



Dorset County Council

# Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan 3

## February 2016

### Dorset Passenger Transport Strategy





# Dorset Passenger Transport Strategy 2015 - 2026

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## Foreword

Local Transport Plans (or LTPs) are comprehensive plans which look at the transport needs of an area and set out a way forward to deliver those needs through short, medium and long term transport solutions. They set out how transport can improve our safety and health, support our local economy, protect our environment and reduce carbon emissions and pollution. They also provide the basis for how funding for maintenance and improvements is secured from central government. LTPs can consider improvements to all major forms of transport whether under the control of local councils or not.

The LTP documents comprise a strategy for transport for the whole of Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset for the period from 2011 to 2026 and separate implementation plans which contain detailed proposals for rolling 3 year periods. The first implementation plan covered the first three years of the LTP from 2011 to 2014 while a second implementation plan has been prepared and covers the period from 2014 to 2017.

This Passenger Transport Strategy is one of a number of individual topic strategies that have helped inform the development and implementation of the Local Transport Plan and it follows a broadly common structure to other strategies and where there is common ground makes strong reference to those strategies rather than repeat their contents.

This passenger transport strategy is led by Dorset and while its development has been prepared in response to issues arising from delivery of passenger transport in the rural area, it does aim to encompass the passenger transport needs of the whole of the LTP area, in line with the approach adopted in the preparation of that plan.

All of the Local Transport Plan documents are available to view or download at:- [dorsetforyou.com/localtransportplan](http://dorsetforyou.com/localtransportplan), including a full set of supporting strategies and related documents.

This document will be kept live and updated on a regular basis. If you wish to make comments on the document, email us at [ltp@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:ltp@dorsetcc.gov.uk) or alternatively telephone 01202/01305 221000.

## 1. Introduction / background

### Context

This Passenger Transport Strategy is written within the context of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset and covers both the county's role in the provision of public transport services and the delivery of 'bespoke' or specialist services mainly for adults' and children's services clients (mainstream education, special educational needs and social care transport). It is the first strategy to be written since the adoption of the LTP in 2011, and as such makes strong reference to the plan and its supporting documents. In particular it links directly to the following LTP strategies:-

- Accessibility Strategy
- Low Carbon Travel Strategy
- Health Strategy
- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy

Rural transport remains an important issue for the people of Dorset. Transport, in particular the issue of rural transport, was a consistent theme running through the consultation for the Local Transport Plan in 2011. In the 'Ask Dorset' public engagement exercise undertaken in 2014, around 12,000 residents participated in a variety of consultation events at which they were asked which service area mattered to them and their families. Rural buses and transport were chosen as a key issue by 36% of respondents. In a previous consultation on community transport, 90% of respondents advised that a volunteer or community transport scheme was essential for their area.

While the case for developing and supporting passenger transport is clear, there are financial constraints limiting what can be achieved. The economic situation remains a challenging one, which puts more pressure on council services to become more efficient and effective. The passenger transport budget is around £22m and there is an overriding objective within the council to reduce the cost of its passenger transport services. Over the past three years some £822,000 of savings have been achieved in reducing subsidies from the public transport budget of £3 million. However it is the non public, school and specialist transport provision that takes up much of the budget, and where benefits could be found through greater service integration.

Historically health, education, social care and local bus routes have developed independently and suffer from a lack of coordination. A more integrated approach could deliver significant efficiencies and improve services for the public. This has been identified as an issue within the Holistic Transport Review, one of several key projects within the county council's Forward Together Programme.

The production of this strategy is one of the outcomes of this review and will set out the other review recommendations within the wider context of corporate and transport policy. The council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee has recently undertaken a review of community transport and its key findings are also reflected in the strategy. The strategy will also define how passenger transport can contribute to the authorities' corporate objectives of enabling economic growth and health and well-being.

## Strategy objectives

The objectives of the passenger transport strategy are to:

- a) Confirm how the council will deliver the outcomes of the Holistic Transport Review in relation to commissioned passenger transport services
- b) Establish how the council will work to deliver the passenger transport and accessibility aspirations of LTP3 to support growth, secure funding and to stimulate and shape service development.

Additionally the strategy will outline how the county council will meet the following supplementary objectives:

- Define a sustainable core public transport network with a hierarchy of routes with different levels of service provision which will allow people to access employment, education, key services and leisure
- Increase the proportion of journeys made by public transport particularly on our key transport corridors
- Prepare for changes in future demand due to new developments, to maximise opportunities for developer funding and bidding opportunities to the Local Economic Partnership and central government
- Link to the LTP3 Accessibility Strategy to identify gaps in public transport provision and how they may be addressed
- Define a clearer role for community transport
- Provide strategic support for local planning authorities on passenger transport
- Set out opportunities for the consolidation and integration of passenger transport services across the county in order to optimise efficiency
- Provide a framework for the commissioning of passenger transport services and vehicles
- Maximise the use of fleet vehicles.

## Geographical Context

The Local Transport Plan recognises five distinctive areas of unique and distinctive character within Dorset. These are:

- The South East Dorset conurbation
- Historic market towns and their rural hinterlands
- The closely-linked towns of Weymouth and Dorchester (Western Growth Corridor)
- The Jurassic and Heritage Coast between Lyme Regis and Swanage.
- The North Dorset Growth Area

The passenger transport needs of each are quite different and are recognised and reflected in this strategy. There is no single overarching solution for the whole area.

## National and Regulatory Context

While the Local Transport Plan provides a local context for the passenger transport strategy, it does also need to take account of national policy and certain regulatory requirements, as well as the county's own policies. These are summarised in Figure 1.1.

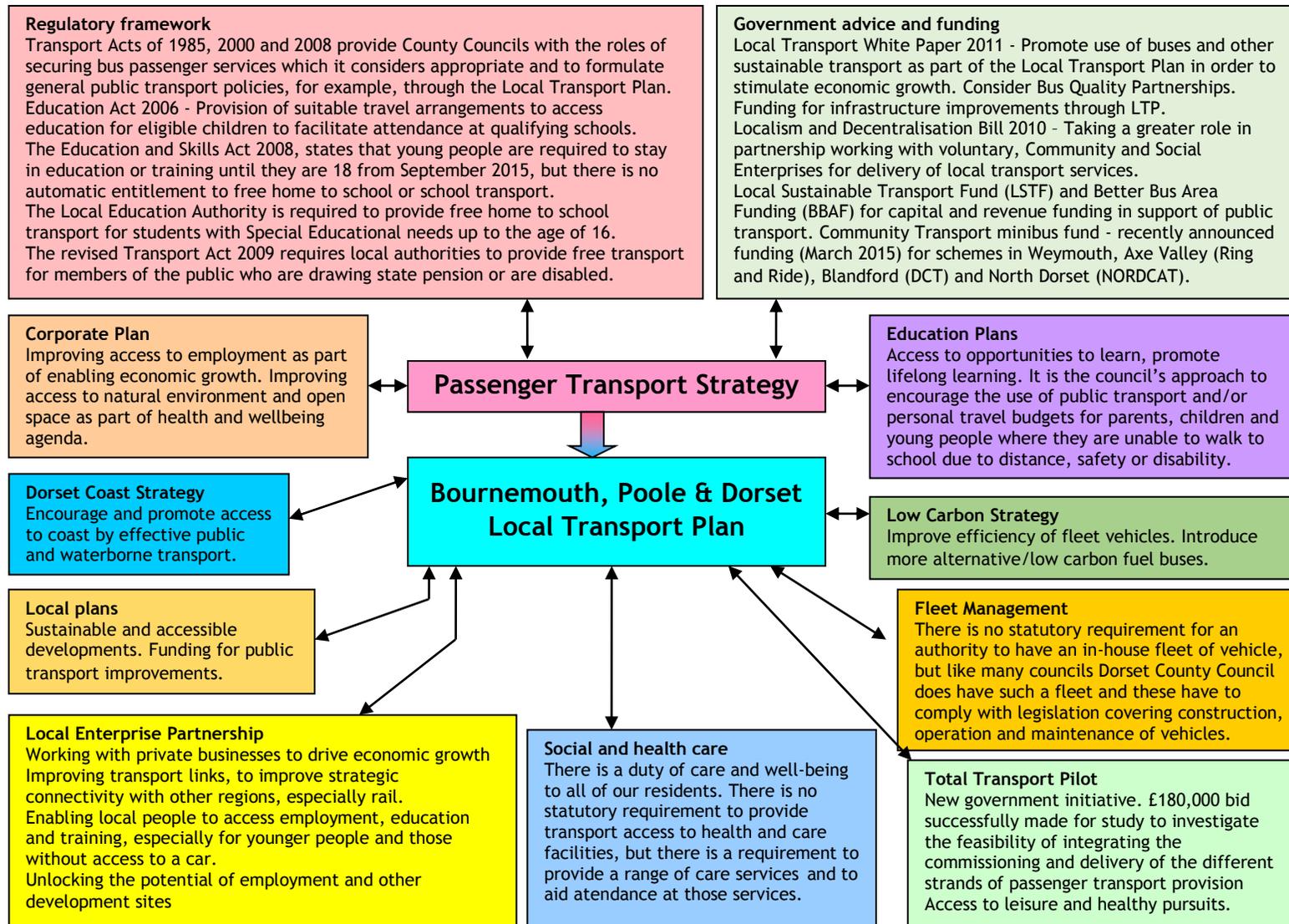


Figure 1.1 Passenger Transport Strategy in the wider context

## 2. Developing the strategy - this is where we want to be

The Passenger Transport Strategy sets out the following vision for the remainder of LTP3 plan period:

‘To create a safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable passenger transport network for Dorset that facilitates a strong economy, gets people to where they need to be, and respects and protects the area’s unique environmental assets, while encouraging alternative means of transport to the car.’

To achieve our vision we have developed the following strategic goals:

- Reducing the need for travel by supporting and finding innovative ways to bring services to people and communities
- Improving accessibility and maximising public and community transport use through a strong partnership with transport providers and other client groups,
- Improving access for rural residents to a wide range of services, facilities and opportunities, by the most cost-effective means and with local communities playing a larger role in identifying and satisfying the needs of their area
- Encouraging an improved and better connected rail network
- Supporting development of frequent, high quality bus services linking the main centres of population and economic activity within and outside the county, which will contribute to economic growth
- Delivering greater efficiency in our total transport provision
- Encouraging walking and cycling as an active means of travel
- Providing sufficient information to make people aware of the full range of passenger transport provision
- Supporting greater use of low emission vehicles and renewable energy sources,
- Working with adjacent authorities, as part of the ongoing process of seeking to provide more effective and efficient passenger transport services.

### How this contributes to LTP3 Goals

Figure 2 demonstrates how achieving the Passenger Transport Strategy goals has a significant contribution to meeting the overall LTP goals. The LTP3 goals are:-

- Supporting a more productive and prosperous economy, by improving the reliability, efficiency and connectivity of transport networks and communications
- Reducing the overall level of emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from travel and transport and ensuring the transport network is resilient
- Reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and promoting travel modes that encourage healthy, active lifestyle
- Promoting equal opportunities, including access to services, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society
- Protecting and enhancing the quality, local distinctiveness and diversity of Dorset’s built and natural environment, and improving individual wellbeing and enjoyment of places
- Maximising value for money.

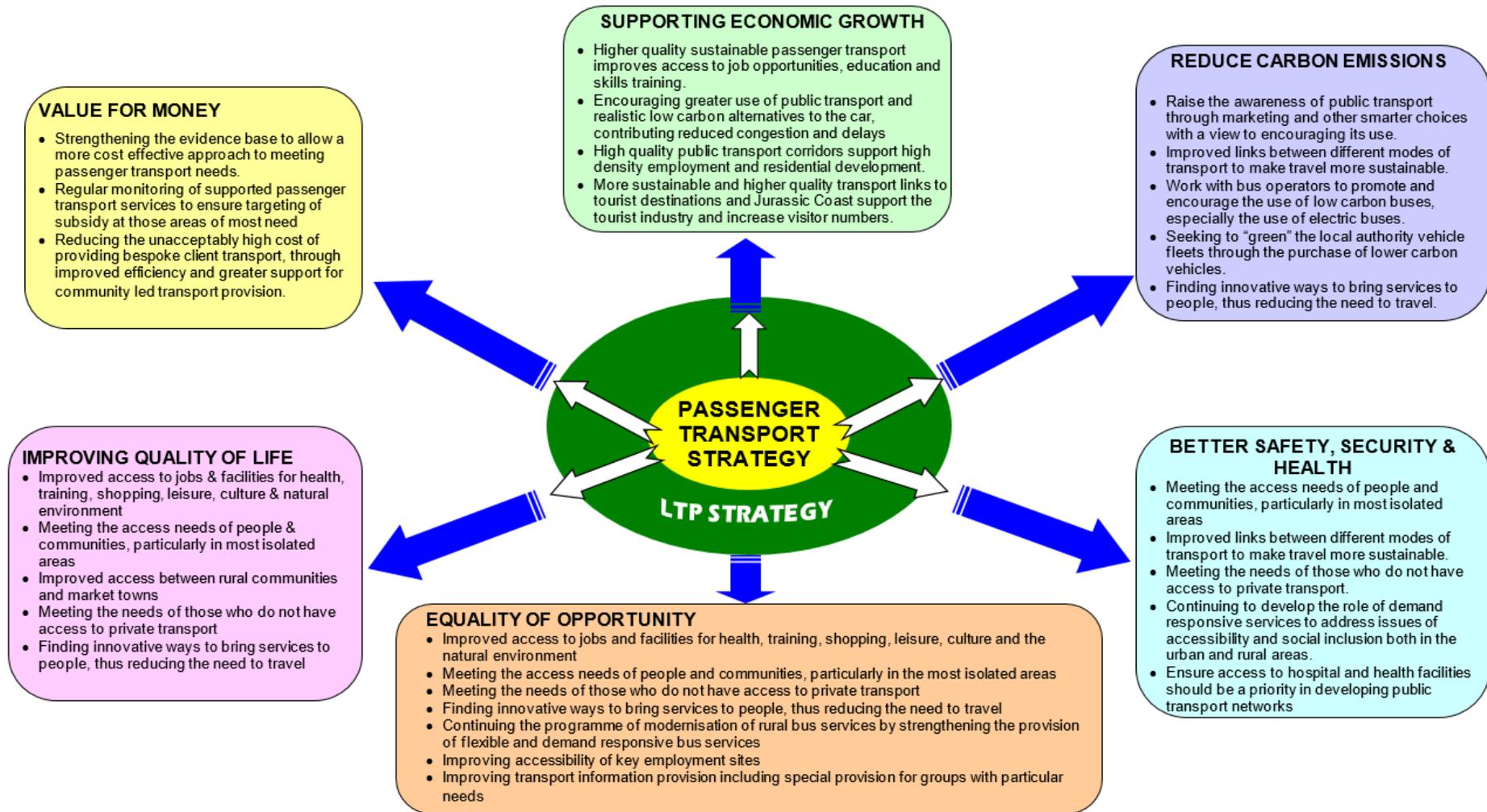


Figure 2 How the Passenger Transport Strategy contributes to LTP goals

### 3. The current position - this is where we are now

#### Recent key achievements

Through delivery of the pre-existing Public Transport and Accessibility Strategies for LTP2 and LTP3, progress has been made towards meeting long term LTP objectives. Some of these achievements are summarised below. Further information can be found in the Local Transport Plan First Progress Report 2011 to 2014.

See <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/417820/Progress-2011---2014>

- Increased rail frequencies in the Bournemouth to Weymouth and Salisbury to Gillingham/Yeovil corridors contributing to increases in passenger usage of the order of 30-40% over the last 10 years
- Access improvements for pedestrians and cyclists at Gillingham and Weymouth railway stations. Provision of new bus stop and turning area at Gillingham station, part financed through Section 106 agreement
- The Three Towns Travel package of improvements in the South East Dorset conurbation are delivering a variety of measures including the provision of Bus priority measures focused along quality bus corridor routes, contributing to increased bus useage and reduced congestion. Total funding of £12.1m has been secured through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund
- £27million has been invested in new modern buses in the South East Dorset conurbation and £3.4m secured from the Better Bus Area fund to help support bus initiatives tackling congestion. This has led to midlife buses being cascaded for routes in rural Dorset, improving the age profiles and disability access of the fleet used on these rural routes
- Improved access to the Jurassic Coast through introduction of X43 (Swanage to Weymouth) and X53 (Poole - Weymouth - Exeter) Jurassic Coast bus services.
- Improvement of bus links from Yeovil and North Dorset to the East Dorset Conurbation, bus services X8, X9 and X10 which now provide a two hourly frequency over this corridor through connections at Blandford
- The introduction of electric buses between Dorchester and Poundbury in 2012 from partnership funding from the County Council, West Dorset District Council, the Duchy of Cornwall and the Department for Transport through its Green Bus Fund
- Weymouth Showcase Project - Investment in new bus services, bus stops and real time bus and car park information. The overall objective of the project was to promote the use of online and electronic systems to ease congestion and improve access to the town centre, in particular for major events
- An increase in the provision of low floor buses and raised bus stops over recent years has made bus transport more accessible to a wider range of people with mobility difficulties and people with prams and pushchairs
- One major development in community transport has been the expansion of services operated by Dorset Community Transport, based in Blandford and under the 'Bus2Go' banner. Dorset Community Transport is part of the ECT Charity (Ealing Community Transport - now a national provider of community transport), and combines the benefit of local management with the support of a national organisation.

## Current transport provision

It is useful in describing current transport provision to make a distinction between public passenger transport and 'bespoke client transport'. The former comprises the public transport network in Dorset including rail, bus, coach and community transport. This is provided by a range of national and local operators either commercially or through a subsidised contract with one or more of the local authorities.

Bespoke transport services are specialist services mainly for adults' and children's services clients (mainstream education, special educational needs and social care transport). This is a mixed service provision which is partly provided by the council's in-house fleet and partly contracted out to external public transport/taxi and private hire operators.

In respect of public transport, the council works with local bus operators to provide a range of services beyond those that are available commercially. In 2013/14 10,231,171 passenger journeys were made on public transport vehicles. The county council supported 1,900,684 (20%) of those journeys through concessionary fare reimbursement. The authority subsidises 83 bus routes across the county which transport an estimated 1,377,744 passengers per annum. This service is wholly outsourced and the net cost for the period 2013/2014, including the income from the receipt of fares, was £3,178,200. Buses comprise about 80% of all public transport journeys. Typically buses are most often used for access to health (whether for doctors, dentists or hospital appointments), shopping, education and for social purposes.

The annual subsidy budget of £2m is fully committed to existing public transport routes and there is currently no scope to increase the level of subsidy to either increase the amount of provision or to support routes where the operator de-registers or reduces the service.

In terms of actual numbers Dorset County Council provides 'bespoke' specialist transport for 12,270 passengers, comprising:

- 7,000 mainstream school children and young people - by bus and taxi
- 1,000 children with special educational needs - specially adapted vehicles, small buses and taxis
- 500 children attending specialist learning centres and children in care - taxis
- 3770 adults attending DCC day centres - contractor taxis and DCC fleet.

Services provided directly by the authority are summarised below:

- Two park and ride services are provided at Weymouth and Dorchester. The Weymouth Park and Ride was an integral part of the strategy that delivered the Weymouth Relief Road and other town centre improvements while the Dorchester park and ride is an essential element of the travel planning arrangements for County Hall and is part of the strategy to minimise peak hour traffic movements in the town
- Transport for mainstream education is provided mostly by public passenger services or is outsourced. There is a small in house provision

- The council has adopted a surplus seats travel scheme which allows the pupils who are not eligible for free school transport, including post-16 students, the opportunity of utilising the council's passenger transport provision, where capacity is available. This service is chargeable
- The provision of a chargeable service for the transportation of the elderly who are vulnerable to 18 day care centres. There is no statutory requirement to provide such transport but, under various Acts there is a requirement to provide a range of care services and to facilitate attendance at those services. Some 67 routes have been established by the in-house service to transport 416 passengers, mostly based at day care centres; while 41 routes for the transportation of 50 passengers is provided by the private sector.
- The provision of free Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport is largely outsourced to local taxi firms. This is an area which has high costs and has potential for improved efficiency. The high costs arises from the high number of passenger assistants, inclusion of large numbers of pupils not necessarily legally entitled to free transport, a high number routes transporting only one child and sub-optimal route planning. A pilot scheme introducing personalised transport budgets to encourage greater independence is currently being trialled by the council, and is showing some early signs of success. It is initially targeting the high cost single travelling pupils with SEN. If successful this may be extended and will contribute to greater independence for younger people and greater efficiencies for the authority
- The council provides or supports a number of community transport services across the county. There are various forms of provision ranging from volunteer car schemes, where designated volunteer drivers use their own cars to transport eligible users in return for mileage expenses, to minibus schemes where users ring up and book a journey in advance. These vehicles are typically restricted to provide transport to specific areas at designated times of the week and can provide essential shopping transport. Some of these use resources redeployed from the adult passenger transport services. The profile of community transport usage is very similar to buses.

Traditionally community transport services have been provided for groups of people unable to access conventional public transport, typically older people or those with mobility difficulties. This may be an outdated view since all public bus services must by law from 2017 be disability compliant. There may be opportunities to introduce a wider range of community transport initiatives to provide a more cost effective solution to conventional subsidised bus services with a lead taken by the local community. All designated passenger transport routes for mainstream schools, SEN/Alternative Provision establishments and elderly Day Care Centres are put out to tender and the award of the contracts is based upon a 60% quality and 40% price tender evaluation model.

It is also worth noting at this point the existence of other transport facilities that could be brought into consideration in any overall review of total transport provision. For example Weymouth College, Yeovil College, Kingston Maurward College and Bournemouth and Poole College provide some dedicated transport for their students. In addition NHS Dorset provides non-emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) for patients who are being transported to an NHS funded service for NHS treatment and who are deemed medically eligible based on Department of Health eligibility criteria.

## 4. These are the key challenges we face

Below is a summary of evidence sources that have helped identify the underlying issues and challenges in achieving the vision for passenger transport:

- Consultation carried out as part of the South East Dorset Multi Modal Transport Study (SEDMMTS) consultation, and for the wider Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- Evidence from accessibility planning work undertaken for the Accessibility Strategy
- Dorset bus service consultation - June 2013
- Dorset community transport consultation - July 2013
- Audit and Scrutiny Committee Review of Community Transport 2014/15
- 'Ask Dorset' Public Engagement exercise in 2014.

Issues and challenges arising from the above can be summarised as follows:-

- As part of the preparation of the Accessibility Strategy for the LTP, a substantial list of accessibility issues were identified through direct engagement with key local interest groups, a consultation exercise and a strategic mapping exercise.

Key Groups identified in the Accessibility Strategy were as follows:

Priority Group	Passenger Transport Issues
Young People - 16 to 25	Access to education, jobs and training, and its affordability.
Older People - over 65	Appropriate transport for older people with limited mobility and at risk of social exclusion
People with a disability, including those with hidden disabilities - people with learning difficulties, dementia, visual impairments and mental health problems	Access to health care, food shops & employment
Low income households	Access to health care, food shops, employment and social/cultural networks (particularly in rural areas)
Residents in remote rural areas	Access to services - location of services, frequency and cost of public transport, public transport coverage.
Residents in urban areas of multiple deprivation	Frequency and cost of public transport, public transport coverage. Availability of low cost transport options.
Those accessing Ferndown Industrial Estate and Bournemouth Airport	Frequency and cost of public transport, public transport coverage. Availability of low cost transport options.

- There are a **limited number of bus operators** in the county, leading to the dangers imposed by a lack of competition and higher than necessary tender prices. The lack of competition is evident by the fact that only three national bus companies operate within the council boundary
- **Reducing commerciality of bus services** outside the main inter-urban corridors and high frequency routes into the main urban centres, which means that fewer places are accessible by bus, particularly in rural and even some suburban areas
- Improving public transport infrastructure with **reduced funding for capital improvements**
- **Changes in post 16 education provision through raising the school participation age has increased pressure on service provision.** There is no automatic entitlement to free transport to school or college once a student is over 16 years of age but statutory guidance has recently been published which local authorities have been given responsibility for promoting the effective participation in education and training of young people in extended education. From June 2015, this has been extended until their 18th birthday
- **The high costs of the SEN passenger transport service provision** are a major issue with £7.5m. spent on 837 pupils, most using a taxi with dedicated passenger assistant. This is double the average of other county councils. A review undertaken by the children's services directorate, has identified potential significant cost savings
- Recently introduced park and ride services, while providing a useful function in getting people to and from work and alleviating congestion during peak periods, often run **empty at off peak times**
- There is a need to **better define the scope and coverage of Community Transport.** Recent reductions in public bus services have identified the need for a community travel and transport policy which enables a wider number of groups to access transport and so the definition of community transport may need to be revised and perhaps extended. This includes people in rural villages who need to access education, training and employment
- In some instances community transport is reliant on local volunteers. Concerns have been expressed that **existing volunteers are overstretched**, and there may not be capacity to expand the role of community transport. The recent survey on community transport in Dorset revealed that only 2% of respondents would consider joining a community transport scheme as a volunteer.
- **The provision of passenger transport services within Dorset is very complex** with the commissioning, procurement and resource management of the service spread over three different directorates and different teams within the directorates. There is scope for operational efficiencies to be made and more integration across the provision of all passenger transport services
- Within the provision of specialist transport, **there is a range of different providers**, with varying types of vehicle, different needs and requirements. There appears to be scope for a much more integrated approach to total provision and in using the various fleets of vehicles more effectively.
- **Constraints on service provision provided by administrative boundaries** that are incompatible with customer's needs
- **Administrative difficulties in managing the surplus place travel policy** for school pupils.

## 5. Strategic Direction - this is how we will get there

### General strategy approach

To meet the vision for the passenger transport strategy a number of solutions will need to be applied, primarily targeted towards areas identified through consultation, analysis of evidence and the full breadth of national and local documentation. A particular balance has to be made between the aspirations of the Local Transport Plan, which identifies what the passenger transport strategy should deliver, and the outcomes from the Holistic Transport review, which tends to focus on how it is delivered and its cost. The policies below draw heavily on both the Local Transport Plan and the Holistic Transport Review.

### **Policy PTS1: Increase the role of rail transport in Dorset**

While the level of rail provision in Dorset is limited it has a significant role to play especially for longer distance travel. There is also scope for increasing its use for shorter distance local commuting trips. The council will work with the government, Network Rail and rail operators to promote improvements to local and long distance rail, in order to provide improved connectivity, particularly to the South West. In some instances there is a need to increase capacity and to improve integration of rail with other modes of travel.

The viability of lesser used routes or stations can be enhanced by promoting their use as a means of access from the towns to the countryside for leisure and recreational purposes. In this respect the authority will support the development of community rail partnerships and volunteer station/line adoption groups, such as the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership, to help promote the use of rail.

### **Policy PTS2: Encourage the development of a high quality viable network of urban and inter-urban bus routes to stabilise and enhance public transport provision on clearly defined strategic public transport corridors.**

The council will work with bus operators to define and help sustain a quality bus network that will be promoted by both the operators and the local authorities to maximise their use and viability. This will maximise the opportunities of attracting car users and increase bus patronage.

The definition of this network needs to be undertaken on the basis of a thorough understanding of the performance of the existing public transport network and the improvements needed to meet current and forecast travel patterns. It is envisaged that this would involve extending the concept of bus quality corridors, currently successfully being implemented in the South East Dorset conurbation to the main inter-urban transport corridors within Dorset, connecting the main market towns with each other and key rail heads, some of which would be outside of the county, such as Axminster and Yeovil Junction. Where possible these services would focus on minimising end to end journey times and in doing so, would normally need to follow the most direct route, leaving the need to link smaller communities just off the core network to access it by other means (described below).

**Policy PTS3: Developing the strategy for procuring transport services in a way that minimises cost but has regards to the social and accessibility needs of local people, including examining the opportunities for an enhanced role for community transport**

In many parts of the county, including the rural areas, the bus network is extremely limited and high frequency commercial bus services are unlikely to be justified by demand. There will be a continued need for supported services to meet social needs, but there will always be pressure on availability of funding. A more flexible and financially sustainable approach to the provision of passenger transport services in rural and poorly accessible areas will be provided through a 'toolkit' of different types of service appropriate to each situation, ranging from conventional buses on timetable to car based community transport services. Where appropriate, this will include integrating different types of passenger transport provision, for example integrating some school services into public provision.

It is envisaged that community transport would form an increasing element of rural services. Although it makes up a small element of the total transport provision, community transport has an increasing role in meeting transport needs that conventional transport cannot provide and it can have an impact on reducing social exclusion and improving quality of life for some people. Community transport in this instance can be defined as a service that is being driven by community identified needs, as opposed to a desire to run a service for commercial gain. The responsibility should with local communities taking the lead. The role of the county council should be one of identifying gaps, seeking solutions and through proactive community engagement, encourage communities to develop local solutions where subsidised public transport is not a practical or affordable option.

However community bus transport does not necessarily offer a cheaper transport solution compared to conventional public transport in all cases. Many of the weekly conventional subsidised local bus services are currently provided off peak between school journeys and this may still represent the most cost effective way of serving the communities concerned in future. Alternative transport options should be fully explored but conventional bus transport should only be replaced by alternative options where it makes financial sense to do so.

To support the procurement process a comprehensive needs assessment will be undertaken to understand the true nature of the demand for public transport services in rural Dorset and the scope for using the council's own fleet capacity more efficiently and for better public use. This anticipates a move from large, wheelchair adapted vehicles to smaller, flexible vehicles more suited to Dorset's rural environment.

**Policy PTS4: The level of spending on bespoke client transport (adults and children services) is high and the council will seek to reduce these costs through a combination of improved efficiency of existing client services, and encouraging the use of public or community transport and other innovative approaches that seek to empower clients and reduce dependence.**

The Holistic Transport Review has identified in particular the high cost of providing SEN (Special Educational Needs) transport. Benchmark cost comparisons against those of

other county councils established that the cost per pupil per annum is some 80% higher than the average cost of other county councils. The government has recognised the proliferation of providers of passenger transport in rural areas and that these are not in general co-ordinated or integrated at a local level, resulting in duplication and potential wastage of public funding. The government wish to encourage local authorities to explore service integration and adopt a 'total' transport model and so have introduced Total Transport Pilot funding.

The county council has been successful in the recent round of bidding for these funds and will use the money to identify the scope for greater integration of all transport services commissioned by the authority. The following opportunities for integration have been identified:

- The piloting of back to back services between adult day centres and Special Education Need (SEN) schools and where possible transporting these passengers together
- The use of the council's fleet vehicles to improve accessibility in rural areas
- Reducing the 86 SEN taxi routes which currently transport only one child (from which £70k savings have been identified through targeting single travellers).

In the long term, there is also the opportunity of integrating commissioning between NHS Dorset and Dorset County Council. While full integration will not be possible in the pilot period because of differing contract lengths, the inclusion of NEPTS (non emergency passenger transport) is a priority and preparatory work in the next two years will be key to ensuring success to identify opportunities to use social care fleet vehicle downtime for suitable NHS transport requests.

The county council will encourage students to travel by public transport where it is available and/or appropriate. Independent Travel Training may be provided to enable students to transfer to using buses and/or trains or active travel (walking and cycling).

**Policy PTS5: Develop a passenger transport information/ticketing strategy that will support and maximise the use of the commercial and supported passenger transport network**

In addition to ensuring that there is an improved range of passenger transport services, measures will be implemented to make more people fully aware of them, including those with particular needs who may be unable to use conventional means of information provision. New technology should be used to provide improved public transport information and offer new fares and ticketing options.

Achieving lasting long-term behavioural change depends on 'winning hearts and minds' with a comprehensive marketing and promotion strategy people will be provided with the appropriate tools they need to be able to make informed travel decisions.

**Policy PTS6: Ensure that passenger transport issues are considered in all aspects of the planning process**

The councils will join up policies on land use planning and accessibility. It is envisaged that all new development will be accessible by a range of different modes of transport, including public transport.

### **Policy PTS7: Seek to maintain and improve access to the Jurassic Coast and other tourist destinations by public transport**

Tourism is vital to the economy of Dorset. Some tourist locations such as the Jurassic Coast, are under threat from the volume of visitors arriving by car. Appropriate public transport access can encourage enjoyment of Dorset's environment by providing access to leisure and tourism activities for those without a car as well as reducing the impact of vehicular traffic on the destination itself.

### **Policy PTS8: Maximise Funding Opportunities**

Recent experience suggests that it is important to keep abreast of developing opportunities for government funding which aside from on-going local transport plan funding can be ad hoc, intermittent and usually subject to some form of a competition, such as the recent Total Transport Pilot fund from which £180,000 was successfully bid. The Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership is another potential source of funding for strategic passenger transport improvements.

### **Policy PTS9: Reducing the Need to Travel**

This is an underlying theme of the Local Transport Plan. Dispersed patterns of development in Dorset have resulted in car-dependent lifestyles. Smarter planning and design that considers people's travel and access needs, can help to create more sustainable travel patterns, and reduce the need for travel. This can be done through the planning process by encouraging and supporting new development in ways that reduces the need to travel. New developments and facilities where possible, should be designed in a way that allows access by financially sustainable public transport and assists the viability of existing services.

Reducing travel can also be achieved by supporting and promoting ways of delivering key services that encourage more sustainable travel patterns. The county council will adopt this principal in the delivery of services that they provide.

## 6. Monitoring our progress

It is important that we understand how well the strategy is being delivered and whether these initiatives are resulting in outcomes which meet the objectives and overall vision for a reliable, affordable and sustainable passenger transport network that meets statutory obligations. During implementation the Action Plan will provide some indication to the performance in delivering the strategy, but we also need to identify whether this is resulting in increased patronage, reduced costs and improvements to the quality of public transport.

There is no longer any requirement by government to report on the progress of LTP3 against a mandatory set of indicators and targets. However LTP3 did include 15 broadly based indicators against which it is intended to monitor performance throughout the period of the document. A progress report for the first three years of the plan has recently been published and is available on:- [dorsetforyou.com/localtransportplan](http://dorsetforyou.com/localtransportplan)

LTP3 indicators relevant to the passenger transport strategy are:

- PI2 - Bus patronage - The annual number of passengers travelling on buses in the LTP area
- PI7 - Access to employment by public transport - The percentage of households within 40 minutes of an employment centre by 'composite' mode. This is a DfT defined and supplied statistic
- PI13 - Bus Punctuality - Various statistics relating arrival and departure of buses at start or intermediate timing points
- PI14 - Satisfaction with bus services - The percentage of respondents satisfied with bus services based on the NHT public satisfaction survey.

The Holistic Transport Review is also recommending the following range of monitoring data, some of which is already collected:

- Data relating to the performance of external service providers
- Customer satisfaction surveys across all passenger transport services provided by the Council should be routinely undertaken to provide a balanced cost/quality assessment of the services
- Dorset Travel should routinely benchmark the cost of passenger transport services both nationally, i.e. with those of other county councils, and with external local service providers.

## Appendix A – Passenger Transport Strategy – implementation plan

### Policy PTS1: Increase the role of rail transport in Dorset

This will be achieved by:

- Seeking to increase frequencies of local rail services between Wareham and Brockenhurst to improve cross-conurbation connectivity
- Re-connect the Swanage Railway to the national network and establish a through service, with potential for park and ride
- Establish strategic park and ride sites at rail stations on the edge of the conurbation, for example at Holton Heath and Hinton Admiral
- Seek to improve the service between Weymouth and Bristol, through increased frequency, capacity and quality of rolling stock
- Establish a new rail service between Weymouth, Dorchester, Yeovil, Axminster and Exeter, either by reversal of trains at Yeovil Pen Mill or through the construction of the Yeovil South Chord
- Support increases in capacity on the Exeter to Salisbury line and improve bus rail integration at the North Dorset stations of Gillingham and Sherborne.
- Seek to increase the number of cross country services per day between South East Dorset and the Midlands and north of England
- Support the development of community rail partnerships and volunteer station/line adoption groups, such as the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership, to help promote the use of rail.

### Policy PTS2: Encourage the development of a high quality viable network of urban and inter-urban bus routes to stabilise and enhance public transport provision on clearly defined strategic public transport corridors.

This will be achieved by:

- Greater partnership working with local bus operators either through formation of further informal quality bus partnerships or quality bus contracts, with a view to securing long term improvements to bus services. (Quality bus contracts are where two or more local transport authorities acting jointly, determine what local bus services should be provided in the area to which the scheme relates. They were introduced in the 2008 Local Transport Act, but have yet to be successfully implemented anywhere. They are probably not appropriate to this area.)
- Under the auspices of quality bus partnerships, establish a core network of buses along the main inter-urban transport corridors within Dorset, connecting the main market towns with each other and key rail heads, some of which would be outside of the county, such as Axminster and Yeovil Junction.
- This broadly commercial network would be supported by the council with infrastructure improvements such as improved bus stops and interchange facilities in order to maximise bus patronage and encourage modal transfer from the private car. The authorities will work with local communities to explore other initiatives that would help maximise the use of this core network ranging from the provision

of high quality waiting facilities with appropriate information systems, to enhanced walking and cycling facilities between communities and the interchange facility and volunteer lift giving services

- The council will support these services with effective traffic management measures, which, where appropriate will re-allocate road space to buses to give them priority in congested areas to improve their punctuality and reliability.
- Providing enhanced services at times that are suited to current working patterns to key existing and future employment centres/ industrial estates to improve accessibility to employment by public transport
- Seek to develop quick and direct 'express' bus services in South East Dorset and Weymouth and Portland, linking more peripheral areas to town centre locations and key employment areas
- The council will work with operators to adopt vehicles with low emissions of both pollutants and carbon, and which use energy from renewable sources
- There may remain a need to support some services on this network, especially where there is a need to serve a school, other education or training facility or key employment site. The criteria for financial support for any bus services will be reviewed to align more closely with corporate and LTP objectives, and to allow a more robust prioritisation of services against objectives and resource availability.

**Policy PTS3: Developing the strategy for procuring transport services in a way that minimises cost but has regards to the social and accessibility needs of local people, including examining the opportunities for an enhanced role for community transport**

This will be achieved by:

- Expanding the role of community transport through joint working with the 'third' sector (voluntary groups and charitable organisations) and local communities to clearly define needs and to seek affordable, practical solutions, which may involve innovative ideas. Priority should be given to the key priority groups identified in Section 4
- Consider enlisting town or parish council to fund trial community transport services using a precept. Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) have confirmed that financial support can be considered under s106A(1) of the Transport Act 1985 for a bus service appearing to the council to be wholly or mainly for the benefit of members of the public who are elderly or disabled or a community bus service operated under section 19 or 22 of the same Act
- There is a need to engage in discussion with other public bodies, especially the various health bodies (Health Trust, CCG etc.), to ensure that support and appropriate cost contributions are fair and reflective of the purpose of the travel (e.g. 75-80% of current community transport trips are considered to be health related.)
- Extending the role of Voluntary car schemes. The county is currently working with adult services PoPP (Partnership for Older Peoples Programme) to look at ways of extending the voluntary car schemes (Neighbour Car Schemes) in the county. Neighbour Car schemes are financially self-sufficient and if the local community is willing to set up such a scheme, this could provide a realistic transport option where there are no conventional local bus services or such facilities are reduced or

withdrawn. A priority would be to provide linkages to public bus services on the main core routes.

- Bus based park and ride can provide a high quality alternative to car based travel to town centres predominantly by commuters or tourists. This presents opportunities for congestion reduction and better use of town centre land and should be adopted where appropriate. Such schemes will need financial support from the authority especially in their early years and the benefits and financial sustainability need to be fully understood. The existing schemes at Weymouth and Dorchester have now been in place for some years and their usage and benefits should be well known. The costs of their provision need to be reviewed
- Examine the potential for joint procurement of services with other adjacent authorities or client groups, such as Bournemouth and Poole Unitary Authorities or local clinical commissioning groups.

**Policy PTS4: The level of spending on bespoke client transport (adults and children services) is high and the Council will seek to reduce these costs through a combination of improved efficiency of existing client services and encouraging the use of public or community transport and other innovative approaches that seek to empower clients and reduce dependence.**

The council will achieve reductions in cost and efficiency through:

- Working in partnership with service users and providers, including taking account of the views of the Young People's Transport Forum and youth groups to develop valued and practical solutions
- Seeking to reduce the costs of the provision of SEN transport through;- reviewing the criteria and processes used to assess SEN transport needs, reducing the number of passenger assistants, reducing the unacceptably high number of pupils with SEN travelling on individual routes, reductions in non-statutory (post 16) provision and consideration of the use of personal travel budgets
- Introducing measures to reduce the cost of private taxis for mainstream school transport, for example through enabling a greater proportion of taxi sharing.
- Considering the opening up of school contract services to the general public.
- Reviewing surplus seat fees for Post-16 students
- Supporting and enabling the provision of services where the market is unable or unwilling to do so, for example through the extension and improvement of the accessible/community transport network as an alternative to bespoke provision.
- Encouraging, supporting and enabling clients to use a mixture of public/community transport and/or active travel (walking and cycling) rather than bespoke client transport, where this is appropriate (having regard to safety and practical considerations), using the developing techniques of personalised travel planning
- Investigate the possibility of using adult services transport for mainstream education and for SEN transport in a back to back operation
- Developing the role of passenger assistants to become travel trainers, so that appropriately able clients can be trained in the course of time to use conventional forms of transport. This could be seen as part of their preparation for independent living.

**Policy PTS5: Develop a passenger transport information/ticketing strategy that will support and maximise the use of the commercial and supported passenger transport network**

This will be achieved by:

- Building upon recent advances in integrated ticketing technology by supporting the implementation of integrated cross-ticketing on buses / trains to make ticketing simpler and more cost effective
- Supporting the development of a smartcard system for travel across all modes/operators
- Developing multi-operator (bus/train/ferry) 'tourist travel cards' and encouraging through-ticketing to tourist attractions
- Continuing to develop on-line travel information sites such as 'Getting About' and 'Travel Dorset' into a stronger, more widely identifiable brand for their respective areas, so that they are focal points for information, marketing and publicity for all sustainable travel activity
- Extending real-time information (RTI) with audio and visual display in key public locations such as shopping centres, hospitals, libraries, public buildings and offices. Provision of RTI at main bus stops
- Making use of mobile phone technology to deliver personalised travel information direct to the user
- Ensuring that up to date information on community transport is available to those who need it most, increasingly through the internet
- Seeking to develop through-ticketing opportunities and smart card initiatives between community transport services and local bus, coach and train services
- Promoting travel options through school, workplace and community travel plans and more personalised travel planning techniques.

**Policy PTS6: Ensure that passenger transport issues are considered in all aspects of the planning process**

This is already being done through the Local Plans process, but it will continue to be strengthened by seeking to:

- Encouraging sustainable patterns of development in locations well served by a range of facilities easily accessible by financially sustainable public transport
- Using accessibility planning techniques to inform decisions on the spatial location of new development and services
- Considering using the emerging Neighbourhood Plans process or existing Transport Action groups as a way of identifying Community Transport needs in advance of specifying services
- Working with developers to secure layouts of new development that encourage accessibility and permeability to public transport
- Working with operators and planners to secure sustainable public transport provision in new developments through the transport assessment process and securing funding towards that provision through the Section 106 process
- Developing a new approach to securing developer funding through the new Community Infrastructure Levy that will allow such funding to be used more

effectively to address strategic priorities, including provision of bus infrastructure and to pump-prime additional bus service provision.

**Policy PTS7: Policy PTS7: Seek to maintain and improve access to the Jurassic Coast and other tourist destinations by public transport**

This will be achieved by:

- Working with public transport operators and accommodation providers to promote holidays in Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset which minimise use of the car.
- Seeking ways of making visitors aware of sustainable travel options prior to the point of travel. This will include a tourist targeted section on transport and travel websites, and visitor travel plans.
- Promoting existing and temporary park and ride services for key events as has been done successfully for the 2012 Olympics Sailing events at Weymouth and the annual Bournemouth Air Festival
- Promoting sustainable transport facilities, whether heritage or otherwise, as attractions in their own right (e.g Swanage Railway)
- Supporting delivery of tourism strategies and plans such as the Jurassic Coast Transport Strategy and the Dorset AONB Management Plan
- For the Jurassic Coast area the priority will be to promoting sustainable tourism and enhancing non-car access. Priority will be given to seeking to maintain and enhance the public transport routes that run along the coast between Swanage/Poole, Weymouth and Exeter
- Waterborne passenger transport has the potential to support sustainable leisure and tourism travel along the Dorset and East Devon Jurassic Coast. Recent work on trying to establish experimental schemes along the coast has proved difficult to progress in the current financial climate, but should be revisited in the longer term.

**Policy PTS8: Maximise Funding Opportunities**

The councils will maximise funding by:

- Making use of developer contribution funding, where appropriate, to deliver public transport improvements which mitigate effects of development and contribute to the delivery of strategic transport improvements
- Investigating opportunities to bid for government grants for innovative schemes. This has already been successfully achieved over the last three years through successfully bidding for four separate schemes in the LTP area under the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) and Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF) schemes. The recently approved funding (£180,000) through the Total Transport Pilot fund is an example of this. This will be used to investigate the feasibility of integrating the commissioning and delivery of different strands of public transport provision such as public bus services and bespoke client services
- Extending partnership working to deliver community transport initiatives through, or in collaboration with partners within the local authorities and third parties such as the NHS, educational establishments and employers.

