Scottish Borders Council
Local Transport Strategy
2007/08

Scottish Borders COUNCIL

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Local Transport Strategy Document

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FOREWORD

By Councillor Jim Fullarton
(Scottish Borders Council: Portfolio Holder for Technical Services)

Transport is an essential part of everyday life for the people of the Scottish Borders and this strategy document will try and influence the decision makers and offer direction to help make the Scottish Borders a more connected place in the future.

Huge strides have been achieved since the last transport strategy document was produced in 2001, with the progress in reintroducing the Waverly Line to the central Borders a key plank in transport policy for this area. We have also recently initiated more frequent bus services to Edinburgh and introduced an element of demand responsive travel in some of our more rural areas.

Road transport will continue to play an important role in our area and it is vital that we continue to improve our road network and adequately maintain our road asset so that local people and visitors to this beautiful part of Scotland can travel easily and more safely on their chosen routes. We have recently upgraded certain sections of road network and we will continue to do so as funding becomes available. We are also currently discussing possible improvements to the Trunk Road Network with the Scottish Government.

We are also aware of the environmental issues associated with the promotion of the private car and we are therefore keen to introduce more sustainable means of transport where we are able to do so. It must also be noted that the introduction of more advanced technology such as faster broadband delivery and more flexible working could also significantly reduce the need to travel in the future. Cycling and walking are also important elements within our strategy document and we will continue to promote off-road cycling routes and develop our Core Path Network throughout the area to encourage the people of the Scottish Borders to have a healthier and more environmentally conscious lifestyle. We are also making great strides in promoting healthier travel options, through our Safer Routes to School Policy which tries to get more kids to walk and cycle to school.

There is a great deal of work still to be done, however I feel that this document will help to identify where our funding priorities should be in the future and the schemes and proposals that will help to achieve these transport related goals.

Introduction

Following the publication of the Scottish Integrated White Paper (Travel Choices for Scotland) in 1998, the Scottish Executive asked each Local Authority to produce a Local Transport Strategy (LTS) to help the co-ordination and implementation of transport policy throughout the country.

Following the publication of the Council's first LTS in 2001, there have been a number of achievements and changes in national transport policy and delivery. The Scottish Executive has indicated that this second LTS document should be designed to incorporate these changes and should be valid for a three year period.

The Scottish Borders

Introduction

The Scottish Borders Region is the 6th largest Local Authority area in Scotland and has a total population of around 106,500 based on the data collected from the 2001 census.

The low densities of population involved make long journeys necessary in order to reach centres with educational, medical, shopping and leisure facilities. There are also a large number of long distance journeys to centres outwith the region. The region has one of the longest lengths of road in Scotland with approximately 1,900 miles of adopted routes.

Location Plan

Visitscottish Borders

Age Profile

The Scottish Borders has the highest proportion of elderly people of any local authority area in Great Britain and also the highest rate of out-migration of young people of any area in Scotland after the Highlands and Islands. These young people often move away for educational or employment opportunities and never return.

Population and Household Projections

The General Register Office for Scotland's projections for the Scottish Borders show considerable growth over the next 20 years. The population of the area is projected to grow from 109,000 up to 126,000 (15% growth) over the period 2004-24. The projected growth in the number of households is also substantial, rising from 49,000 to 60,000 (23% growth) over the same period. The high population and household growth projected for the Scottish Borders will have implications for traffic growth and network capacities that will require increased levels of funding in the future.

Economy

The main sectors of employment in the Borders are public administration, education and health along with distribution, hotels and restaurants. The Borders still has a relatively large proportion of its employment in the manufacturing sector compared to figures for the whole of Scotland.

Environment

The quality of the natural and built environment is one of the areas key assets. There are many outstanding landscapes and conservation areas throughout the region and air and noise quality is generally good.

Transport Network

Transport plays a key role in the Scottish Borders due to the peripherality of the area and the distances that people need to travel to access local and national services.

Road Network

At present, road transport is the only viable option within the Scottish Borders and therefore the road network is rightly recognised as a valuable and important asset. This asset must be maintained and enhanced where appropriate in order to promote economic development, tourism and social inclusion.

The trunk road network is a valuable national asset and is the responsibility of the Scottish Government in terms of maintenance, planning, and the construction of new links and the improvement of existing routes.

Within the Scottish Borders, there are five trunk roads that travel through the region:

- A1 – Edinburgh – Berwick-upon-Tweed. This route running from Cockburnspath at the boundary with East Lothian to Lamberton at the Scottish Border is a key link between Edinburgh and the north of England and is a trunk road;

- A6091 – Galashiels – Newtown St Boswells. This section of trunk road links the A7 and the A68 trunk roads;

- A68 – Edinburgh – Jedburgh – Carter Bar. This route provides a link between Soutra at the boundary with Midlothian to the border with England at the Carter Bar;

- A7 – Edinburgh – Carlisle. The section of road between the Kingsknowes roundabout at Galashiels to the boundary with Dumfries and Galloway is trunk road. The section from Galashiels to Edinburgh is not trunk road;

- A702 – Edinburgh – Biggar. This route is a short section of trunk road between Carlops and Dolphinton to the west of the region and provides a link from Edinburgh to the motorway network.

There are also a number of other strategic routes in the area that are not trunk roads:

- A697 – Carfraemill – Coldstream – Morpeth. This section of non-trunk road is a key cross boundary route from the south east of the region to the Scottish trunk road network;

- A698 – Hawick – Kelso – Coldstream – Berwick-upon Tweed. A key cross boundary route from the south of the region to the east coast;

- A699 – Selkirk – St Boswells – Kelso. Another key east west link between three of the main settlements in the area;

- A6105 – Earlston – Berwick upon Tweed. Another key east west link from central Borders to the east coast;

- A701 – Leadburn – Broughton – Moffat. Important link between the Western Borders and Dumfries and Galloway;

- A703 – Peebles – Leadburn. Short but important north – south link between the western Borders and the boundary with Midlothian; and

- A72 – Biggar – Peebles – Galashiels. This route provides a key east to west link from the central borders to South Lanarkshire.

Rail Services

There are currently no rail stations in the Scottish Borders. However, with the successful promotion of the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill in July 2006, it is hoped that rail services will be running on the old Waverley Line from Edinburgh to Tweedbank by 2011. In addition, the eastern Borders can access the East Coast Main Line at Dunbar and Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Bus Services

At present, approximately 30% of the bus network is operated commercially by private companies such as First Group and Munros and approximately 70% of the network is subsidised by Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to communities that would not be able to sustain a commercial service. The absence of a railway station means that a number of strategic services are provided by bus, many at the expense of the Council.

The Council provides free school transport for approximately 4,000 pupils under the Education Act. Over 12% of primary school pupils and 37% of high school pupils qualify for free transport. School transport has a key role in sustaining the rural public transport network with over 90% of local bus services used to carry school or college students during peak periods.

The Technical Services Department

The Technical Services Department comprises a broad range of businesses. The principal objective is to manage the local infrastructure of public roads, bridges, properties and open spaces and to deliver the related support services to maintain these assets. The Technical Services Department also provides regulatory services including Environmental Health and Trading Standards, and most of the Council's direct or contracted services, including:

• Roads Maintenance and Management;
• Passenger Transport
• Fleet Management;
• Street Lighting;
• Cleansing; and
• Grounds Maintenance.

Most of the services provided by the Technical Services Department are based at Newtown St Boswells, although some have been decentralised to enable devolved decision making and to provide more local accountability. There are 270 Professional & Technical staff and 1,250 Manual staff in the Technical Services Department.

The department's assets include:
- **Roads** – The public road network – 1,900 miles of roads, 1250 bridges and culverts;
- **Lighting** – 18,500 lighting units, 60 CCTV cameras in 8 town centres; and
- **Vehicles** – 371 owned and 116 leased.

The main transport related functions of the department can be summarised as follows:

Roads and Fleet Management is responsible for the;
- Management of the public road network, street and civic lighting;
- Management of CCTV systems, traffic management, car parks & road safety;
- Provision of civil engineering contracting services such as:
  - ❏ Roads and Winter maintenance, and emergency response;
  - ❏ New construction;
  - ❏ Contract services to other authorities & private sector; and
  - ❏ Local sub-contractor to BEAR for trunk road maintenance
  - ❏ Fleet management - vehicles, all plant & equipment.

Engineering & Property is responsible for the;
- Engineering design and project management of major road schemes for the Council and external clients, including the Scottish Government & Transport Scotland;
- Management and maintenance of bridges and culverts, including many listed structures of national importance;
- Flood prevention and Coast protection – day to day maintenance and major preventative schemes;
- Architectural design and project management for refurbishments and new buildings;

- Estate Management services for the Council's land and property holdings; and
- Property Management – inspection, management and maintenance of all Council buildings, including offices, schools, leisure facilities, memorials and depots.

Business Management is responsible for
- Providing strategic business support;
- Overall revenue budget planning, management and coordination;
- Capital programme planning, scheme commissioning and progress monitoring;
- Transport policy, strategy, commission and planning, including the 'safer routes to school' team; and
- SB Local – a devolved, rapid-reaction service for small scale roads/environment at work.

Waverley Railway Project
- In addition to the four divisions, the Council has established a professional project team within the department to promote the Waverley Railway private Bill through the Scottish Parliament and thereafter to help procure the project and oversee construction.

Policy Background

Introduction

There have been a number of developments in relation to transport delivery since the production of the last strategy document. It is therefore important that the LTS is linked to current guidance both nationally and locally.

National Context

National Transport Agency

A new transport agency called "Transport Scotland" was established by the Scottish Government on the 1st of January 2006, to help deliver transport projects throughout the country.

The main remit of Transport Scotland is to:

- Advise, plan and deliver rail projects throughout the country;
- Manage the trunk road network in Scotland, including the delivery of new road related projects;
- Support the delivery of public transport projects in Scotland;
- Improve transport integration; and
- Promote transport excellence throughout the country.

Transport Scotland is based in Glasgow and will be working closely with all Scottish Local Authorities and other partners and agencies to help deliver a wide range of transport related projects.

National Transport Strategy

The need for a National Transport Strategy (NTS) has been apparent for some time. The Scottish Executive and Transport Scotland produced a consultation document in April 2006, with a view to publishing a national strategy document at the end of 2006. Scottish Borders Council provided a consultation response to the Scottish Executive, outlining our suggestions and concerns.

The aim of the NTS document is to clearly set out the Scottish Government's aims and objectives for transport throughout Scotland, including proposed projects and priorities. The vision for the strategy will cover approximately a 20 year period, which will take us to beyond 2025.

PART 01 BACKGROUND & CONTACT

Regional Transport Partnerships

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 placed a duty on Scottish Ministers to introduce statutory regional transport partnerships. Following a period of consultation, an order to create seven regional transport partnerships was agreed in December 2005. The partnerships were created to facilitate the planning and delivery of transport in a more strategic way.

Scottish Borders Council is part of the South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) which also includes:

- Clackmannanshire Council;
- East Lothian Council;
- Falkirk Council;
- Fife Council;
- Midlothian Council;
- The City of Edinburgh Council;
- West Lothian Council;

A figure showing the SEStran area has been provided on the right of this page.

Regional Transport Strategy

As part of their remit, all regional partnerships are statutorily required to produce regional transport strategies (RTS). A regional strategy will set out the priorities and the case for investment throughout the partnership area and will be guided by the National Transport Strategy. The SEStran RTS was submitted to the Scottish Executive for ministerial approval in March 2007.

Strategic Development Plan

The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 requires the preparation of Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) for the main city regions of Scotland. The current expectation is that the SDP for the Edinburgh City Region will consist of Fife, the Scottish Borders, Edinburgh City, Midlothian, West Lothian and East Lothian Councils.

Local Context

Community Plan

A number of public sector agencies in the Scottish Borders area have worked together in partnership with local communities to produce a vision of positive change in the Borders area. This is all part of national agenda called community planning, which is entitled "New Ways" in the Scottish Borders. As well as bringing together agencies such as SBC, Scottish Enterprise Borders and NHS Borders, the New Ways partnership ensures that individuals, businesses and organisations throughout the Borders are given the opportunity to shape policies and services.

SEStran Regional Transport Partnership Area

The New Ways Community Plan was published in April 2006 and presents a ten year vision for the future of the Scottish Borders and describes how the partners will work towards this vision. The community plan acts as an umbrella document for all of the other local strategies and plans, including this LTS.

Development Plan - Structure Plan and Local Plan

The Structure Plan and the Local Plan together form the Development Plan for the Scottish Borders. The Structure Plan sets out the strategic policy framework over a ten year period and was approved by Scottish Ministers in September 2002. The Local Plan supplies the local details and policies and the finalised Local Plan was approved in December 2005, but following the Local Plan Inquiry will not be formally adopted until March 2008.

The Council will encourage the following improvements to the transport network through the Development Plan:

• Improvements to future road and rail development will be encouraged through the development process;

• When determining planning applications, the Council will seek to protect existing access routes, such as rights of way, core paths and walking and cycling routes;
• More sustainable travel patterns will be encouraged and proposals for new infrastructure will be assessed against their impact on the natural and built environment;
• The promotion of more sustainable travel options will be encouraged; and
• The Council is committed to guiding development to locations that are accessible to existing or proposed public transport corridors and maximises opportunities for walking and cycling.

Cycling in the Borders

Achievements of the First LTS (2001 – 2006)

Previous Achievements

The first Scottish Borders LTS document was published in 2001. Since that time a number of achievements have been made and a number of projects completed. A summary of major transport related projects which have been completed and policy achievements that have been progressed since 2001 has been provided below:

Major Transport Projects

•   The design and construction of a 3-lane overtaking section of carriageway on the A68 at Soutra for the Scottish Executive. It has proved to be so successful that it has been adopted nationally as an area of good practice;

•   The planning, design and completion of the first phase of the Galashiels Inner Relief Scheme. This is a multi-phased town centre development which is linked to retail expansion and a new transport interchange;

•   The completion of the A7 Hawick Traffic Relief Scheme, which has given through traffic an alternative route avoiding the town centre;

•   The completion of the A72 Clovenfords to the Nest Scheme;

•   The successful progress of the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill through the Scottish Parliament. The Bill was granted Royal Assent in July 2006;

•   A three-year route development grant from the Scottish Executive was procured in 2005 to double the frequency of key bus services on a number of routes to and from Edinburgh, designed to encourage more sustainable travel;

•   The continued implementation of the Safer Routes to School policy throughout the Borders area, including the introduction of school travel plans and 20mph schemes;

•   Improvements to public transport infrastructure throughout the Borders, including a programme of new bus stops, shelters and raised kerbing;

Other Policy Achievements

•   The rapid response team, "SB Local" was introduced in selected areas throughout the Council area and has proven to be a huge success, with positive feedback from elected members, community councils and the general public alike;

•   The use of recycled material in road maintenance contracts.

SB Local in Action

Vision Statement and Objectives

The vision for transport in the Scottish Borders has been developed through the community planning process which has benefited from widespread consultation with public sector agencies, other key stakeholders and the general public.

Vision Statement

Our transport network will improve access for everyone, particularly to essential services within the community. It will offer real alternatives to the private car and provide socially inclusive travel for those who live, work and visit the region. The routes that connect to the national transport network will be improved, ensuring that more effective, safer connections with economic areas out-with the Scottish Borders are provided.

Objectives

A number of significant objectives have been developed for the Scottish Borders. These objectives have been derived from the five key objectives outlined in guidance from the Scottish Executive and are compatible with the community planning process. The objectives for the Scottish Borders LTS are listed below:

- **Objective One** – To ensure a safer and more sustainable environment;
- **Objective Two** – To help address the issues highlighted in the Council's Structure and Community Plans;
- **Objective Three** – To maximise personal mobility and accessibility for all;
- **Objective Four** – To promote and improve healthy modes of transport;
- **Objective Five** – To reduce social exclusion throughout the Council area;
- **Objective Six** – To enhance the local economy and provide improved transport to, from and within the Scottish Borders

Transport Issues and Opportunities

Sustainability and the Environment

- The Scottish Borders is an area with the reputation of having an excellent environment with good air quality.

- The Council's 2005 household consultation on the Local Transport Strategy showed that the majority of respondents wanted a reduction in pollution and improvements to the Borders environment;

- In a few locations within some of the main towns in the Borders, air quality is becoming more of an issue, especially in relation to the number of vehicles using our roads on a regular basis. However, the private car will inevitably continue to be an important element of transport delivery within the Borders;

- The Council's 2005 household consultation on the Local Transport Strategy showed that many people who travel to work by car do so because they do not see a viable alternative and that 75% of journeys to work are made either as a driver or passenger in a car.;

- There is a need to balance the reduction of road traffic for environmental reasons against recognition that such traffic needs to be encouraged for the sake of tourism;

- The Borders is seen to be an attractive area in terms of having a good work life balance and has a hardworking and skilled workforce. A balance needs to be struck between encouraging increasing levels of business related traffic attracted by a vibrant economy and the problems caused by localised congestion and levels of pollution.

Economy and Freight

- Freight transport is vital to the economic prosperity of the area, with an average yearly total of 1.3 million tonnes of freight transported within the Borders and a further 1.2 million tonnes is transported from the Borders to other parts of the UK by road.

- The maintenance of the Borders roads asset is essential to the vitality of the local economy. However, diminishing maintenance budgets have been adversely affecting the structure of the road network and reducing the effectiveness of the asset;

- Levels of congestion, pollution, safety and noise are relatively low throughout the Borders. However, we need to be aware that our historic towns and villages were not designed to cope with large volumes of freight related traffic.

Demolition of Station Bridge in Galashiels

- There is increasing haulage of timber as forestry plantations mature;

- Increasingly tight delivery windows placed by retailers on suppliers can put pressure on the urban road network;

- The Council is currently developing a traffic forecasting system upon which to plan for future maintenance;

- In terms of road condition, the Borders is currently ranked 27th out of the 32 Scottish Council areas.

Mobility and Social Inclusion

- The Borders does have relatively good public transport and social transport providers, but selected improvements would certainly enhance the current system, especially for the 24% of Borders households that do not have access to a car;

- Elderly and disabled people can face difficulties in using public transport and the commercial cost of services can disadvantage certain sections of the community;

- There is an increasing need to travel longer distances to major facilities;

- The Council's 2005 household consultation on the Local Transport Strategy showed that powered two wheeler use is not regarded favourably by many Borders residents;

- There are presently difficulties travelling to healthcare facilities for non-drivers and non-car owners, although the Borders General Hospital enjoys a reasonably good level of bus services.

Public Transport

- There is a lack of adequate public transport boarding/alighting facilities in some Border towns, although the Council is currently addressing this issue with a planned programme of improvements throughout the area;

- The Council is currently operating a number of demand responsive transport services in areas of sparse population, where it is difficult to justify scheduled services;

- At present, there are a number of buses and taxis in the Borders that are suitable for the elderly or disabled. However, this number needs to increase, especially noting that all vehicles will eventually have to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act;

- Although bus services are improving, there is still a negative perception of public transport amongst non users and it could be argued, a lack of integration with other modes of transport.

Road Safety

- Recorded traffic on all major roads in the Scottish Borders rose by 70 million vehicle kilometres between 1999 and 2004, thus increasing the risk of accidents;

- The Council has undertaken extensive road safety related work throughout the area. However, rural roads are by nature often unsuitable for the kind of high speed use that the modern traveller tends to demand and inappropriate speed is usually the most common cause of accidents;

- Some sections of the Council's road network are below the standard required by national codes of practice, mainly due to a lack of funding;

- The increasing level of traffic on our roads does raise child safety fears for parents, thereby encouraging parents to drive their children to school, which in itself raises road safety issues;

- The Council's 2005 household consultation on the Local Transport Strategy showed a dislike by many Borders residents of speed humps as traffic calming measures;

- Modern motor vehicles, have the ability of high performance which, in untrained and inexperienced hands can cause accidents;

- The Council has introduced a Road Safety Working Group which includes members of all the local emergency services, road safety groups and road maintenance companies. This group is actively seeking to reduce the number of accidents on Borders roads and this approach is considered to be innovative in Scotland

Councillor Hutton with Junior Road Safety Officers

Healthy Travel

- The Borders has an excellent environment for pursuing an active lifestyle and the Council needs to encourage exercise through 'healthy travel' such as walking and cycling for shorter journeys and as a recreational pursuit;

- The Council has an excellent record of working with schools throughout the Borders on Safer Routes to School Projects and School Travel Plans. More than 50% of plans have either been produced or are in the process of being implemented.

- The Council tries to cater for the needs of walkers and horse riders on and off road;

- In 2004/5, the Borders Health Board Area recorded the highest percentage 'Severely Obese', 'Obese' and 'Overweight' P1 school children of any of the six Area Health Boards in Scotland;

- SportScotland is encouraging as many primary school children as possible to be physically active.

Consultation

The Council involved the public and key stakeholders in the development of the strategy document. A questionnaire was sent to all of the residents of the Borders in 2005 asking for views and comments with over 1,100 replies received by the Council. In 2006 an issues and options report was sent to major stakeholders throughout the Borders including community councils and local elected members.

Broad Conclusions

There was broad agreement with the initial aims of the transport strategy. The themes that ran through the results of the

survey were a strong perception that in the Borders we have a poor bus service, it should be improved and where possible to try and reduce car use. However, there is still a lot of support for road improvement and maintenance, in particular trunk road improvements. The car is still seen to be essential in a rural area such as the Borders and there is some evidence of resistance to encouraging alternatives to it.

Respondents also saw reducing road accidents, improving the environment and reducing pollution as important but generally disliked traffic calming measures. North – South transport links were given a higher priority than East - West ones. Proposals for rail links in the Borders were subjected to extreme views with the large majority in favour of developing them. Respondents were strongly against local and adjacent area road user charging.

From the questionnaire, 75% of journeys to work are by car. Most people use their cars because they see no alternative. Improved routing, frequency and reliability of bus services would encourage some people to use public transport to get to work. A small majority of respondents would be prepared to car share, with assistance in finding car share partners being the factor that would most encourage people to car share. There is little enthusiasm for cycling to work, although cycling is seen as a popular pastime.

Finally, improved bus services is far and away the prime factor in encouraging people to use their cars less for other journeys.

Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance

The Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) is a methodology that has been developed by the Scottish Executive to help transport planners and decision makers in the development of transport policies, plans and projects and is the key reference document for Scottish Local Authorities.

The STAG methodology has been written in the belief that good planning and appraisal results in good transport policy and investment and it is intended that STAG will result in the development of proposals and strategies that are to the satisfaction of the stakeholders. The Scottish Executive recommends that STAG is used when undertaking a transport planning exercise, which includes the development of an LTS.

Guidance from the Scottish Executive suggests that the STAG appraisal process focuses on the Government's five key objectives, namely:

- Environment;
- Safety;
- Economy;
- Integration; and
- Accessibility and Social Inclusion.

A STAG appraisal normally has two parts:

- **Part One –** an initial appraisal and broad assessment of measures and impacts in relation to the Governments key objectives; and
- **Part Two –** a very detailed assessment of the considered options including cost benefit analysis and environmental assessment.

For the purpose of the LTS, we have carried out a part one assessment on the overall strategy document to try and develop a suitable approach and also a package of measures that will adequately address the situation in the Scottish Borders.

Suggested Strategic Transport Approach Options

Four approaches have been considered in the development of the LTS

1. **An approach based purely on motorised road transport**
   - ❍ Infrastructure maintenance and development will be focussed around:
     - Promoting use of the motor car and powered two wheelers to provide a means of personal travel for access to services and facilities for the vast majority of residents and tourists
     - Promoting use of commercial road transport to sustain and advance economic development
     - Accepting use of public road transport to provide access to services and facilities for those residents unable to run a car.
     - Minimal priority given to other forms of non-motorised transport

2. **An approach balanced between the use of motorised road transport and more sustainable modes of transport**
   - ❍ Infrastructure maintenance and development will be focussed around:
     - Accepting use of the car and powered two wheelers to provide a means of personal travel for access to services and facilities over longer distances and for tourist related travel
     - Discouraging the use of the private car for personal travel in favour of sustainable non-motorised modes of transport
     - Accepting that commercial road transport will be the main mode to sustain and advance economic development, but encouraging the use of proposed rail alternatives

   - Encouraging the use of public road and rail transport to provide access to services and facilities as an alternative to using the car
   - Committing to an integrated approach to public transport provision
   - Investigating the provision of sustainable or public transport facilities on routes to major centres of employment

3. **A sustainable approach based on the total promotion of public and non-motorised transport**
   - ❍ Infrastructure maintenance and development will be focussed around:
     - Discouraging use of the motor car and powered two wheelers to provide a means of personal travel for access to services and facilities for all but long distance essential journeys.
     - Encouraging the use of public transport and sustainable non-motorised transport as the main form of tourist travel within the area
     - Discouraging the use of commercial road transport where a viable alternative exists
     - Promoting the use of public road and rail transport to provide access to all services and facilities over longer distances
     - Promoting the use of cycling and walking over short distances to access services and facilities
     - Committing to an integrated approach to all transport provision

4. A do-minimum approach based on current levels of funding

○ Infrastructure maintenance and development will be focussed around:
   • Accepting that current levels of funding will continue to apply;
   • Minimal investment will be delivered into sustainable or road based transport;
   • Only essential works will be undertaken;
   • Innovation will not be actively encouraged.

The four options have been appraised against the Council's key objectives and the results of the Part One appraisal on the Council's four strategic options have been summarised in Table 2.1.

Chosen Strategy

From Table 2.1, it can be noted that option two or the balanced approach helps to achieve the majority of the Council's key objectives and therefore has been chosen by the Council as the best approach to be adopted as the basis for the transport strategy.

New bus shelter at Cardrona

TABLE 2.1 - An Appraisal of the Suggested Strategic Transport Options

Option / An emphasis upon	Addressing Sustainability and the Environment	Addressing Community Plan Issues	Maintaining Personal Mobility	Improving Health and Fitness	Improving Social Inclusion	Addressing Structure Plan issues	To Enhance the Local Economy and provide Enhanced Transport Links
1. An approach based purely on motorised road transport	**No** – making no attempt to reduce motorised transport will not contribute to sustainability or improvement of the Borders Environment	**No** – The Community Plan encourages alternatives to car use and improved social inclusion through integrated public transport and increased provision for walking and cycling	**Yes** – The car is undeniably the most convenient way of travel for the individual	**No** – Increased moderate or vigorous physical activity is a national target of the Scottish Executive. Sustained use of the car for short journeys will not help to meet this	**No** – This approach will not benefit people who cannot afford to run a car	**Partly** – The structure plan promotes rail development, public transport and cycling, whilst recognising the need for a strong roads infrastructure	**Partly** – Increased investment in road improvement could address this, although this would ignore opportunities that rail development could offer
2. An approach balanced between the use of motorised road transport and other sustainable modes of transport	**Yes** – attempts to reduce car use for short journeys would improve the environment where it is worst affected – in urban areas	**Yes** – The Community Plan encourages alternatives to car use and improved social inclusion through integrated public transport.	**Yes** – This approach recognises that car use is essential for some journeys, whilst the encouragement of public transport will help the mobility of people who do not have access to a car.	**Partly** -- The encouragment of a limited amount of walking and cycling will moderately increase physical activity	**Yes** – Improved public transport will benefit non car owners and improvements to road based transport will also benefit	**Yes** - The structure plan promotes rail development, public transport and cycling, whilst recognising the need for a strong roads infrastructure	**Yes** – The Waverley Railway has the potential to do this while supporting limited road improvement would also help

Option / An emphasis upon	Addressing Sustainability and the Environment	Addressing Community Plan Issues	Maintaining Personal Mobility	Improving Health and Fitness	Improving Social Inclusion	Addressing Structure Plan issues	To Enhance the Local Economy and provide Enhanced Transport Links
3. A sustainable approach based on the total promotion of public and non-motorised transport	**Yes** – the more that motorised road use is discouraged the better for the environment	**Yes** – The Community Plan encourages alternatives to car use and improved social inclusion through integrated public transport.	**Partly** – Discouragement of car use will reduce the convenience of personal mobility	**Yes** – Encouraging more walking and cycling will increase moderate or vigorous physical activity	**Partly** – Improved public transport will benefit non car owners, but in rural areas the car is essential for some journeys	**Partly** - The structure plan recognises that the Borders needs a strong roads infrastructure to encourage economic development	**Yes** – The Waverley Railway has the potential to do this while supporting limited road improvement would also help
4. A do-minimum approach based on current levels of funding	**Partly** – the more that motorised road use is discouraged the better for the environment	**Partly** – The Community Plan encourages alternatives to car use and improved social inclusion through integrated public transport.	**Partly** – There will be a limited amount of improvements designed to improve personal mobility	**Partly** -- The encouragment of a limited amount of walking and cycling will moderately increase physical activity	**Partly** – Improved public transport will benefit non car owners	**Partly** - The structure plan promotes rail development, public transport and cycling, whilst recognising the need for a strong roads infrastructure	**Yes** – The Waverley Railway has the potential to do this while supporting limited road improvement would also help

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a new requirement for public plans and strategies, which tries to assess the impact that a strategy will have on the local environment. Current legislation was introduced in February 2006 (The Environmental Assessment Act (Scotland) 2005.)

The idea is that the SEA should run in parallel with the appropriate plan or strategy from the initiation of the project, thereby giving more credence to environmental issues.

The key stages of the SEA process are:

- **Screening –** to determine whether the plan or strategy is likely to have a significant environmental effect and whether a SEA is required;
- **Scoping –** to decide on the scope and level of detail of the environmental report and the consultation period for the report;
- **Environmental Report –** to publish an environmental report on the plan or strategy and to comment on its environmental impact;
- **Adoption –** to provide information on the adopted plan or strategy and report on how the comments from the consultation period have been addressed; and
- **Monitoring –** to monitor any significant environmental effects and to take any appropriate remedial action.

There is not a current legal requirement to undertake a SEA on the Scottish Borders LTS document mainly due to the fact that the preparation of the LTS document started long before the current legislation came into force. However, the Council considered that there was some value in the SEA process and therefore some initial information gathering was undertaken. The Council intends that this information will act as a baseline for future environmental assessments.

Introduction

The strategy has been divided into a number of specific areas that need to be addressed and are based on the categories outlined in the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance. Associated policy initiatives have been identified and targets have been detailed where appropriate. The specific areas to be addressed are:

- Sustainability and Environment;
- Economy and Freight;
- Mobility and Social Inclusion;
- Public and Integrated Transport;
- Road Safety and Management; and
- Healthy Travel.

Sustainability and the Environment

Air Quality and Noise

Introduction

The Environment Act 1995 requires all local authorities in Scotland to conduct local air quality reviews, including an assessment of the current air quality in the area and the predicted air quality in the future. If the reviews indicate there is a problem then the local authority is required to designate an Air Quality Management Area. Action must then be taken to ensure that air quality in the area improves. This process is known as local air quality management.

Under the European Union Noise Directive all major roads with more than six million vehicles per year and all conurbations over 250,000 inhabitants will have to be assessed in terms of noise levels.

Existing Situation

The quality of the air in the Borders is assumed to be of high quality, because of the low density of population and the rural outlook with high levels of open farmland. However the level of car ownership is relatively high in comparison with the rest of Scotland, and there is a high level of agricultural activity that can contribute to the air quality in the area. The Council currently undertakes air quality testing throughout the Borders, especially in the main settlements.

What We Plan To Do

By applying a balanced approach to transport strategy development, the Council acknowledges that car related traffic will continue to be an important part of life in the Borders. However, the Council is also trying to promote more sustainable transport alternatives where it is feasible to do so. The Council will continue to undertake regular air quality and noise monitoring throughout the Borders area, especially in identified areas of localised congestion such as town centres and in areas of development within the central borders.

When a transport or land-use development scheme is proposed, the opportunity to enforce environmental conditions and sustainability is available, and the Council can enforce certain conditions through the land-use planning system. The Council will continue to give consideration to air and noise quality when promoting a transport related scheme.

The Council may have the opportunity in certain cases to promote lower polluting vehicles in its role as a major fleet purchaser and contractor. There may also be the opportunity to promote alternative fuels such as biofuels or liquid petroleum gas which in certain circumstances could help to reduce the amount of produced pollutants.

Over the next 10 – 15 years, the popularity of the private car will put more pressure on the infrastructure in our traditional town centres. The Council is keen to support environmental improvements in selected

locations where there is a need and funding is available. The towns of Galashiels, Hawick, Melrose and Kelso have been identified as locations where suitable improvements would have a significant effect on the town centre environment.

Policies

1. Air Quality Assessment

Policy SE1 – Scottish Borders Council will carry out regular air quality assessments throughout the Borders in compliance with the Environment Act 1995 and subsequent regulations.

2. Environmental Impact

Policy SE2 – Scottish Borders Council will carry out environmental impact assessments for all appropriate transport related development, and will encourage sustainability in the form of walking, cycling and public transport.

3. Alternative Vehicles and Fuels

Policy SE3 – The Council will promote alternative fuels and low emission vehicles where appropriate.

4. Town Centre Environmental Improvements

Policy SE4 – The Council will promote environmental improvements in selected towns throughout the Borders.

Travel Planning

Introduction

Travel planning is the process of encouraging more sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling, particularly in the process of travel to work. There are a number of reasons for promoting travel planning such as:

- A healthier work force;
- Reduced levels of congestion, especially at peak times;
- An improvement in air quality; and
- Improved public transport

Existing Situation

The journey to work presents an ideal opportunity to promote sustainable practices and the Council, mindful of its role as a road authority and significant employer, is currently in the process of developing a travel plan as part of an environmental improvement campaign.

A small number of major employers in the Borders such as Tesco and Asda have introduced travel plans as part of the Council's planning requirements. In addition SEStran has appointed a person to help develop travel planning throughout the south east of Scotland.

Melrose Town Centre Improvements

What We Plan To Do

The Council will progress its environmental strategy, and will develop a travel plan in the next 12 months. In addition the Council will continue to promote more environmentally friendly infrastructure such as enhanced cycling facilities and showers for employees along with the promotion of public transport to Council Headquarters.

The Council will also work with SEStran to help develop travel planning to and from Council workplaces and with other major employers in the Borders.

The production and co-ordination of a Transport Plan for a major employer is a demanding and time consuming business, involving numerous studies and meetings with various partners and the intended beneficiary. It would be extremely beneficial to have a dedicated officer within the Council to help co-ordinate the initiation of travel planning in the Borders area.

Policies

1. Transport Plan for Scottish Borders Council

Policy SE5 - Scottish Borders Council will develop a Travel Plan as part of an environmental improvement programme

2. Influencing Employers in the Borders area

Policy SE6 – Scottish Borders Council will work with SEStran and New Ways Partners to encourage other major employers in the area to develop travel planning.

3. Co-ordination and Partnerships

Policy SE7 – Scottish Borders Council will appoint an officer to co-ordinate and monitor travel planning throughout the Borders, subject to available funding.

Road Traffic Reduction

The Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 requires local traffic authorities to undertake a review of existing and forecast levels of traffic on local roads in their area, and to prepare a report. The Report is also required to set targets for reducing existing traffic levels or the rate of growth of traffic, or, if the authority chooses not to set targets, to clearly justify this decision.

From recent and historical traffic data, it is clear that the trunk roads are carrying most of the traffic travelling through the area. The A1 at Lamberton and the A7 between Selkirk and Galashiels carry over 10,000 vehicles per day, although these flows are still well within the capacity of the roads. However, this Report is about local roads and their ability to cope and the possibility of traffic reduction.

In a rural area such as the Borders, with no railway station, strategic port or airport, there is a great dependence on the car. Any expansion or development in the area will almost certainly attract extra traffic. Indeed, the tourist industry works hard to attract additional motorists into the Borders.

The Borders area has also been subject to pressure arising from the Edinburgh housing market. The Council's most recent Structure Plan recognises the reality of housing growth within the Edinburgh journey-to-work area, and the pressure this will place upon the Borders, but intends to divert that growth towards the Central Borders area where new residents can make maximum use of established retail and public services.

The proposed railway is both an essential catalyst in attracting such development to the preferred area, and also a means to ensure that the consequent travel demands can be met in a sustainable manner.

It is the Council's wish not to set targets for Traffic Reduction for two main reasons: -

• The majority of the existing road network copes adequately now and will do so within the lifetime of this document; and
• There is an urgent need to attract industry (and therefore traffic) into the Borders.

What We Plan To Do

The Council will work with SEStran to provide more effective alternatives to the private car for journeys into Edinburgh. In particular the Council has placed great importance on the planned construction of the Waverley rail link between Edinburgh and the Central Borders.

In addition, the Council will continue to plan for improved walking and cycling facilities and for improved public transport, in an effort to restrict traffic to its current levels, or at worst, to limit its rate of increase.

We will monitor the level of traffic along with traffic movements on adopted road links throughout the Borders through a programme of traffic counts, the results of which will inform future traffic management and maintenance programmes. The Council will also develop a traffic generation model in the Central Borders, which will help direct funding to areas of the road network that may become congested in the future.

Economy and Freight

Road Network

Introduction

At present, road transportation is the only viable option within the Scottish Borders in terms of travel, and therefore the road network must be recognised as a valuable and important asset. This asset must be maintained and enhanced in order to promote economic development, tourism and social inclusion, and must link this part of the country to areas of key importance, including the motorway network, airports and railway stations.

Existing Situation

The development of the road network in the Borders is dependent on relevant funding provision. The Scottish Government and Transport Scotland have previously indicated that the balance of transport related funding over the next few years will favour the development of public transport schemes. Scottish Borders Council accepts that the funding of public transport provision will benefit rural areas, however, the Council would argue that there needs to be a balanced approach to transport provision, especially in the Borders where the private car and other motorised vehicles will continue to be the dominant form of transport.

Within the Borders the trunk road network is managed and maintained by the Scottish Executive via their agent BEAR Scotland (previously Amey). The Council manages and maintains all of the other roads in the Borders, apart from privately maintained roads or tracks.

A number of Route Action Plans have, in the past been undertaken by Scottish Borders Council on the trunk and local road network (A class) within the Borders. The main reasons for undertaking these studies is to investigate existing conditions, identify shortcomings and provide a consistent approach for improving specified routes. A more specific objective of these studies is to improve the safety, comfort and reliability of journey times on the route and it is generally felt that this type of approach is efficient, effective and produces the best value for limited expenditure.

The Development Plan for the Borders highlights the fact that transport issues are a fundamental part of the development strategy of the Borders. Three development hubs have been identified as shown in the figure below. These areas are the preferred areas for growth within the Borders area and are labelled the Primary, Eastern and Western hubs.
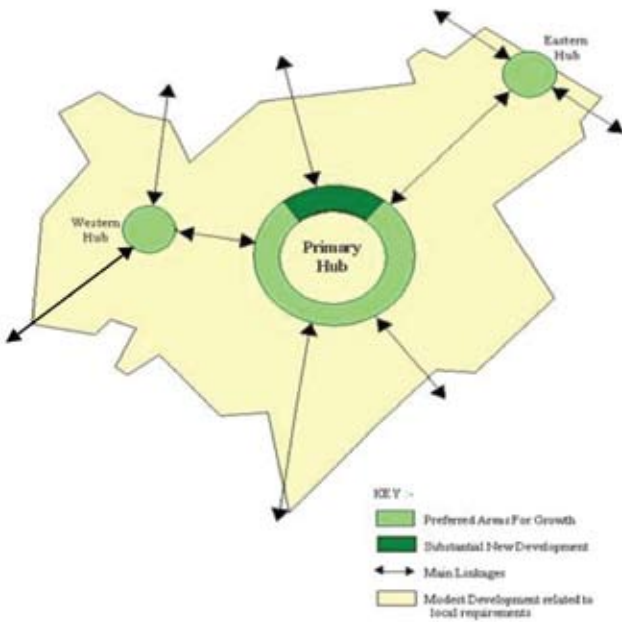
Development Hubs in the Scottish Borders

What We Plan To Do

The existing Route Action Plans that have been developed for the trunk and strategic road network throughout the Borders will be reviewed and updated where required. The aim is for the whole of the trunk and strategic road network in the Borders to have been assessed and preferred improvements identified.

The Council will continue to use the hub strategy to help develop better internal and cross boundary links throughout the Borders. Priorities for the promotion of enhancements to the road network include:
  • Key connections between the towns within the primary hub;
  • East to west links between the three hubs; and
  • Links between the hubs and settlements out-with the Scottish Borders such as Edinburgh, Newcastle, Carlisle and beyond.

The potential schemes that the Council would like to promote for each of the categories is as follows:

Part 1: Key connections between the towns within the primary hub:

  • Completion of the Galashiels Inner Relief Road – links;
  • Initiation of town centre studies in selected locations throughout the Council area including Kelso and Peebles;
  • Promotion of a by-pass for Selkirk
  • Construction of a new bridge over the Tweed at Lowood.

A72 Clovenfords to the Nest

Part 2: Linking the Primary, Eastern and Western Hubs Together

• Construction of the A72 Woodend to Tighnult improvement and improvements at Dirt Pot Corner; and
• Implementation of the priority listing from the completed east-west strategy.

Part 3: Linking the Primary, Eastern and Western Hubs to Central Scotland and England.

• Completion of the A68 Soutra - Oxton improvement;
• Dualling of the A1 between Edinburgh and the Scottish Border;
• Completion of the priority schemes identified in the A7 Route Action Plan, south of Hawick; and
• Working with neighbouring local authorities to promote improvements to strategic local routes such as the A701.

Policies

Identify Suitable Road Network Improvements

Policy EF1 - The Council will work with the Transport Scotland, SEStran and other neighbouring Local Authorities to identify and implement suitable road network improvements in the Borders.

Increased Funding for Transport Improvement Schemes in Rural Areas

Policy EF2- The Council shall bid for increased funding for transportation projects for rural areas through the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland.

Road and Bridge Maintenance

Introduction

It is recognised that the road and bridge network represents a valuable asset particularly in an area that is totally dependent on road transportation. Improving and maintaining this asset must be considered an integral part of any sustainable integrated transportation policy. In recent years a reduction in maintenance budgets has led to deterioration in the structural stability of the road network throughout the Scottish Borders.

Existing Situation

There are approximately 1,900 miles of council maintained roads, and over 1,250 bridges throughout the Scottish Borders. The asset value of all the roads, bridges, lighting and signposts etc. is estimated to be in the region of £1 billion. There is therefore a huge cost to the Council of maintaining these assets to a suitable standard.

The management and maintenance of the Trunk Roads within the Scottish Borders is the responsibility of the Scottish Government, with the day to day operations currently undertaken by BEAR Scotland (previously Amey Highways) who are the Executive's agents.

The maintenance of the local road network can be separated into four main categories, namely:

• Structural – includes work such as surface dressing, overlays, bridge works and resurfacing of existing roads and footways;
• Routine maintenance – smaller value work such as patching, drainage, road marking, grass cutting and general repair work as well as the maintenance and improvement of the street lighting asset;

- Minor improvements – has historically included both capital and revenue funding and includes new footways, crash barriers, passing places and other miscellaneous items; and
- Winter – the majority of this type of work is weather dependent and can be very difficult to plan in terms of allocating suitable budgets
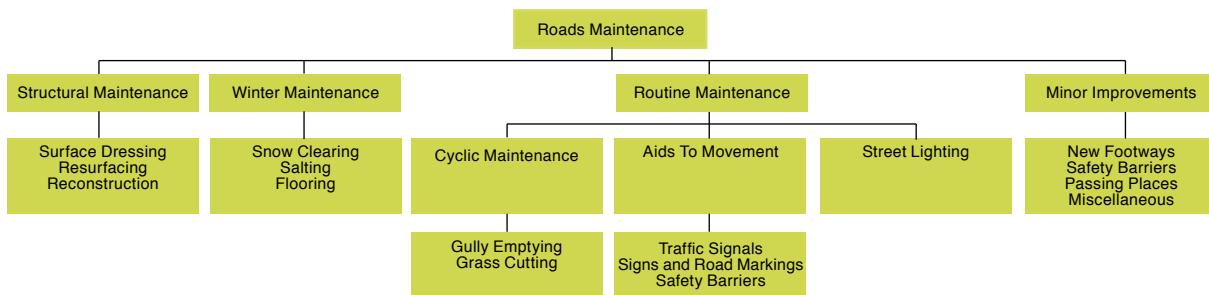
Road Maintenance Structure

The Council spends in the region of £7 million annually on maintaining the Council's roads and associated infrastructure. However, the Technical Services Department has been concerned for several years about the deteriorating condition of the local road network with some roads suffering from edge rutting, flooding, uneven road surfaces and lack of skid resistance. Public opinion surveys have repeatedly identified that the maintenance of roads and footways should be one of the Council's key priorities.

The deterioration in the condition of the roads and bridge network has been accompanied by an increase in vehicle ownership, with car ownership levels projected to increase over the next 10-15 years, therefore exerting more pressure on the existing road network.

If continued additional funding is not obtained for essential maintenance, the possibility of localised road and bridge closures may have to be considered if their condition continues to deteriorate to a point where public safety is affected.

The Council has recently produced a hierarchy of roads which indicates the priority routes in the Borders and helps dictate where maintenance should be prioritised.

Many street lighting columns are coming to the end of their working lives and therefore a replacement programme is currently underway throughout the Borders. This programme is obviously expensive to implement and additional funding will be required to complete this process.

What We Plan To Do

The maintenance of the road network has been identified as an area that has been underfunded in the past and is also an issue that the general public feel is vitally important to the vitality of the Borders. The Council members have therefore decided that road and network maintenance should be given more priority and £3 million of additional funding has been identified in the capital programme for maintenance and road improvements in the financial year, 2007/08. This is a one-off investment, however if this policy proves to be successful, additional funding could be sought for future years.

There is currently a huge backlog of maintenance related work required to bring the roads and associated infrastructure up to a sufficient standard. Therefore the Council will continue to press the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland for increased funding for roads maintenance.

The Council also intends to implement an asset management system which is a computerised monitoring package incorporating high-speed structural surveys of the local road network. The surveys outline areas of failure and low skid resistance, and can assist in providing priority-based information.

The prioritisation of bridge maintenance work is essential in terms of providing a cost-effective allocation of resources, and demonstrating best value to the general public. To help staff develop a priority system, an electronic database was installed as a management tool to record defects and help with the prioritisation of maintenance work. The Council is currently updating this system.

Scottish Borders Council will continue to place a high priority on roads and winter maintenance and will continue to prioritise funding throughout the Borders based on the hierarchy of roads. If funding levels do not increase, then the Council may consider reducing the number of public roads throughout the Borders where it is practicable to do so.

Street lighting is also an issue that has been identified by the general public as being important. The Council has therefore decided to direct more funding to deliver enhanced lighting throughout the Borders. An additional £1.5 million pounds has been allocated in the capital programme over the next three years.

Policies

1. Maintenance of the Existing Network

Policy EF3– Scottish Borders Council will maintain the existing road, bridge and street lighting network to a standard that is proportionate to the available budget allocation.

2. Route Hierarchy

Policy EF4 – Scottish Borders Council will use the route hierarchy to help prioritise winter and routine maintenance works throughout the Borders network.

3. Bridge Maintenance Management System

Policy EF5 – The bridge maintenance section will develop and use an electronic database and priority system designed to help allocate maintenance resources.

4. Asset Management System

Policy EF6 – Scottish Borders Council will develop a computerised Asset Management System to prioritise spending on road, bridge and lighting maintenance.

Freight

Introduction

Freight transportation by road is vital in an area such as the Borders in terms of providing economic stability and development opportunities, which in turn sustain local communities. Good road links are therefore vitally important in the process of freight transportation along with policies to help minimise the impact that freight vehicles can have on local communities and the local road network.

Existing Situation

At present, the Scottish Borders has no viable rail or sea freight networks, and relies totally on road freight to serve the local towns and outlying settlements. The existing road network and associated structures must therefore be maintained adequately and enhanced where appropriate to facilitate the quick and easy transportation of goods to their destination and to encourage economic growth throughout the Council area.

There are no existing advisory routes at present in the Borders. However there are some informal arrangements in place in selected areas for the transportation of timber and for irregular loads. There are also a small number of HGV parks in towns such as Galashiels, Hawick, Kelso and Newtown St. Boswells.

The re-introduction of the Waverley rail link and potentially a new local rail service from Edinburgh to Berwick, could, in time help to initiate a move away from a roads dominated freight distribution system, and help reduce the number of heavy vehicles on Border roads. However, this shift away from road based travel is unlikely in the medium term due mainly to the fact that the Waverley rail link has been promoted as a passenger only route. Also, without a through route

to Carlisle, the proposed Waverley route is not particularly attractive to high volume freight distribution. The majority of freight distribution will therefore continue to be facilitated by road throughout the Borders.

What We Plan To Do

The transportation of goods is a vital part of modern life, however, in some cases freight movement can cause problems for residents in towns and villages. The solution to some of these problems may include the use of advisory HGV routes in selected areas of the Borders. However, the landscape of the Borders and the existing road network sometimes make alternative routes difficult to achieve. Any proposed routes would be discussed between Scottish Borders Council, The Freight Transport Association, freight operators and the local community.

The Council will also seek to be involved in a regional freight strategy which could be developed by SEStran throughout the south east of Scotland. The strategy would look at the development of strategic freight routes to help retain and develop the economic vitality of the area, but at the same time reduce the possible impact of freight related traffic in certain locations throughout the Borders.

The Council is also considering using web-based technology to advise motorists and especially freight related traffic of major road-works taking place throughout the area.

Policies

1. Freight Movement

Policy EF7 – Scottish Borders Council will maintain and enhance where appropriate the existing road network to allow the adequate transportation of road freight.

2. Advisory Routes

Policy EF8 – Scottish Borders Council will investigate and encourage the use of designated advisory routes for freight, to offer environmental benefits to residents, but also to maintain the economic vitality of the area.

3. Route Hierarchy

Policy EF9 – The Council will use the local route Hierarchy to determine suitable routes for commercial vehicles in the Borders area, and to inform planning decisions regarding freight generating developments.

Timber Transport

Introduction

Approximately 87,435 hectares or some 18.5% of the Borders are covered by forestry and over the next five to ten years the resource will approach economic maturity. The transportation of timber from source to the point of processing is a fundamental link in the chain and can introduce a number of economic, environmental and social issues. The Scottish Borders Timber Transport Group was formed in 1998 to try and help address the issues of timber transportation throughout the south of Scotland.

The members of the group include:

- Forest Enterprise;
- The Forestry Commission; and
- Scottish Borders Council

Existing Situation

A Timber Transport Strategy has been developed by the Scottish Borders Timber Transport Group which was adopted in June 2006. The strategy document identified the following issues:

- The impact of HGV traffic on local communities – 40,000 HGV trips associated with timber extraction in 1999 is expected to rise to 80,000 trips between 2012 – 2016;
- Use of inadequate minor roads – the nature of forestry extraction means that many of the designated routes have not been designed to take heavy vehicles;
- Insufficient funding levels for road maintenance;
- The high timber haulage costs in Scotland in comparison with other EU countries inhibits the competitiveness of Scottish timber;
- There can be conflict between timber traffic and recreational traffic such as cyclists and equestrians; and
- There are limited opportunities to transfer timber haulage from road to other more sustainable forms of transport such as rail or sea.

The Council and partners has recently developed a comprehensive and co-ordinated timber transport route map, which allows timber traffic to be directed away from the most popular tourist routes where applicable.

What We Plan To Do

The Council intends to help implement the proposals contained in the Timber Transport Strategy by working with relevant partners and lobbying for increased levels of funding. The proposals noted within the strategy document include:

- The employment of a South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer;
- The provision of alternative routes that by-pass local communities where it is possible to do so;
- The provision of in-forest routes to by-pass unsuitable sections of public roads and help provide suitable improvements to the public road;

- The Council and partners will lobby for an increased investment in forestry related routes; and
- The Council and partners support the reintroduction of the Waverley Rail Link between Tweedbank and Carlisle.

Policies

1. Agreed Routes Map

Policy EF10 – Potential conflicts between timber freight, local communities and other users will be minimised by the use of the agreed routes map.

2. Rail Transportation

Policy EF11 – Scottish Borders Council supports the re-introduction of the Waverley Rail Link between Tweedbank and Carlisle and will support the promotion of rail and sea based transport for the transportation of forestry related material where feasible to do so.

3. Internal Forestry Road Network

Policy EF12 - The development of an integrated and robust internal forestry road network will be supported and encouraged by the Council where it is viable to do so.

4. Transport Funding

Policy EF13 - All possible sources of funding for timber transport infrastructure such as the Strategic Timber Transport Fund will be explored to help implement improvements to the public road network to help facilitate timber extraction.

5. South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer

Policy EF14 – Along with partner organisations, the Council will support a South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer whose primary role is to act as a link between Local Authorities and the forestry industry.

Mobility and Social Inclusion

Community Transport

Introduction

Although the majority of the Borders population live in communities of more than 500 people, there are a number of communities that are located away from regular public transport routes. A significant number of these people will also have limited access to a car for various reasons such as:

- Too young to drive;
- Disability;
- One car households; and
- Can't afford to run a car

Some of these people can experience rural isolation and may be unable to serve their basic human needs as well as community affairs such as evening classes, youth clubs, pre-school education, sport and leisure. Others may live in larger communities with a wider range of facilities, but be unable to participate in the community due to disability or infirmity.

Community transport schemes are diverse and include projects such as community buses, volunteer car schemes and a variety of services, and are designed to play a significant part in meeting the needs of isolated communities that normal public transport services simply can't meet.

A variety of successful schemes have been operated by partnerships of community groups, local authorities, voluntary groups and commercial operators with the intention of delivering an enhanced service to the rural community.

Existing Situation

In the Borders there are a number of community based transport schemes that commonly provide accessible vehicles for people who find it difficult to use public transport. The essential characteristic of Community Transport is that services are specified by, managed by or operated by volunteers or not for profit organisations. The main organisations providing community based transport in the Borders includes:

- The Womens Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) and the British Red Cross provide transport with volunteer drivers using their own cars;
- The British Red Cross also has a specially adapted Minibus driven by volunteers; and
- The Wheels Projects have specially adapted vehicles to allow disabled access within various parts of the Borders.

Scottish Borders Council contributes towards the cost of providing these services and there is a small charge made by the voluntary organisations to the passengers. The Council also has a small fleet of mini-bus vehicles that are available to community groups.

The Regional Transport Strategy produced by SEStran is focussed on improving accessibility to health care services, employment and also identifies improving accessibility within rural areas as a key initiative.

What We Plan To Do

The Council intends to strengthen the partnership working that currently exists between the Local Authority, Health Authorities and the voluntary sector currently based throughout the Borders. These relationships should be maintained and enhanced where appropriate to ensure that community based transport schemes are delivered in the appropriate areas.

The Council has introduced demand responsive transport services in selected parts of the Borders and will look to enhance these services where it is possible to do so. The Council will also continue to make mini-buses available to community groups.

Policies

1. Partnership Working

> Policy MS1 - The Council will encourage the improvement of strategic partnerships within the community sector throughout the Borders and will work with organisations such as SEStran to provide enhanced mobility and access for isolated communities.

Taxis

Introduction

Taxis and Private Hire Cars are an important part of an integrated transport system, and can be used to fill the gaps in public transport routes, especially in the most rural parts of the Borders away from regular public transport links. They are also especially useful late at night, when most other forms of public transport are unavailable. A number of vehicles are also equipped with facilities to help disabled and elderly passengers.

Existing Situation

The majority of larger settlements in the Borders such as Galashiels and Hawick have designated facilities for taxis and private hire cars. In other towns and villages there are usually informal arrangements in place, the majority of which are acceptable to the local community.
The Disability Discrimination Act specifies that all taxi and private hire car operators must have vehicles that are suitable for disabled passengers by 2012. Regulations also specify that taxi and private hire drivers must have been through the disclosure process undertaken by The Police and Disclosure Scotland.

The Council acts as the licensing authority and currently has an input into setting maximum fare levels and has a role in helping to deliver reasonable standards for vehicles and operators.

Some of the smaller towns in the Borders do not have designated taxi ranks at present, and this situation could cause problems if demand increases over the next few years.

There is no anecdotal evidence to suggest there is the occasional problem of individuals operating without a license and/or insurance.

What We Plan To Do

The Council intends to review the taxi facilities in a number of the main towns in the Borders and will work with local communities to identify suitable facilities for taxi operators and private hire companies where it is appropriate to do so. A new taxi rank is currently being promoted in Eyemouth and lessons from this exercise will be taken forward to other towns as required.

The Council will also work with local operators to highlight the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Scottish Borders Council will also assist operators in terms of the licensing laws and regulations and will advise operators of any changes to the legislation.

Policies

1. Survey of Existing Facilities

> Policy MS2 – The Technical Services Department, in conjunction with licensing officers will undertake a review of existing taxi and private car hire facilities in the larger Border towns and work with the local community to deliver enhanced facilities where it is practical to do so.

2. Compliance with Disability Discrimination Act

> Policy MS3 - The Council will encourage taxi and private hire car operators to have vehicles that are suitable for disabled passengers in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act before 2011.

Powered Two Wheelers

Introduction

Motorcycles, scooters and mopeds all come under the definition of powered two-wheelers, and can provide an alternative means of transport for many trips. Such vehicles are becoming more popular mainly because they are economical to run, can provide cheap flexible transport in comparison with the private car and can be used as a viable alternative to the car, especially in rural areas which do not have regular public transport links.

Motorcycle and moped users can be classed as vulnerable road users because of the lack of protection offered to them in comparison to private cars and other road vehicles. This aspect of road safety is a very important factor in relation to powered two-wheeler use, and must be taken into account in the promotion of this mode of transport.

Existing Situation

A number of journeys are made by powered two wheelers in the Borders and the area is popular with motorcyclists.

Motorcycles at St. Boswells

With reference to the 2001 National Census data, 0.8% of journeys to work were made by powered two-wheelers, Compared to 45% of journeys made by private car and 4.6% of journeys made by bus. These figures show that there may be some scope to increase motor-cycle journeys whilst reducing the number of private car journeys in the Borders area.

What Do We Plan To Do

Well designed and readily available motorcycle parking spaces and associated facilities, may encourage motorcycle and moped use that will be safe and secure for the owners.

Studies of powered two-wheelers in the Borders area will be conducted to offer a greater understanding on the viability of this form of transport in terms of popularity, environmental damage and social inclusion. There will also be a study of the existing motorcycling facilities that are available within the Borders area in order to plan future improvements.

There may also be an opportunity to encourage developers to include well designed motorcycle parking facilities within the design of new developments, and to integrate these proposals into the Council's Development Control Guidelines.

Policies

1. Powered Two-Wheeler Study

> Policy MS4 – The Council will undertake a study on the viability of powered two-wheelers in the Borders, and provide an inventory of all existing motorcycle facilities that are available within the area.

2. Education

> Policy MS5 – Scottish Borders Council will continue to promote existing motorcycling training schemes, and will consider the introduction of specific moped training for younger people in the Borders area.

Bus and Integrated Transport

Buses

Introduction

Bus services are an essential part of the Council's transport strategy and the provision of these services throughout the Borders is one of the Council's main priorities. The general public expect efficient, direct and comfortable services that will take them to their preferred destination quickly at a reasonable cost. However, it must be noted that the dispersed nature of the towns, villages and settlements in the Borders, along with the increasing popularity of the private car makes the provision of regular, viable services throughout the Council area difficult to achieve.

Existing Situation

There is a strategic network of bus services in the Borders that runs between the main towns and villages. The majority of these routes are provided by private bus companies, although most routes operate with subsidies provided by Scottish Borders Council. There are a small number of routes that are commercially viable, primarily on the routes to and from Edinburgh and Carlisle.

There are also secondary bus services that offer the settlements that are not on the main routes a regular service and some additional town services in some of the major settlements.

More and more services in the Borders are operating with newer vehicles including some with low floor access which helps elderly, disabled and people with children. The Council has also been improving facilities on a number of routes throughout the area by providing new shelters, bus stops and new raised kerbing to help people gain access to the bus. National legislation dictates that by 2017, all buses travelling in the UK will need to have low floor access.

The National Concessionary Travel Scheme was introduced in 2006 and provides free bus travel for Scottish residents who are either disabled or who are over 60 years of age. The scheme allows residents free bus travel anywhere in Scotland and on cross-border bus services to Berwick on Tweed and Carlisle.

What We Plan To Do

The Council will concentrate resources on the strategic bus network throughout the Borders in order to provide the people of the Borders with direct, viable bus services between the main towns and villages in the Council area and other regionally significant destinations such as Edinburgh, Carlisle and Berwick.

This may have an impact on some of the existing services that serve the more rural settlements. However, the aim is to maintain and improve service frequencies on the existing strategic routes in order to provide more direct and quicker journeys

for passengers. This will hopefully make an impact on the number of people using the private car throughout the Borders area.

The Council will provide improved waiting and access facilities for bus passengers throughout the Council area, as well as working with operators to introduce more modern vehicles with low floor access and to help promote through ticketing where it is possible to do so. The Council will also provide transport interchange facilities in appropriate locations when funding permits. An interchange is where two or more different or similar types of transport meet for the benefit of passengers, such as two buses or possibly trains and buses.

The Council in conjunction with SEStran will develop a Bus Transport Information Strategy, which will help to address the gaps in information and will help to offer the general public with easier access to public transport information. An area wide public transport map will also be produced to help users and the Council will explore the possibility of introducing Real-Time Information on the key strategic public transport corridors.

The initiation of the Waverley Rail Project will require the Council to redevelop the bus network in the Central Borders and therefore the planning of these changes will need to be developed over the timescale of the strategy document.

To help address issues of social exclusion, the Council has developed and is currently operating several Demand Responsive Transport Services, which will help the viability of settlements that lie outside the strategic bus network. The pilot projects include services to Smailholm, Gordon, Maxton and Kelso and a fixed route service in the Ettrick Valley.

Policies

1. Strategic Bus Services

Policy PIT1 - The Council will develop the strategic network of bus services that connects the principal settlements of the Scottish Borders and the principal destinations Edinburgh, Berwick and Carlisle.

2. Public Transport Infrastructure

Policy PIT2 - The Council will continue to improve on-street bus stances, bus shelters, lay-bys, bus stops and other associated facilities, where these facilities are to the benefit of bus users and in the interests of road safety.

New Bus Shelter at Peebles

3. Promotion and Publicity

> Policy PIT3 - The Council in conjunction with SEStran will develop and implement a Bus Transport Information Strategy.

4. Demand Responsive Transport

> Policy PIT4 - The Council will develop demand responsive transport solutions in suitable areas to help promote social inclusion and replace conventional bus services where appropriate.

5. Real Time Information

> Policy PIT5 - The Council in conjunction with SEStran will develop plans to introduce real time information on the key strategic corridors in the Borders.

Rail

Introduction

The Waverley Railway project proposes the re-establishment of a fast, efficient and reliable rail link connecting the Scottish Borders and Midlothian to Edinburgh and the national rail network. It is one of the most important sustainable transport projects in Scotland. The Council is also promoting the introduction of a local rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick.

Existing Local Situation

The Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill was passed by Parliament in May 2006 and the project to reinstate the Waverley Line between Tweedbank and Edinburgh was given the green light to proceed to the next phase of development. The new line will include stations at Shawfair, Eskbank, Newtongrange, Gorebridge, Stow, Galashiels and Tweedbank. It is hoped that construction related work will be initiated in the near future and that the scheme will be completed by the end of 2011.

Scottish Borders Council is pleased that the Edinburgh to Tweedbank rail link is proceeding. However, it is an aspiration of the Council that the whole of the Waverley line between Edinburgh and Carlisle is constructed in the future to help encourage sustainable growth in the whole of the transport corridor and to provide an alternative for freight and timber transport. The Council has long supported the enhancement of local rail services on the East Coast Mainline and the restoration of a rail station at Reston in Berwickshire. Scottish Borders Council and East Lothian Council appointed a consultant to look at a number of options on the East Coast Mainline corridor, including the restoration of a station at Reston. The report which was published in January 2006 was not conclusive and it was recommended that additional work was required. The report was forwarded to the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland and a decision on how the project should be taken forward is awaited.

The planning of public transport links to proposed Waverley Line stations will begin in earnest when the construction of the line is initiated. This is a complex project which will have a major effect on how the public transport services in the Borders are managed.

What We Plan To Do

The Council is pleased that the first stage of the Waverley Rail Project between Edinburgh and Tweedbank has been agreed. The Council now plans to promote the next stage of the route between Tweedbank and Carlisle and the route has been protected from development within the Council's Structure Plan.

Scottish Borders Council will also press Transport Scotland for a decision on the development of a local rail service on the East Coast Mainline from Edinburgh to Berwick and especially on the potential for a new station at Reston.

The protection of former branch lines which are located throughout the Borders are also deemed to be very important by the Council and could be developed as potential transport projects such as cycleways or footpaths in the future.

Policies

1. Re-introduction of the Waverley Line

> Policy PIT5 - Scottish Borders Council will actively support the complete reintroduction of the Waverley Line to Carlisle

2. Protection of Waverley Route and Branch Lines

> Policy PIT6 - The Council will protect the line of the former Waverley Route south of Tweedbank and associated branch lines from any development that might prejudice the reinstatement of a rail service or transport project in the future.

3. Introduction of a Local Train Service between Edinburgh and Berwick

> Policy PIT7 - The Council will actively support the provision of a local rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon Tweed, including the reopening of a station at Reston.

4. Public Transport Links to Waverley Line Stations

> Policy PIT8 - The Council will investigate the planning of public transport services to Waverley Line Stations and the wider public transport network

Improved Safety and Traffic Management

Road Safety

Introduction

The Council has a statutory duty to carry out studies into accidents on its roads and to take appropriate measures to help prevent such accidents. Road safety measures are usually carried out through the three "E"s of Enforcement, Education and Engineering. Enforcement is mainly carried out by the Police, and engineering roads is largely the responsibility of the Council with The Scottish Government/Transport Scotland responsible for Trunk Roads. Road Safety Education is carried out mainly by the Police, the Council's Education Department and, more recently, the Fire and Rescue Service. The Council's Community Safety Forum has also recently taken more of an interest in Road Safety, and all of the groups mentioned above are represented on the Scottish Borders Road Safety Working Group.

Existing Situation

The Government has three main targets to reduce the numbers of casualties by 2010, compared with the average figures between 1994 and 1998. These targets were adopted by Scottish Borders Council as the benchmark for road safety improvements:

- To reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured by 40%;
- To reduce the numbers of children killed or seriously injured by 50%; and
- To reduce the slight casualty rate per vehicle distance by 10%.

There were nine fatal crashes, 66 serious crashes and 296 slight crashes, on roads in the Borders in 2006. These resulted in ten deaths and 72 serious casualties. Records show that 428 people had slight injuries,

(although this included some that declined any medical attention, and some casualties would not have been reported).

In comparison with 2005 there was a decrease of 6 in the number of deaths, a decrease of 54 in serious casualties, and a decrease of 74 in slight casualties. This is a large improvement and sees the annual numbers of killed or seriously injured casualties fall below the target for the first time in 5 years. However, as 2005 and 2006 had the worst and best (respectively) figures for many years, the 5-year average has changed little since we adopted the target.

There is concern that despite the numerous road safety campaigns advertised today, there is still reluctance by some motorists to keep their speed below the speed limit, or to reduce their speed sufficiently when required in poor weather or other conditions.

- Most reported injury crashes in the Borders involve only one vehicle, with 45% of the total being single-vehicle non-pedestrian crashes, and a further 7% being single-vehicle pedestrian crashes.

- The most common error is to drive too fast for the conditions, with speeding contributing to a variety of collision types, such as "loss of control" (e.g. when a driver goes too fast for the amount of grip between their tyres and the road) or "nose to tail" (e.g. when a driver goes so fast that they can't stop before running into the back of a slower or stationary vehicle).

- Drink-driving vastly increases the risk of crashing. Some 560 people were killed on roads in Britain in 2005 in collisions where one or more driver or rider was over the legal limit. Even if under the maximum alcohol limit some drivers are five times as likely to crash after a drink as when sober. Fortunately drink driving is less common and the number of crashes caused by this is lower than it was many years ago. However this trend may be reversing as recent numbers are higher than they were a few years ago. 45 drivers in crashes in the Borders in 2006 were found to be over the legal alcohol limit.

- Failing to give way when turning onto or off a road is sometimes the result of drivers not taking enough time to check the road is clear. Sometimes the turning driver sees the oncoming vehicle but fails to appreciate that it is going so fast that they need to wait. Some drivers are so used to quiet roads in the Borders they forget to look out for other vehicles.

- The number of vehicles on our roads is set to increase significantly over the next few years, and this fact allied to the historical nature of the Border towns and villages with narrow winding streets, will make vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and children more susceptible to road crashes.

What We Plan To Do

Nationally, there has been some success in reducing road casualties in recent years, and these figures can be improved, especially in the case of vulnerable road users such as children and the elderly. In the Scottish Borders, the reduction in casualties has not been as good as the Scottish average. To achieve our target over the longer term, resources must be made available for road safety and investment must be concentrated on crash reduction, through engineering education and enforcement.

Through the Scottish Borders Road Safety Working Group, the Council and our partners Lothian and Borders Police, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service, and Transport Scotland, an Action Plan to continue to develop our activities aiming to reduce casualties on road in the Borders has been developed.

Policies

1. Casualty Reduction

Policy STM1 - Scottish Borders Council will contribute to achieving Government targets for casualty reduction by reaching annual casualty reduction targets and analysing year-on-year trends.

2. Investigation and Review

Policy STM2 – Scottish Borders Council will investigate the cause of collisions on Borders Roads by reviewing road collision data on a monthly basis. Emerging problems, patterns and trends will help to identify suitable interventions.

3. Road Safety Checks

Policy STM3 - The Council will develop a methodology to ensure that all A & B class roads are checked formally for road safety issues such as signage, road markings and vegetation. Identified issues will be analysed and solutions prioritised.

4. New Road Construction

Policy STM4 - The Council's Technical Services Department will continue to comment and advise on the design and engineering of all new planned roads in relation to driver and pedestrian safety.

5. Enforcement

Policy STM5 – Scottish Borders Council will work closely with and support the Police and other relevant bodies in the pursuit of better enforcement of road safety measures.

6. Education

Policy STM6 - Scottish Borders Council will work closely with and support the Police, Fire and Rescue Services and other relevant bodies to increase awareness of road safety issues

Fig 3.7 - Targets for Fatal and Serious Casualties

Fatal/Serious Casualties (all Ages) Target 40% Reduction
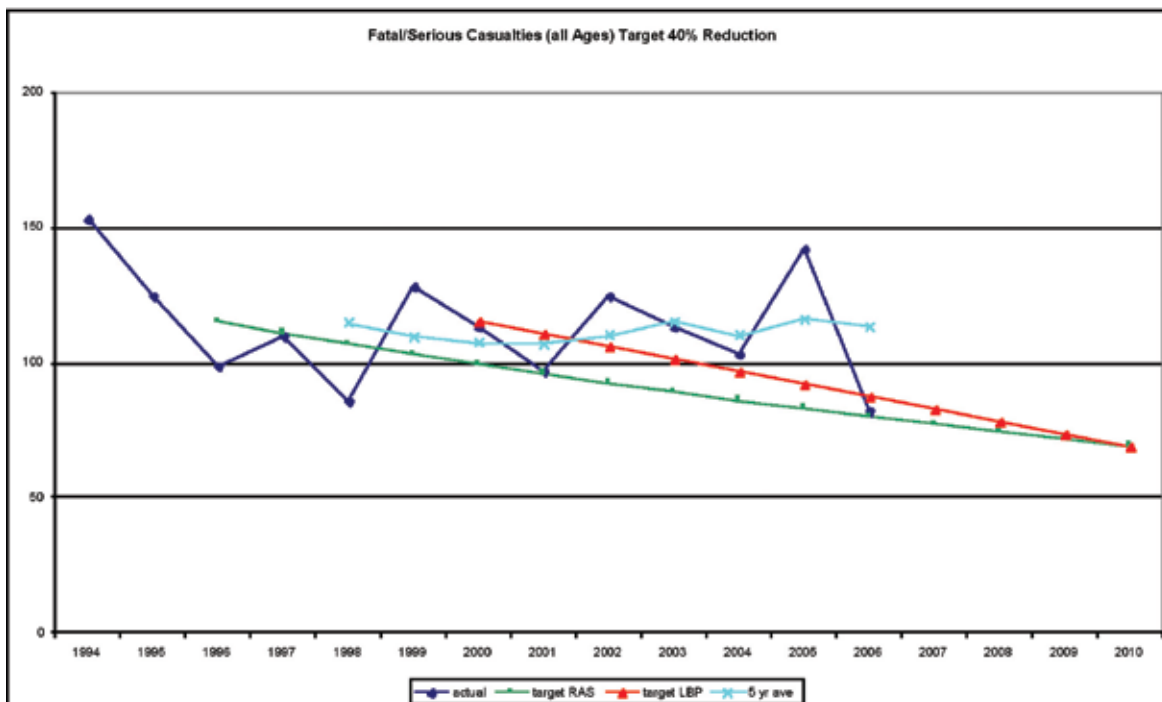
Parking

Introduction

Parking management is an essential part of an integrated transport strategy in terms of helping to control the number of private vehicles in our towns and village, but also helping to ensure that shoppers and visitors are able to access local facilities and offering a degree of vitality for local businesses.

The parking policies adopted by Scottish Borders Council will need to be a balance between the essential nature of the car and the provision of an excessive number of car parking spaces in our towns and villages.

Existing Situation

The number of vehicles on our streets is set to grow over the next 15-20 years. Parking management is one of the only tools available to local authorities to help ensure that our town and village centres are reasonably accessible.

The popularity of the private car and the rural nature of the Borders promote the idea that increasing car parking is essential in our towns and villages. However, if this policy is pursued indiscriminately it will have a detrimental effect on the town centre environment, creating more congestion and pollution. The lack of short-stay parking in our town centres ensures that existing parking facilities are saturated, and the vitality of the local shops and businesses are affected. It could be argued that a number of visitors and tourists coming to the area are discouraged from stopping in our towns and villages by the lack of available parking spaces and the lack of clearly indicated well designed parking facilities.

On-street enforcement in the main towns and villages of the Borders is provided by Lothian and Borders Police. Due to resource and funding issues, some locations are not regularly enforced.

What We Plan To Do

The Council is currently in the process of reviewing parking throughout the Borders and a draft parking strategy document has been produced by transport consultants. This document, when ratified by Council Members will form the basis of parking management throughout the Borders.

To help achieve more parking enforcement, the Council will consider introducing a decriminalised parking regime. This type of arrangement allows the Local Authority to take over parking enforcement from The Police. Such a regime can assist local authorities in providing more effective parking implementation policies, and allow any surplus revenue to be used for traffic management purposes and further enforcement.

Clear and well sign-posted parking facilities can assist the traffic flows through town centres and direct motorists to appropriate areas. A review of signing in all of the main towns and villages in the Borders will be carried out.

Parking problems in Melrose before the town centre improvements

Policies

1. Parking Strategy

> Policy RS4 – Scottish Borders Council will implement the SBC Parking Strategy.

2. Decriminalised Parking

> Policy RS5 – Scottish Borders Council will consider the implementation of Decriminalised Parking Zones in selected areas of the Borders as part of the SBC Parking Strategy.

3. Signing

> Policy RS6 – Scottish Borders Council will review the signing of parking areas in the context of the SBC Parking Strategy

Healthy Travel

Walking and Cycling

Introduction

Walking and cycling are fundamental parts of any integrated transport system, offering a wide range of benefits including cheap flexible transport, increased individual health and pollution free travel for all ages.

There has been a significant decline in walking amongst all age groups in the last 20 years, mainly due to the availability of the private car. There are also concerns for personal safety and the danger from increased traffic flows. Cycling on the other hand is starting to enjoy a resurgence, particularly as a leisure pursuit in the Scottish Borders and the challenge will be to try and encourage more people to walk and cycle as part of their everyday activities.

To be successful, walking and cycling must be considered as part of the overall strategy and not just considered in isolation. Particular attention is required on the role of walking and cycling as alternatives to the car for shorter journeys.

Existing Situation

Walking

Following the adoption of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, the Council has developed an Outdoor Access Strategy. This document provides a framework for the planning, management, development and promotion of walking, cycling and horse riding in the Scottish Borders. There will be a degree of overlap with the LTS document. The Council is also currently in the process of developing a Core Path Network throughout the Scottish Borders in partnership with the local community and other key stakeholders. This will help establish and promote longer distance walking routes as well as local networks in towns and villages.

In the Scottish Borders, recreational provision for walking has been developing steadily since the early 1990s and it is considered that there are definite economic benefits to be gained from developing walking routes throughout the Borders. At present there are a number of long distance routes running through the area such as The Southern Upland Way and St Cuthbert's Way. There are also the town trail guides, which offer visitors a written guide tour through their chosen town, for the main Border towns. However, the challenge for the Council is to promote and encourage utility based walking that people undertake every day, especially in their journey to work.

Cycling

Approximately 90% of the Borders population live within 5 miles of a town or village with a population of over 1000 people, therefore cycling could be a realistic

alternative to the car in terms of "utility cycling" such as travelling to work, travelling to the shops etc. and also in terms of many leisure trips that would normally be made by the car. The challenge once again for the Council is to try and encourage people to give up the car for a percentage of shorter journeys and to get them into the habit of cycling.

Cycle based tourism is increasingly seen as being a key component of the Borders economy. The popularity of mountain biking especially at locations such Glentress, Traquair and Newcastleton is particularly positive and does bring a large number of people into the Borders.

The area also has a number of marked cycle routes, including:

- The National Cycle Network – Part of a UK wide network of cycleways. The route through the Borders travels from the Border near Berwick to Midlothian via Coldstream, Kelso, Galashiels and Innerleithen;
- The 4 Abbeys Cycle Route - The 4 abbeys cycleway is a circular route connecting the four abbeys of the Scottish Borders at Melrose, Dryburgh, Kelso and Jedburgh, following mainly quieter minor roads throughout the area;
- The Tweed Cycleway is a signposted route nearly 90 miles long, running along the Tweed Valley from Carstairs to Berwick-upon-Tweed; and
- The Border Loop – 250 mile on-road marked route throughout the Borders.

The area is already well provided with quiet minor roads, which are ideally suited to cycling, and these will provide the majority of the links in the network. However, traffic on Borders roads continues to increase, in line with national trends, so that some roads are becoming less attractive for cycling because of increasing traffic flows and excessive vehicle speeds.

What We Plan To Do

Walking

The Council will encourage walking trips within our towns and villages by incorporating good pedestrian facilities in our new housing developments and by upgrading existing facilities where necessary. The Council will also continue to maintain and enhance the footway network throughout the Borders, including the improvement of lighting where it is appropriate to do so.

Scottish Borders Council will also investigate additional ways of encouraging more pedestrian related trips by looking at elements such as:

- Home Zones – A way of reclaiming local streets from the private car by altering streets and road to favour the pedestrian;
- The promotion of traffic management and the development of 20mph zones in selected areas; and
- Adopting Government policy initiatives and guidelines such as Scottish Planning Policy 17, Planning Advice Note 57 and Planning Advice Note 76. These guidelines promote sustainable travel initiatives and offer advice on how to implement new transport related schemes.

Parents walking to school in Jedburgh

The Council is keen to develop pedestrian links between towns, villages and satellite settlements and will help to develop the core path network throughout the area. Scottish Borders Council will also continue to develop access arrangements and parking facilities on the long range walking routes.

Cycling

The Council will continue to promote off-road cycle routes throughout the Borders where appropriate and especially schemes that promote workplace cycling. However, it must be noted that the development of these routes are expensive to construct and they can take a long time to come to fruition due to negotiations with landowners and other interested parties. Scottish Borders Council will continue to promote the development of selected disused railway lines as potential cycle paths and is keen to promote cycle tourism throughout the Borders.

The Council is also working to develop opportunities for children to get involved in school based cycling projects and has recently provided cycle racks and shelters at a number of schools throughout the Borders area. Scottish Borders Council will continue to provide suitable infrastructure and traffic management at schools and in other locations within Border settlements, where there is a need and where funding is available.

The Council will also request that developers incorporate good cycling and pedestrian facilities and infrastructure in areas where new development is planned throughout the Borders.

The Technical Services Department produced a preliminary cycle network study covering the Borders area in 2000. The report offered a comprehensive study of the existing and potential cycling networks within the Borders area, with immediate priorities and costings associated with improving cycling facilities

in each part of the Scottish Borders. This document would benefit from being updated and the Council will develop a new cycling strategy document in collaboration with other interested parties such as Visit Scotland and Scottish Enterprise during the next 12 months.

Policies

1. Improved Facilities for Pedestrians and Cyclists

Policy HT1 - Scottish Borders Council will introduce improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, where appropriate in the design of new transport projects and development opportunities including pedestrianisation schemes, cycle lanes, traffic calming measures and pedestrian friendly crossing points.

2. Promotion of Access Strategy

Policy HT2 – The Technical Services Department will work closely with the Planning Department and other interested parties to promote and implement the Outdoor Access Strategy and in particular the Core Path Network throughout the Borders.

3. Strategic and Local Networks for Walking and Cycling

> Policy HT3 – Scottish Borders Council will develop strategic and local cycling and walking routes throughout the Borders with encouragement given to developing suitable links between towns and villages.

4. Promotion of Walking and Cycling

> Policy HT4 – The Council will incorporate the recommendations from Government guidance, such as SPP17, PAN 57 and PAN 76 where it is appropriate to do so in order to encourage the promotion of walking and cycling related activity.

Equestrian

Introduction

Horse riding is an important part of Border life, and therefore must be protected and enhanced where possible.
There are a number of promoted routes in the Borders that can accommodate horse riders and a number of these routes use the road network to some degree. This can sometimes lead to an element of conflict with road vehicles.

Existing Situation

Horse riding is an important part of the existing fabric of the Borders and equine tourism is also becoming more popular. The rural road network in the Scottish Borders is relatively quiet in terms of traffic, but the number of vehicles on our roads is increasing rapidly and horse riders are considered to be vulnerable road users. There are no specific records regarding the number of accidents involving horses and their riders. However, the Council does try to prevent potential accidents by providing assistance to horse riders in the form of signing where it is appropriate to do so.

The Access Strategy currently being developed by the Council does include provision for horse riders within the core path network.

What We Plan To Do

Horse riding is a sustainable form of transport, and an important component within the Borders economy in terms of employment and tourism opportunities. These opportunities must be enhanced and maximised where possible in order to retain and enhance the existing equestrian network of routes and bridle ways.

Horse riders can be classed as vulnerable road users, and therefore should be protected from road vehicles whenever possible. Protection will obviously become harder to achieve as the number of private cars on our roads increases over the next decade and beyond as forecasted. Possible solutions include appropriate signing, crossing points and road surfacing when routes primarily cross the strategic and local road network.

Policies

1. Promotion of Equestrian Routes

Policy HT5 – Scottish Borders Council will promote the development of equestrian routes and bridle ways throughout the Scottish Borders where it is possible to do so.

2. Safety

Policy HT6 – Scottish Borders Council will provide safety arrangements for equestrian needs on the road network where it is appropriate to do so.

Travel to School

Introduction

In recent years the number of children that walk and cycle to school has declined. There are a number of reasons, including the perceived dangers associated with allowing children to make their own way to and from school, the popularity of the private car and the increasing number of dual income families with busy working lives.

Scottish Borders Council promotes more sustainable travel-to-school options for children in the Scottish Borders by developing school travel plans and safer routes to school initiatives. The reasons for encouraging children to walk and cycle to school are numerous and include:

- Exercise can help improve health levels in children and can help to lower obesity levels in our children;
- The opportunity to travel independently can improve the child's personal and social skills; and
- The environment and road safety in our towns and villages can be improved by reducing the localised congestion and pollution produced by the dropping-off and picking-up of children at peak periods.

Existing Situation

Scottish Borders Council has had a School Travel Co-ordinator in post since 2003. The remit of the School Travel Co-ordinator is to work with willing primary and secondary schools in the Borders to help develop school travel plans. At present 26 of the 65 primary schools in the Borders have a travel plan and 15 are under development. Two of the nine high schools currently have a travel plan and a third is currently under development.

In the Scottish Borders, the Safer Routes to School initiative works alongside the school travel plan process and aims to improve road safety, increase walking and cycling where possible, reduce the number of single occupancy journeys by parents and staff and enhance the environmental aspects of

the children's journey to and from school. Each Safer Routes to School project requires input from the school management, parents, pupils and community representatives. By conducting an in-depth study of the surrounding area, a thorough audit and analysis of existing travel modes, traffic conditions and pedestrian/cycling facilities for pupils and staff it is possible to determine the problems and devise potential solutions. Suggested measures include enhanced walking and cycling initiatives, traffic calming measures and safer crossing facilities. The Scottish Government has provided funding to Local Authorities for the provision of School Travel Co-ordinator posts. This funding stream finishes in March 2008 and it is unclear whether the Executive will continue to support these posts.

What We Plan To Do

The Council will encourage schools to participate in the travel planning process and also continue to consider safer routes to school projects throughout the area, provided that suitable funding is made available. It would be impractical to target a large number of schools considering the amount of analysis and consultation involved in these types of projects, therefore a limited number of schemes per year is recommended. The promotion of road safety education is a very important part of the Safer Routes project, and can be of significant benefit to children and parents alike. There must also be some commitment and co-operation from the local school in terms of adopting the Safer Routes project as part of the school year. The Council's Technical Services and Education and Lifelong Learning Departments will work with Lothian and Borders Police Road Safety Unit to develop suitable schemes for the schools as long as suitable funding is available.

The Council believes that the post of School Travel Co-ordinator is a very valuable one and would encourage the Executive to continue funding these posts beyond March 2008, when the current allocation finishes.

Policies

1. Travel Planning

Policy HT7 – Scottish Borders Council will encourage all schools to undertake a School Travel Plan

2. Implementation

Policy HT8 – The Council will implement safer routes to school projects

3. Education

Policy HT9 – The Council will work in conjunction with Lothian and Borders Police Road Safety Unit to promote suitable road safety initiatives at Borders Schools.

4. Continuation of Funding

Policy HT10 – The Council will encourage the Scottish Executive to continue the funding of School Travel Co-ordinators beyond the current end date of March 2008.

Resources

The Technical Services Department budget can be separated into two categories:

- The Capital Budget is generally spent on new infrastructure and transport projects such as new roads schemes or new bus shelters etc. The Technical Services capital budget for 2006/07 was approximately £7 million, but this included areas such as flood prevention, town centre improvement work, specific waste transfer projects and the provision of CCTV in selected towns.
- The Revenue budget is generally required for maintaining the existing infrastructure or services such as roads maintenance, bus subsidies, street lighting and refuse collection. The Technical Services revenue budget for 2006/07 was approximately £25 million

The Council does rely on a number of funding sources to help deliver the services and new projects. A number of these funding sources are not guaranteed and the Council frequently has to take part in a bidding process within certain criteria in order to procure funding. Selected funding sources and funding partners include;

- The Scottish Government;
- Transport Scotland;
- SEStran; and
- Sustrans – The sustainable transport charity

The Council can also receive contributions from private companies in the form of developer gain. However, these sources can be unpredictable, making budgeting difficult to achieve.

It must be noted that the effectiveness of the policies represented in this strategy document are commensurate with future funding being allocated to the Technical

Services Department and ultimately Scottish Borders Council. Projects identified by other departments may receive priority allocation from Council members, depending on the nature of the proposal.

Implementation Plan

An indication of the schemes that the Council plans to promote in order to implement the strategy has been provided in **Appendix A**.

The implementation plan provides details of schemes and proposals that are in the Councils' capital and revenue programmes over the next three years. There are also a number of schemes that are more aspirational and would depend on additional funding becoming available, partnership working or development contributions etc.

The plan has been split into sections to correspond to the specific areas detailed in Section three, which are:

- Sustainability and Environment;
- Economy and Freight;
- Mobility and Social Inclusion;
- Public and Integrated Transport;
- Road Safety and Management; and
- Healthy Travel.

For each scheme or proposal the plan indicates:

- Whether it is a short, medium or long term proposal;
- The links to the relevant policies and objectives;
- The estimated cost of the proposal; and
- How the proposal is to be funded and delivered

Monitoring

The monitoring of performance indicators and targets can give an indication of the success of the strategy. The indicators and targets have been derived from the

objectives and the Council's vision of transport development in the Borders.

Accurate monitoring can be difficult to achieve due to the diverse nature of transport delivery. However, the Council feels it is essential to monitor targets and indicators where possible to do so in order to appraise the effectiveness of the strategy.

A monitoring plan, which includes associated performance indicators and targets, has been provided in **Appendix B.**

You can get this publication on tape, in large print, and various other formats by contacting us at the address below.

Our Scottish Borders
Your environment