/11 and the next one, LTP3, will embrace the period 2011/12-2015/16. It is through the LTP that many of North Dorset's transport policy objectives will be achieved. The current LTP sets a number of priorities under the overarching core principle of Sustainability:

- Road safety;
- Accessibility;
- Congestion;
- Air quality and environment;
- Economic development; and
- Asset management.

3.29. These priorities will be tackled by way of widening choice, improving infrastructure, managing demand and making better use of existing assets.

3.30. The LTP sets out in some detail the problems and challenges facing Dorset 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.

#### North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan

3.31. The current Local Plan<sup>18</sup>, adopted to 2011, includes a number of aims and objectives relating to transportation:

- 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; and
- To locate development relative to the highway and public transport network.

#### Local Studies

3.32. The Council has not commissioned any specific studies to inform the LDF process but has been a partner in three key studies sponsored by the County Council as Highway Authority. The first of these, the North

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<sup>17</sup> Dorset (Excluding South East Dorset) Local Transport Plan - Dorset County Council (March 2006)

<sup>18</sup> North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (First Revision) - North Dorset District Council (January 2003)

and north East Dorset Transport Study<sup>19</sup>, forms part of the preparatory work which will inform the LDF process and forms the basis of the Emerging Transport Strategy for Dorset. 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.

- 3.33. The second study, the Dorset Residential Car Parking Study<sup>20</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.
- 3.34. The location and design of new developments will be crucial in promoting sustainable transport and accessibility to employment and services. The Council is a partner with the County Council in a study of Gillingham<sup>21</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.

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<sup>19</sup> The North and north East Dorset Transport Study: Emerging Transport Strategy – Buro Happold for Dorset County Council (in preparation)

<sup>20</sup> The Dorset Residential Car Parking Study - Dorset County Council (in preparation)

<sup>21</sup> Developing a Vision for the Growth of Gillingham - Atkins Ltd for Dorset County Council (in preparation)

#### 4.0 Issues Arising from Stakeholder and Community Consultations

- 4.1. In June/July 2007 the Council undertook consultation<sup>22</sup> on the issues and options<sup>23</sup> for a core strategy in June – July 2007. This exercise took place before the Proposed Changes to the RSS were produced; consequently, the issues and options discussed were based on the draft RSS<sup>24</sup> as it stood at the time.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. 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 while development of the DCSC involved many community groups and organisations.

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<sup>22</sup> The Council recently decided to produce a Development Plan Document (DPD) containing both the Core Strategy and a limited number of development management policies

<sup>23</sup> Core Strategy: Issues and Alternative Options - North Dorset District Council (June 2007)

<sup>24</sup> The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006 - 2026 - South West Regional Assembly (June 2006). It should be noted that the overall level of growth proposed for North Dorset has increased (from 5,100 net additional dwellings in draft RSS, to 7,000 net additional dwellings in the RSS Proposed Changes). Consultation responses were based on the original 2007 RSS and should be assessed accordingly.

## 5.0 Key Issues Identified

- 5.1. Certain common issues are readily apparent in national policy and guidance. Reducing the need to travel by car is one significant element of PPS 1, improving accessibility is another. PPG 13 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 key issues and the further issues arising from them. PPS 6 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.
- 5.2. In the regional context, Policy SD4 of the RSS clearly sets 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.
- 5.3. The RTS elaborates this within overall corridor management and draws out the importance of parking management in helping to reduce car use and support more sustainable modes of transport. The impact of freight movement is acknowledged in the RTS and planning for freight movement is therefore important while a reminder of the economic importance of a good transport network is provided in the RES.
- 5.4. The issue of accessibility to employment, goods and services as well as leisure and the importance of transport infrastructure is seen again in the DSCS.
- 5.5. 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.
- 5.6. These various issues can be tackled primarily by managing travel demand and developing and implementing appropriate spatial planning policies.

### Managing Travel Demand

- 5.7. Managing travel demand<sup>25</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;

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<sup>25</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).

- District movements, where trips are made between the district's settlements; and
  - Local movements, within and around the towns and villages of North Dorset.
- 5.8. Sub-regional road movements primarily affect the A303, A30, A31 and A350 but also, to a lesser extent, the A354 and A357 / A3030 routes. 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 in the Regional Transport Strategy, although the Council has recently urged<sup>26</sup> the Highways Agency to upgrade a section of the road to dual carriageway standard. The capacity of the railway will be improved to some extent through the construction of a 'passing loop' in the Axminster / Chard area. However, the dual tracking of the railway is unlikely to take place in the foreseeable future<sup>27</sup>.
- 5.9. 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.
- 5.10. The District's main roads still have some capacity<sup>28</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.
- 5.11. The outstanding issue involving movements within the District is that of accessibility - 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

<sup>26</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>27</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>28</sup> The North and north East Dorset Transport Study: Emerging Transport Strategy - Buro Happold for Dorset County Council (in preparation)

NORDCAT<sup>29</sup> scheme and developing other demand responsive services to improve accessibility in all parts of the District. The continuing development of the North Dorset Trailway offers a non-car link between an increasing number of settlements.

- 5.12. 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. Cycling and walking facilities can be included when green infrastructure networks are being considered. 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. 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**

- 5.13. 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 pivotal policy is Policy SD4 of the RSS and its reference to linking the provision of homes, jobs and services so that settlements have the potential to become more self contained and the need to travel is reduced; promoting a step change in public transport; managing demand for travel; and promoting public transport. Other Topic Papers<sup>30</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 RSS lead and deal with the location of new development, public transport and the encouragement of non-car modes of transport.
- 5.14. Implementation of these policies will be carried out by a number of means:
- 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.

<sup>29</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.

<sup>30</sup> Particularly relevant are the Topic Papers dealing with the Spatial Strategy, Economy and Housing.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## 6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1. Managing travel demand will be key to achieving more sustainable transport patterns in North Dorset and will be achieved by a combination of means.
- 6.2. 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 transport framework.
- 6.3. 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.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. 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.