

TRANSPORT



Transport has been described as “the lubricant of society”. An efficient and effective transport system is essential to enable people to access the facilities and services which they need to live enriched and fulfilled lives and to enable the local economy to prosper. Transport therefore links to every other theme of this Plan.

Access to jobs, education and health services, shops, banks and other commerce, and to leisure facilities continues to be a key concern amongst communities in the county borough. Good access to services and facilities remains a prerequisite to the achievement of equal opportunities and community prosperity. A particular priority is access to jobs because of the fundamental importance of work to both individuals and society. High quality pedestrian routes are also recognised as being fundamental to ease of access throughout the county borough.

Good transport links are also vital to the success of business activity in the county borough. Improving transport options, including rail and sea, can help to grow existing businesses and attract new ones.

Traffic management, facilities for bus and train passengers and adequate and safe parking are all key elements that contribute to creating more accessible town centres for shoppers, leisure users and businesses alike and will contribute to the delivery of more sustainable town centres.

With the support of the National Assembly for Wales a major new road, the Port Talbot Peripheral Distributor Road (PDR), is being developed which will improve transport links, contribute to the reduction of congestion on the M4 and open up economic opportunity. The new road, extending from Junction 38 at Margam to Seaway Parade at Baglan will provide direct access from the M4 to the docks and the town centre and will have a significant impact on the economic and social well being of the area.

Public transport provides access to services and facilities for those who do not have private means of transport available to them or who choose not to use private transport. In addition community transport, social services, patient care transport and Shopmobility are crucial to providing a means of getting to essential services for those unable to access other forms of transport, thereby providing access for all.

The links with other Community Plan themes are two way. With the exception of some tourism or leisure journeys, travel is not normally an end in itself, but is undertaken to

gain access to other facilities, services or opportunities. Consequently, the way in which developments and services are planned needs to give proper recognition to potential transport implications. For example, residential or commercial developments in remote locations, with no through routes, are unlikely to be able to be well served by bus services, whilst centralisation of services, which may be cost effective to the provider, imposes transport costs on others.

This poses a dilemma for planners in that transport considerations have to be weighed against economic or social gain. It is vital therefore that a balance is struck and the best possible solution delivered to meet the overall needs of the communities of the county borough. There may not be readily achievable or affordable transport solutions to historic access problems, which have arisen because of poor planning decisions. Best endeavours will, however, be made to find deliverable solutions.

Access does not always have to be physical. Obtaining or exchanging information or arranging for goods or services to be supplied is commonly done by telephone and increasingly via the Internet. Effective business communication is increasingly dependent upon information and communications technology (ICT). This requires its own infrastructure, which needs to be developed so that services, such as broadband, are widely available.

The County Borough Council is a partner, with Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire

consortia across Wales. The establishment of the consortia recognises that transport issues extend across local government boundaries. SWITCH is concerned with all aspects of transport, not solely public transport, and one of its top priorities is improving accessibility within the region for residents, businesses and visitors. This includes some new roads and other highway developments, as well as enhancing facilities for public transport, improving awareness of and encouraging use of alternative modes to the private car, and encouraging more sustainable car use.

Since the launch of the Community Plan in 2002, progress has been made in a number of areas:

- The central section of the Port Talbot PDR, which will improve access to Port Talbot Industrial Estate and Port Talbot Docks, is under construction. Objective 1 and Transport Grant funding has been secured for construction of the western section, whilst Transport Grant funding has been secured for the design of the eastern section and the Welsh Assembly Government has confirmed funding for its construction from April 2009.
- Port Talbot bus station has been refurbished and Neath bus station has been completely reconstructed.
- Passenger facilities have been improved at 170 bus stops.
- Real-time passenger information has been installed at 22 locations.

- Over half of the bus fleet in the county borough is low-floor, easy access.
- Approximately 40% of the drivers employed by the major bus operator in the county borough have received customer care/disability awareness training, in addition to their induction training, with plans to progressively extend this to all drivers.
- Travel Plans have been introduced at 15 schools.
- The County Borough Council's road safety education programme has been extended to all local education establishments.
- 8.4 kilometres of cycleway have been constructed.
- The 'switch2share' car share scheme has been launched in partnership with Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire Councils.
- By 2003 the number of slight casualties in road traffic collisions was already below the national target for 2010.
- A comprehensive map of bus services in the county borough has been published and distributed.

KEY PARTNERS

Arriva Trains Wales
 Associated British Ports
 Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust
 Bus Users UK
 Confederation of Passenger Transport
 Corus
 Dulais Valley Community Transport
 English, Welsh and Scottish Railways
 First Great Western
 Firstgroup
 Freight Transport Association
 Jobcentre Plus
 Mid and West Wales Fire Brigade
 National Public Health Service
 Neath Port Talbot Community Transport
 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
 Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service
 Neath Port Talbot Taxi Association
 Network Rail
 Rail Passengers Committee Wales
 Road Haulage Association
 South Wales Police
 South West Wales Economic Forum
 South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium
 Strategic Rail Authority
 Sustrans
 Swansea NHS Trust
 Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust
 Welsh Assembly Government
 Welsh Development Agency

OUR VISION

Our vision is that by 2015 we will have improved the transport infrastructure and significantly progressed towards a transport system which:

- Is accessible to all, both physically and in terms of information;
- Enables businesses to operate efficiently;
- Is convenient and safe;
- Encourages use of sustainable means of transport.



OUR AIMS

This is what we wish to do together:

1. Develop the transport infrastructure to improve mobility and access and to facilitate economic regeneration in the county borough.
2. Reduce traffic congestion and the pollution arising from traffic by improving transport infrastructure and encouraging sustainable means of travel.
3. Reduce road collision casualties in line with national targets by applying engineering measures together with education and training programmes.
4. Ensure that proper consideration of transport implications continues to be fully integrated into the planning process for new or revised services, facilities or developments, including consultation with relevant stakeholders.
5. Ensure that, subject only to any overriding site constraints or conditions, all works on the public highway, including footways, take full account of relevant accessibility considerations.
6. Encourage the movement of freight from road to rail and sea to alleviate congestion and reduce pollution from emissions.
7. Reduce car dependency for personal travel and encourage the making of informed travel choices by improving the quality of, access

OUR AIMS (continued)

to and awareness of alternative means of travel, including buses, trains, taxis, car sharing, cycling and walking.

air managed car parks and ensure that any new public car parks are secure by design.

8. Develop quality bus corridors on all main bus service corridors by improving infrastructure, information and vehicles.
9. Improve the reliability of public transport by introducing appropriate bus priority measures.
10. Improve the security of public transport by means of partnership working between the County Borough Council, operators, the police, schools and other agencies.
11. Improve co-operation, communication and co-ordination between passenger transport providers in the planning, promotion and delivery of services.
12. Develop community enterprises to provide transport services to meet the needs of local communities.
13. Develop a co-ordinated service for community, social services and patient care transport.
14. Complete the identified cycleway network.
15. Develop and implement travel plans for all education establishments and major employers.
16. Improve the security of the County Borough Council's existing open

OUR TARGETS

By 2009

1. Commence construction of the final stage of the Port Talbot PDR, with completion by 2012.
2. Further develop Port Talbot Parkway Station to create a more user friendly facility which will encourage greater use of rail transport and reduce car usage.
3. Establish the provision and usage of rail freight services and identify opportunities for new or improved facilities and services.
4. Increase the tonnage of sea freight moving through Port Talbot deep water harbour by 10%.
5. Increase the tonnage of sea freight moving through Port Talbot docks by 25%.
6. Improve passenger facilities at 50 bus stops, in addition to the 170 already improved, subject to the availability of grant funding.
7. Provide real-time passenger information at 15 bus stops or other appropriate locations, adding to the 22 locations already equipped, subject to the availability of grant funding.
8. Provide a further 80 pairs of dropped crossings on footways to facilitate easy road crossing by people with impaired mobility, subject to the availability of funding.
9. Customer care and disability awareness training will have been received by all taxi and bus drivers and school transport escorts and community transport drivers.
10. Increase the length of cycle ways by 14 km, to add to the existing 92.5 km, thus moving towards completion of the currently identified cycleway network of approximately 126 km.
11. Implement 25 more school travel plans, in addition to the 15 already in place, together with associated safe routes to schools projects, secure cycle storage provision or other measures as identified in the Travel Plans.
12. Establish travel plan fora for Baglan Energy Park and Coed Darcy, and implement the travel plans which arise as a result, together with a travel plan for the County Borough Council.
13. Increase from 38% to 44% the proportion of the County Borough Council's existing managed car park spaces, which are in car parks with "Secured Car Park" status by bringing all open air car parks to the required standard.
14. Set up a co-ordinated service for shared community, health and social services transport.

RELATED STRATEGIES, PLANS AND DOCUMENTS

- The Future of Transport in Wales 2003 - “Provide and Promote”
- Policy Review of Public Transport 2001
- Local Transport Plan 2000-2005
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council’s Technical Services’ Policy Statement
- Unitary Development Plan 2001-2016
- Regional Transport Strategy 2005-2015 (In preparation)
- Regional Public Transport Strategy 2003
- Local Authority Bus Strategy 2003
- “Working Differently-Creating Sustainable Places” (Draft)
- Regional Rail Strategy
- People, Places, Futures -The Wales Spatial Plan 2004