

ANNEX F

SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY

SOCIAL INCLUSION

This strategy helps to deliver the following Local Transport Plan objective:

To provide a transport system which provides access to employment, shopping, education, leisure and health facilities for all, especially those without a car and those with impaired mobility.

The government's definition of 'social exclusion' is:

'a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown.'

The purpose of this policy is to tackle such social "exclusion" by ensuring that transport in Hertfordshire is more socially "inclusive".

In transport a number of potentially disadvantaged groups can be identified, many of which overlap. However, membership of any of these groups does not automatically mean that an individual suffers social exclusion. The groups include:

- Disabled people and those in poor health (along with their carers), who are frequently restricted in their travel and hence their quality of life by uncertainty about facilities in unfamiliar places.
- People on low incomes, particularly in rural communities, who may not have access to private transport and consequently have reduced access to many services, and may find transport for work, education or leisure beyond their means.
- Women, who often have less access to private transport, can find use of passenger transport less easy, and who frequently have fears for their personal safety regardless of modes of transport.
- Ethnic minority groups, particularly those who do not speak English as a first language.
- Young people and the elderly, whether they are also in any of the above categories, who may not have personal transport, may have concerns about personal security while travelling, and may not have money for some more secure modes of transport.
- Parents with young children in pushchairs or prams who may have difficulties negotiating kerbs or accessing public transport.
- People who work unsociable hours (e.g. shift workers), who may not have personal transport, and may find that there are limited passenger transport services available.
- Non car owners, whether due to financial or health reasons, or through choice.

- People with language/communication difficulties, who may find it difficult to understand passenger transport information and timetables.
- People who experience geographic barriers, in particular, east-west movements, orbital movements, multi destination journeys and those living in rural areas.

Meeting the Transport Needs of All Social Groups

The County Council is able to address social exclusion resulting from transport in four key areas:

- through highway design to ensure that there are not physical or psychological barriers to accessing facilities;
- through the way that the highway network is operated;
- through the design and provision of information so that it is understandable and accessible to all;
- through the provision and/or co-ordination of passenger transport services which are available to all.

Further details of these four key areas are shown below. Measures which are aimed specifically at ensuring social inclusion for disabled people are included in a separate “Transport Issues for Disabled People” policy.

(a) Highway Design

The County Council will:

- work with disadvantaged groups and their representatives in designing transport service facilities, including roads, pavements and other rights of way, to ensure that they can give access to the maximum number of people in ways that are safe and consistent with their environment;
- work with all social groups and their representatives to ensure that new or updated service facilities enable easy transition from one transport mode to another in terms of both access, personal security and information.

(b) Highway Operations

The County Council will:

- review bus stop locations to meet changing demand and seek best advantage from the planning system when new developments are proposed
- support Bus Stop Clearway Orders and Carriageway ‘cage’ marking (Orders will also be sought to create Bus Stop Clearways at most stops in the county, particularly where illegal or inconsiderate parking is a problem for buses accessing stops).
- work closely with the police to agree adequate parking enforcement strategies.
- ensure that the impact of access, information needs and personal security are considered in the design and development of all transport interchange facilities and their surrounding facilities.

(c) Information

The County Council will:

- ensure that the provision of transport information is consistent with the needs of the wider community including disabled and minority ethnic groups. Further use will be made of electronic information where this will enhance provision.
- offer to provide all information in large print, tape, braille and appropriate foreign languages
- consider how information may be best provided to people with reading or learning difficulties.
- use the Intalink partnership to promote a greater availability of passenger transport information.
- maintain a network of outlets for printed information across the county e.g. one-stop shops.
- work with local groups where they are able to assist in the local distribution of information.

Further details on the provision of passenger transport information are set out in the County Council's Intalink Strategy.

(d) Passenger Transport Services

The County Council will:

- work with operators to plan bus services to maximise accessibility to the network.
- use cost benefit assessments to assist decision making on contract services to achieve maximum passenger and community benefit from provision and help prioritise the use of scarce resources.
- support the development of the Integrated Transport Partnership by the ambulance services and hospital trusts, with the aim to provide a 'one-stop shop approach' to transport for people who have a medical or social need for transport i.e. to hold information on all transport services available and to match the appropriate transport to the individual need.
- develop measures, such as the Smartcard, to enable young people, the elderly, people with communication difficulties and those with low incomes to travel for work, education or leisure e.g. Smartcards allow concessionary fares to be used without embarrassment at the point of payment.
- introduce flexible ticketing schemes which offer better value to bus passengers.
- promote agreements with surrounding local authorities and Transport for London, to cover the joint funding of cross boundary services, and possibly infrastructure, seeking value for money for the benefit of Hertfordshire residents.

Further details on the role of passenger transport services in tackling social exclusion is set out in the County Council's Bus Strategy.

Involving All Social Groups

Meeting the transport needs of all social groups can only be achieved if there is sufficient dialogue to establish what the needs are and whether existing measures are meeting those need. In line with its "Putting People First" policy, the County Council will:

- work with district and parish councils, local access and voluntary groups, youth groups, ethnic minorities, and women’s groups to (a) monitor and assess practice, and (b) ensure that their interests are considered in the development of all transport policies.
- work with schools, educational and community groups to develop safe and accessible transport measures for young people.

The Local Transport Plan consultation list, which is used when developing policies and for providing general updates, contains approximately 550 organisations and individuals who represent a wide range of interests. The County Council is always willing to add new groups to this list.

The County Council has recently introduced the Herts Direct newspaper which is delivered to all households in the county. It is intended that this newspaper will be used as part of the awareness process in the development of the next Local Transport Plan in 2004 and 2005.

Improving Personal Security

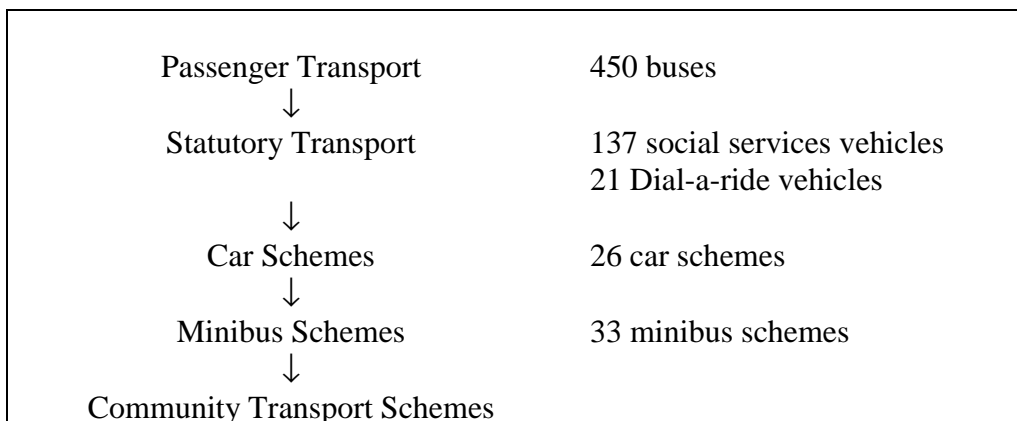
Personal security issues are an increasing concern to many sectors of society. To help combat this problem, the County Council will:

- provide at-grade pedestrian crossings instead of subways wherever possible;
- encourage the use of CCTV on buses where routes experience crime and disorder or pupil behaviour problems;
- provide adequate lighting in town centres and main pedestrian routes.

Community Transport

Voluntary/Community transport schemes are essential for local communities as they deal with the less regular and more specialised demands for transport, especially in the more rural areas of the County.

The overall priority of transport provision for local communities is shown in the diagram below, which also indicates the level of fleet resources available.



In order to help develop community transport the County Council will:

- provide assistance and advice to the voluntary sector/communities;
- allocate grants and financial support to suitable applicants;
- work with the voluntary sector to identify funding and bidding opportunities for further development;
- encourage integration with other passenger transport services through the development the Integrated Transport Partnership in conjunction with health agencies.

Current Schemes/Initiatives

- delivery of road safety measures as part of junior citizenship projects;
- linking LEARN into health and community planning in Buntingford;
- the development of the Rural Transport Partnership;
- the development of community strategies;
- working with Hertfordshire Action for Disability to promote bus services in rural areas;
- working with the Countryside Agency within STRAP (Sustainable Transport in Rural Areas Project);
- improved delivery and distribution of passenger transport information to a wider audience through the Intalink network;
- the continuing widening of travel choice by promoting walking, cycling and passenger transport through TravelWise and Business TravelWise;
- transport projects as part of Single Regeneration Budget work in South West Hertfordshire;
- improvements to concessionary fare schemes in many districts;
- pilot scheme for bookable bus/taxi services to replace scheduled buses in areas with contracted local bus services running to a timetable;
- Funding recently awarded under the rural bus challenge for a rural community transport and accessible vehicles project.

Performance Indicators

Indicator	Current (year)	Target (year)
How much information is available in other languages and formats (Charter Mark)	4.5% (2000/01)	↑
Number of forums working with local people and groups to improve the quality of the environment (Charter Mark)	72 new & Continuing forums	↑
What efforts have been made to involve local ethnic minority, disabled people and women and their organisations in our consultations (Equality Indicator)		-
Percentage of rural households within 10 minutes walk of an hourly or better bus service.	36% (2001/02)	40% (2005/06)
Percentage of urban households within 5 minute walk of half hourly or better bus service.	79% (2001/02)	85% (2005/06)