

ANNEX G

TRANSPORT ISSUES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE POLICY

TRANSPORT ISSUES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

This strategy helps to deliver the following 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.

There is a wide range of disabilities which may affect the way in which a person is able to use the transport system. The general definition of a disabled person for the purposes of this policy is:

‘Someone who is at a disadvantage in some way (physical, sensory, learning, mental health, reading, temporary) when using transport services and infrastructure’.

Around 21,000 people in Hertfordshire can be defined as having a high level of disability according to the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) survey of disability in 1997, although the County Council is aware that over 100,000 more people in the county suffer from other less severe levels of disability..

Meeting the Needs of Disabled People

The County Council’s policy is:

(a) to work with disabled people and disability groups 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.

(b) to undertake an accessibility audit on all new highway schemes

(c) to work with disabled 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.

(d) to work with district and parish councils and local access and voluntary groups to ensure that measures to increase the use of modes other than the car do not prevent access for disabled people.

(e) to ensure that the provision of transport information is consistent with the needs of the whole community including disabled groups.

Consultation

The County Council’s aim is to ensure that all sectors of society are encouraged to participate in the consultation processes. This applies both to the development of countywide policy and to the design of local schemes.

Groups representing a range of disabilities are included in all of the forums which have been established to develop the Area and Urban Plans. It is also the intention to

ensure that these groups will be included on the LTP User Group which helps to develop overall transport policies.

In accordance with the County Council's "Putting People First" policy the Environment Department has introduced a process to ensure that a demographic profile of target communities (which includes disabled people) is prepared prior to commencing any consultation. Targets for consulting these groups are set and these are tested in a post consultation evaluation.

Co-operation with Partners

The County Council's strategy on voluntary/community transport is:

- to provide assistance and advice to the voluntary sector/communities;
- to allocate grants and financial support to suitable applicants;
- to ensure integration with other passenger transport services;
- to provide information and assistance to promote and provide information about the availability of such services and facilities.

The County Council will support the Integrated Transport Project in partnership with North Herts & Stevenage Primary Care Trust and Beds & Herts NHS Ambulance Trust, which aims to develop a 'one stop shop approach' for people who have a medical or social need for transport.

Improving Mobility

(a) Highway Design

The County Council will:

- provide physical measures using the best advice available from the DTLR disability unit;
- provide appropriate physical measures, including dropped kerbs, pedestrian guardrails, tactile paving, pelican crossings with beepers and increased lighting;
- consider the needs of motorised buggies for disabled people in the design of highway schemes e.g. slope design and access to recharging points.

(b) Highway Operations

The County Council will:

- ensure that disabled drivers have short distance and level access to popular services, as well as being considered for informal residential provision i.e. marked parking bays on the highway which rely on the goodwill of motorists rather than legal enforcement;
- to ensure that the needs of disabled people are considered in all parking proposals (principally Controlled Parking Zones and Special Parking Areas).

(c) Buses

The County Council will:

- encourage the use of vehicles compliant with DPTAC guidelines;
- continue to raise the quality of vehicles through higher contract specifications and by grants for new low floor and accessible buses taking full account of the needs of the elderly and mobility impaired;

- administer the countywide (district council funded) concessionary scheme for the elderly and disabled;
- continue to ensure that wherever possible the walk to the bus stop will be less than 400 metres from the origin of the journey in residential, business and industrial areas, and less than 200 metres at schools, railway stations and within town centres;
- define standards for the design and layout of bus stops by September 2002, taking into account the needs of modern low-floor vehicles, the Disability Discrimination Act and the prevailing traffic conditions on the highway. The standards will be used to determine a programme of stop enhancements following audit, and to determine requirements for new developments. 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;
- secure vehicle accessibility improvements through vehicle specifications on contract services and by selective grants to commercial operators;
- to work with bus operators to identify and implement, by December 2002, standards for customer care, and where appropriate, codes of conduct and measures to ensure appropriate behaviour of passengers and staff;
- fund a trial of CCTV systems on buses to discourage bad behaviour which may deter many disabled groups;
- encourage continuing investment in the fleet. Vehicles will be expected to: meet construction and use requirements for safety of passengers and other road users; meet Disability Discrimination Act access requirements;
- continue to encourage the use of vehicles compliant with DPTAC guidelines on local bus services in the county and will monitor innovations in vehicle facilities for the elderly and disabled people.

(d) Rail

The County Council's policies on rail provision are set out in Hertfordshire's Rail Prospectus 2001 – 2005" (July 2000) which acts as a daughter document to the Local Transport Plan. The policy regarding disabled people is as follows:

- the County Council expects the train operating companies to take the Disability Discrimination Act requirements into consideration when specifying new rolling stock, and for partners (which may include local authorities) to account for them in station schemes;
- franchise bidders should include proposals for improved disabled access within franchise replacement. The County Council's target is to increase the number of stations with full disabled access to all platforms during the currency of the Local Transport Plan.

Specific stations to be targeted include Letchworth, Hatfield, Broxbourne, Elstree & Borehamwood and St Albans. More significant station improvements at places like Watford Junction, Stevenage and Cheshunt will be expected to include full disabled access in the proposals under development. The full list of investment priorities is set out in the table below.

Local Authority Investment Priorities Identified in Rail Prospectus

Broxbourne - Passenger operated lifts
Waltham Cross - Disabled access at station
Letchworth Garden City – passenger lifts
Hatfield station – feasibility for disabled access
Hertford North station – feasibility for lift access to platform 1
St Albans station – full disabled access to all platforms (through station redevelopment)
Elstree & Borehamwood station – feasibility of disabled access to platforms
Watford Junction station – Abbey line platform accessibility
Hemel Hempstead station – feasibility for enhanced disabled access
Tring station – feasibility for full disabled access
Rickmansworth and Chorleywood (dependent on CrossRail)

(e) Taxis

The County Council will:

- encourage the district/borough councils to incorporate the needs of disabled people and the mobility impaired in their policies for vehicle and driver standards for taxis;
- encourage the provision of new taxi facilities if they provide full facilities for wheelchair users and others with physical disabilities.

(f) Dial-a-Ride

The County Council will:

- promote and improve the availability of Dial-a-Ride services where district or borough council agreement and funding exists.

(g) Information and Monitoring

The County Council will:

- improve information about and access to the passenger transport network for those who are disabled or mobility impaired;
- provide information on disabled facilities and services through the Mobility Helpline and on the County Council's web site;
- ensure that disabled people have access to the services they require by monitoring access availability;
- undertake a programme of quality comprehensive publicity to present the customer with details of all passenger transport services available in the county, together with information on facilities for the elderly and disabled people, concessionary fares and school transport;
- encourage passenger transport operators to provide enquiry points.

(h) New Development

Guidance on highway design to developers undertaking new residential or commercial developments is set out in "Roads in Hertfordshire – A Guide for New Developments" (June 2001). Guidance specifically in relation to the needs of disabled people is as follows:

- Access to and within any new development must be available to all sections of the community. Within development design therefore, the provision made for motor vehicle should never be to the detriment of the access requirements of pedestrians, including the mobility impaired.
- Whilst it may be technically impossible to meet all the needs of the mobility impaired, there are a variety of practical arrangements that will be of benefit. Detailed advice is given in “Revised Guidelines for Reducing Mobility Handicap: Towards a Barrier-Free Environment” (IHT 1991).
- All crossing points shall be provided with tactile paving to the standards laid out in Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving Surfaces and dropped kerbs flush with the carriageway.

In addition to general highway design for new developments, the County Council, in conjunction with district and borough councils, has adopted “Car Parking Provision at New Development” (December 2000) as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Structure Plan. The relevant policies included in this document are:

- parking provision at non-residential development to comply with DETR Advisory Leaflet 5/95 Parking for Disabled People;
- the needs of disabled motorists are to be met in full, irrespective of location i.e. the number of spaces provided will not be reduced in line with the availability of public transport, as is the case for other parking spaces.

(i) Other Measures

There are a number of other transport measures which are not specifically aimed at disabled people but which can be of particular benefit to these groups.

The County Council will:

- minimise obstructive street furniture on pedestrian thoroughfares;
- seek to prevent vehicles parking on the footway;
- encourage district/borough councils to decriminalise parking so that they can have control over the enforcement of parking in disabled spaces and bus stops/lanes;
- implement measures to increase the priority of pedestrians relative to motor vehicles, especially in towns;
- repair dangerous pavements within 24 hours of being alerted;
- introduce SmartCard ticketing to make the payment of public transport fares easier;
- encourage the provision of accessible toilets at passenger transport interchanges.

Disability Awareness Training

The successful delivery of policies and schemes requires an awareness of disability issues by those who implement the measures. In this respect the County Council will:

- ensure that staff delivering these services understand and implement these policies fairly;
- encourage all passenger transport operators to ensure that full customer care training is made available to all staff, including those specialised elements that concern disabled customers.

Information

The County Council will offer to provide information on transport in large print, braille and on tape.

Information on the Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report is published in large print and is available in libraries and other outlets.

Targets and Performance Indicators

Indicator	Current (year)	Target (year)
Percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for the disabled people	74.7% (2000/01)	
Percentage of rail stations in Hertfordshire with facilities for disabled people at all platforms	31.4% (2000/01)	100% (2005/06)
Percentage of bus fleets meeting DDA standards	31% (2001/02)	70% (2005/06)
Percentage of bus stops meeting DDA standards	1% (2001/02)	50% (2005/06)

