

TRANSPORT POLICY

We aim to:

- ◆ protect and enhance the countryside by reducing the impact of surface and air traffic;
- ◆ enable people to access the countryside of South Yorkshire and the Peak District and ensure that rural communities are able to access services, without compromising its unique environmental and cultural characteristics;
- ◆ reduce the need to travel throughout South Yorkshire and the Peak District;
- ◆ encourage the use of low carbon networks and modes as the preferred choice of travel.

Guiding principles:

1. People and freight choose to use low carbon networks for travel in order to mitigate climate change, and conserve and use energy efficiently.
2. Land use and transport planning is integrated in urban/rural hubs using mixed dense development with access to quality public transport; car parking is reduced where public transport access is, or has the potential to be, good.
3. Low carbon transport (walking, cycling, and public, community and voluntary transport) and a road users' hierarchy of walkers, cyclists, public transport, motorcyclists and car users in centres of population reduce dependency on the car.
4. Best use is made of existing infrastructure – road, rail, waterways and air services, recognising where the car has a role; adaptation to climate change is designed to respect local distinctiveness.
5. Travel costs reflect the environmental and social impacts of transport through fiscal incentives such as area wide road user and workplace parking charging, aviation fuel tax and VAT on air tickets.
6. Local diversity, character and tranquillity are protected through a rural road hierarchy with speeds of 30mph or less through all villages, 40mph on country roads and 20 mph on quiet lanes, unobtrusive signage and lighting that avoids polluting dark skies.
7. A rights of way network provides opportunities for access for all and is part of the low carbon network for people.
8. New road building is an option of last resort and:
 - Is the best solution for, and appropriate in scale to, the problem;
 - Does not lead to traffic growth or undermine public transport use, walking and cycling by making car use more attractive;

- Is consistent with national, regional and local land use planning policies and National Park statutory purposes;
 - Is introduced alongside measures to manage demand for use of the car;
 - Does not generate additional development pressures on the countryside;
 - Does not deprive more worthwhile transport initiatives of scarce resources.
9. Major infrastructure for other modes, e.g. re-opening of Woodhead and Matlock-Buxton railways and inter-modal freight interchanges, meets our objectives.
 10. Local services, including surgeries, schools, mobile libraries, local food webs and farmers markets meet the needs of local communities and reduce miles travelled and consequent carbon emissions.
 11. Freight impacts are reduced through modal shift from road to rail and water, decreased empty running of HGVs and appropriate routing of HGVs to prevent damage to country lanes and villages.

Background

The biggest threat to the countryside is climate change, with road transport contributing 25% of CO₂ emissions. Car use has increased dramatically, with 16% more traffic on the roads in 2004 than a decade earlier. Air traffic in the UK has trebled over the past 20 years and is continuing to rise. Both driving and flying offer many people benefits, but both have damaging environmental effects. New roads and new runways scar the landscape, while speeding traffic and roaring aircraft erode tranquillity for hundreds of thousands of people who live near major roads or under flight paths. Individual major developments (such as Robin Hood Airport, and Rossington Inland Port and Ecotown) can have substantial impacts on the countryside from the traffic that they generate, notwithstanding other effects. Traffic in rural areas moves at speeds which inhibit people from walking and cycling, using public transport and enjoying the countryside. The majority of fatal crashes occur on rural roads, and wildlife and farm stock are frequent victims of accidents. The clutter of road signs and street furniture impairs tranquillity and harms local distinctiveness. Of those who visit the countryside up to 91%¹ travel by car which impairs the character of the countryside. While cars have improved access to the countryside for many, the 18% of rural households without a car have become more isolated, as other transport options have declined and local shops and services have closed down. Our countryside is threatened by major road building, such as the Mottram bypass/Glossop Spur and the A57 Todwick dualling.

¹ *The contribution of transport to sustainable rural communities*, Commission for Rural Communities, 2008

Over the last ten years the Government's plans to address these impacts have failed. However, the imperative to address climate change has been given extra urgency with the statutory requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from their 1990 baseline by 2050 (Climate Change Act 2008). Over the next 15 years, transport's contribution would be reduced largely through fuel/ carbon efficiency of vehicles and the fuel duty escalator, with reductions in the contribution from aviation and shipping yet to be determined. This package of measures will not be sufficient to reduce transport-related CO₂ emissions equitably.

The Government's latest plans, 'Towards a Sustainable Transport System' 2007 (TaSTS) and 'Developing a Sustainable Transport System' 2008 (DaSTS) focus on international/national networks and regions and cities and give rural transport scant attention. However in response to the recommendations of the Eddington Transport Study², which looked at the long-term links between transport and the UK's economic productivity, growth and stability, and the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change³ there is a new approach to strategic transport planning. Assessment requires planners to look at what the problem is and assess all reasonable options to solve it, with addressing climate change as a key objective⁴. The Government's priority to 2014 is to make better use of the existing network, combined with a targeted programme of improvements to improve capacity, reliability and safety in the most congested areas.

In the longer term road and air traffic levels must be contained using high quality alternatives to private cars and flying, demand management and smaller-scale transport packages (such as bus and cycle priority schemes, traffic calming, car clubs and travel planning like Smarter Choices) rather than large-scale road-building.

For review September 2012

² The Eddington Transport Study: Transport's role in sustaining the UK's productivity and competitiveness, Sir Rod Eddington, December 2006

³ Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, Lord Nicholas Stern, October 2006

⁴ The full objectives of the latest plan are to:

- support national economic competitiveness and growth, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks;
- reduce transport's emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change;
- contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health;
- promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society; and
- improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment.