

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

11 JANUARY 2005

FINAL REPORT –

THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To present the findings of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Panel's review of the Local Transport Plan.

AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

2. The overall aim of the Scrutiny into the Local Transport Plan is to assess if the Local Transport Plan that is currently under development will ensure that the key strategic transport aims of the Council will be achieved.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

3. The terms of reference for the Scrutiny investigation were as outlined below:-
 - (a) Assess the key transport issues for Middlesbrough.
 - (b) Are there sufficient measures, either planned or in place, that will ensure that the strategic transport aims contained within the Corporate Performance Plan and the Shared Priorities for Transport are met?
 - (c) If the strategic transport aims contained within the Corporate Performance Plan and the Shared Priorities for Transport are not statutorily required to be included within the Local Transport Plan are they included within any other plans or policies and how will they be delivered, monitored and evaluated?
 - (d) Based on the evidence received by the panel over the course of the review, for the Panel to make recommendations to the Executive on the content of the Local Transport Plan.

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

4. Members of the Panel met formally between 28 July 2004 and 25 November 2004 to discuss/receive evidence relating to this investigation and a detailed record of the topics discussed at those meetings are available from the Committee Management System (COMMIS), accessible via the Council's website.
5. A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-
 - (i) Detailed presentations from officers from the Environment and Regeneration Service Areas
 - (ii) Discussion with the Mayor
 - (iii) Discussion with the Executive Member for Transport
 - (iv) Visit to the Urban Traffic Control Centre
 - (v) Evidence gathering from the bus operators
 - (vi) Evidence gathering from the Joint Strategy Unit
 - (vii) Discussions with a representative from Government Office North East

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

6. The membership of the Panel were as detailed below:-

Councillors M Booth (Chair), Councillor P Sanderson (Vice-Chair), Councillors S Biswas, S Bloundele, W Ferrier, F Gill, J Ismail, C Robson and M Williams

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Local Transport Plan

7. In 2000 the Government introduced a 10 year transport plan. That plan set the vision for the future and sought to deliver integrated transport through Local Transport Plans developed by councils. Each plan is produced with a five-year time span and is used by the government to allocate funds for transport schemes. There are a number of key priorities set by the government for all councils to achieve by 2010 which included the following:
 - Reduce congestion
 - Make bus services more accessible, punctual and reliable
 - Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents
 - Improve the air quality by meeting national air quality strategy objectives
 - Triple the number of cycling trips
8. The production of the LTP for 2006-2011 is taking place over the next 8 months and a period of public consultation is now underway. The plan must be submitted to the Government for approval by July 2005.

9. The plan may include proposals on key transport issues such as the co-ordination of all forms of travel, improving road safety, use of new technology for travel and planning information and ensuring people can get key services at a reasonable cost.

Annual Performance Report

10. As part of the LTP process the Council is required to produce an Annual Performance Report (APR) for the Government Office North East on the progress and achievements in relation to the LTP. The APR is divided into a number of individual sections in accordance with Government guidance.
11. The panel noted that the 2003 APR had been assessed and scored and Middlesbrough's plan had been placed within the 'average' category.
12. The 2003/04 APR included a number of key items of progress including:
- substantial completion of green transport corridors, safer routes to school
 - partnership with bus operators for service improvements
 - investment in maintenance of footways, carriageways and bridges
 - lowest number of accidents and casualties on record
 - expansion of the Council's control of car parking.
13. In terms of the Council's progress against targets in the LTP, 88% of the core targets and 86% of the local targets were on track for delivery at the end of the LTP period. (Source – APR 2004 p3)
14. Towards the end of the scrutiny review the Local Transport Capital Settlement for 2005/06 was announced. Government Office North East announced that the Council's APR for 2003/04 demonstrated that the Council were making good progress in implementing the LTP and that the Council should be congratulated on the significant improvements made in the last year. The APR was therefore assessed as being in the 'above average' category.

Transport - The Mayor's Vision and the Corporate Performance Plan

15. There are 4 priority themes contained within the Corporate Performance Plan with regard to Transport. The themes are drawn from the 'Raising Hope' agenda which aims to develop a transport network which can 'meet the needs of a town on its way up'.

The 4 themes are:

- i. Improve road safety
- ii. Secure better access to jobs and services
- iii. Improve highway maintenance
- iv. To improve access to buses and other forms of local transport

16. There are a number of planned actions to address those priority issues for which the panel have assessed, these issues include the introduction of real time bus information, the development of a bus strategy and undertaking a programme of road safety improvement.

Transport - Shared Priorities

17. The Government has agreed 7 shared priorities for Local Government these are:

- i. Raising standards across our schools.
- ii. Improving the quality of life of children, young people, families at risk and older people.
- iii. Promoting healthier communities by targeting key local services, such as health and housing.
- iv. Creating safer and stronger communities.
- v. Transforming our local environment.
- vi. Meeting transport needs more effectively.
- vii. Promoting the economic vitality of localities.

18. Within theme 6 above - 'meeting transport needs more effectively' the focus is on the following transport issues:

- i. Improving Road Safety
- ii. Access and Mobility
- iii. Congestion
- iv. Environmental Issues

THE PANEL'S FINDINGS

SECTION ONE - MIDDLESBROUGH'S KEY TRANSPORT ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT OF THE MEASURES THAT WILL ENSURE THE STRATEGIC TRANSPORT AIMS OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE MET

19. In order to undertake the review the panel began by examining each of the Corporate Plan and Shared Priority themes to ascertain the key transport issues pertinent to those headings. The panel also assessed if there are sufficient measures, either planned or in place that will ensure that the strategic transport aims contained within the Corporate Performance Plan and the Shared Priorities would be met.

20. As the shared priorities are similar to those priorities as set out in the Corporate Performance Plan, taken collectively the panel considered the key transport issues within the following headings:

- Improving Road Safety
- Securing Better Access To Jobs And Services/Improving Access And Mobility
- Improving Highway Maintenance
- Improving access to buses and other forms of transport
- Congestion
- Environmental Issues; and
- The Mayor's overarching theme of 'meeting the needs of a town on its way up'

21. The panel received information from a variety of sources that identified the key priority transport issues relevant to Middlesbrough. The Panel's findings for each of the themes, as listed in paragraph 20 above, are detailed as follows.

IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY

Corporate Performance Plan/Shared Priorities

22. The Corporate Performance Plan notes that all Councils must reduce road casualties by 15% by 2010.

23. With regard to the shared priorities for transport, the focus for road safety includes targeting resources on to accident hotspots, road safety highway engineering, road safety information, child cyclist and pedestrian training, safety auditing and identifying and responding to the needs of different social groups.

Findings

24. The panel found that the Highways Act gave local authorities the power to improve road safety. A Road Casualty Review was produced each year that provided an evaluation of accident statistics and which was also used to evaluate accident costs. The document was also used as a tool for the identification of problems and the monitoring of performance.

Accidents in Middlesbrough

Year	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
1994	9	53	559	621
1995	2	51	516	569
1996	10	70	525	605
1997	8	46	515	569
1998	2	62	502	566
1999	4	61	430	495
2000	6	65	470	541
2001	8	64	414	486
2002	6	58	428	492
2003	6	71	393	470

25. Trends showed a decrease in the number of accidents, there being a total of 470 accidents in 2003 compared to 621 in 1994. In 2003 the lowest accident and casualty figures were recorded for Middlesbrough.

Killed and seriously injured casualties

Year	baseline	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Target	65	63	60	58	56	54
Actual	65	67	81	81	74	85
Differences		+4	+21	+23	+18	+31
% difference from baseline		+3.4%	+25%	+25%	+14.2%	+31.2%

26. At the time the panel received evidence on this section the target of achieving 40% reduction in killed and seriously injured casualties was not being met and this was to be investigated further. More recent statistics show that for the first 5 months of 2004 there had been a significant decrease in KSI figures compared to previous years therefore the projected figure to the end of the year was 46 which was under the target figure of 52.

Children killed and seriously injured

Year	Baseline	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Target	22	21	20	19	18	17
Actual	22	21	18	9	20	13
Differences		0	-2	-10	2	-4
% difference from baseline		-3.7%	-17.4%	-58.7%	-8.3%	-40.4%

27. The Council is well below the set target however due to the low number of figures involved in the calculation a slight increase/decrease can make the figures change dramatically. The panel found that there were a number of tools that the Council could use to develop its road safety strategy. The main influences are the three E's – engineering, enforcement and education.

28. **Engineering** - In terms of engineering single sites were identified where there were higher than expected numbers of accidents. Mass action plans were developed as a matter of course and this involved applying tried and tested methods at locations with common accident histories such as anti skid surfacing. Area action plans identified accident clusters and introduced measures over the whole area such as traffic calming.

29. **Enforcement** - In terms of enforcement there are a number of methods that include physical restrictions such as traffic islands, road humps and one way streets. Legislation such as traffic regulation orders, parking restrictions, banned turns and speed limits are also used. In terms of policing, methods such as the use of parking tickets, speed cameras, obstruction, enforcement campaigns i.e. tyre checks, tax disks etc. were employed.

30. **Education** - The council can use a number of methods in order to influence or alter public behaviour and are able to instil an attitude in road users and pedestrians through education, training and publicity. Education is seen as a gradual process and can take the form of a number of different processes such as theatre in education, presentations to children in school assemblies, car seatbelt demonstrations and road safety education in schools.

31. The council's Road Safety Officer highlighted a number of education initiatives for the public. Details were given regarding an initiative that involved the distribution of 'move on up' packs given to children prior to their transition to secondary education where there is more possibility that they will travel to school without an adult for the first time.

In terms of training the Council's aim was to develop practical skills such as providing cycle and pedestrian training in primary and secondary schools.

32. In terms of publicity the Council provides information and advice on appropriate behaviour and also raises awareness of road safety issues. Examples include supporting national campaigns such as Drink Drive and Don't Drive Tired. Awareness raising events have also been held with schools to highlight Walk to School Week. There are also a number of campaigns that have been launched to encourage children to walk to school whilst also conveying a road safety message such as the walking bus and the cartoon safety squirrel initiatives.
33. Members were encouraged to hear that in terms of figures for 2003/04 Middlesbrough had exceeded the target of reducing road casualties by 15% before the target date of 2010 and that the Council would continue to introduce measures to reduce the figure even further.

SECURING BETTER ACCESS TO JOBS AND SERVICES/IMPROVING ACCESS AND MOBILITY

Corporate Performance Plan/Shared Priorities

34. With regard to securing better access to jobs and services the CPP states that the council must ensure that its transport policies underpin economic regeneration and help people access jobs. As such the planned priorities for the year are to improve parking arrangements, improve transport to James Cook University Hospital, improve transport from estates to Riverside Park and respond to the issues that arise from the Mayor's debates.
35. The shared priority of access and mobility states that councils should understand, monitor and evaluate the travel and mobility needs of its locality. Councils should use the delivery of its transport and planning policies to respond to these needs and ensure public transport and accessibility policies are integrated across the other policy areas of the Council.

Findings

36. The panel considered whether or not the new regeneration schemes included plans for increased car usage and alternative forms of transport such as cycling and walking? The panel also considered whether there was any evidence that economic growth in the town is being held back by poor transport links and if potential investors perceive that the current transport infrastructure is adequate or even good?
37. The panel found out that Middlesbrough is the hub of the Tees Valley travel to work area and that the ability for employees to access employment locations in Middlesbrough, particularly the town centre, is considered as good. The panel heard that it is difficult to predict the impact on congestion and parking issues for any particular development however all new developments require a traffic impact assessment as part of the planning application process.
38. Initial analysis of the 2001 Census indicated that 57,400 people worked in Middlesbrough. Of these jobs, 29,100 (51%) were taken by people who lived in the
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Borough, and around 28,300 (49%) were taken by people who travelled in from elsewhere. At the same time, 20,200 people who lived in Middlesbrough travelled out of the Borough to their job, creating a total net flow of 8,100.

39. Middlesbrough had the highest net inflow and the highest proportion of people who travelled into the Borough from elsewhere to work of all the Tees Valley authorities. Middlehaven ward had 22,600 jobs of which 13,700 (61%) were taken by workers who resided outside the Borough – the highest number of jobs and percentage inflow of all wards in Tees Valley.
 40. Officers discussed the subject of parking for employees, customers and visitors with the panel and it was considered that it was an issue which local businesses did take into account. There was a balance to be considered between the advantages and disadvantages of a business being in the town centre and congestion that this may cause. Middlesbrough was competing for local businesses with other towns within the Tees Valley and also the Teesdale site where there is good access and parking facilities. Officers noted that initial indications are that that current parking provision in Middlesbrough is adequate but that plans would need to be put in place for the future. The option of a Park and Ride scheme had been considered but officers felt that the pressure and need from motorists is not evident at this time. Any plans involving the improvement of public transport to bring people into Middlesbrough will also need to be considered on a Tees Valley wide basis.
 41. Regarding plans to examine the town's future parking needs, Members were informed that the Chief Executive had asked for a report to be written which will detail parking provision looking ahead for the next 5 years.
 42. The panel was pleased to learn that the number of cars driving within the town centre had reduced whilst the pedestrian footfall and car parking levels have increased. Whilst it was difficult to identify exactly why this was the case it was suggested that the reduction could be attributed to a number of factors. Such factors included methods of designing how traffic moves around the town, people are focused on where they need to park and do not have to drive around the town centre to access parking facilities and only buses are allowed in certain areas.
 43. With regard to the provision of public transport to the town's industrial areas, the panel learnt that there were currently no public transport services to Riverside Park, which was the main industrial estate in Middlesbrough and it could be argued that this factor might discourage future developments on the estate. The panel was pleased to hear that as a result of a successful Urban Bus Challenge Bid that improvements would be made to bus services to this area and with the introduction of a new service to the James Cook hospital by the end of the financial year.
 44. In terms of providing a more convenient and speedier access for car users entering into the town, officers noted that this would be improved with the alterations to the Hartington Road Interchange and the A66 interchange at North Ormesby.
 45. The rail sector remained a difficult area in which to deliver local transport improvements. The increased financial focus on mainline services created an environment within which there was little scope to improve local services. This was
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disappointing as the use of local rail services was on the increase and there was clearly a role for rail to play in providing a viable alternative travel choice to car users. The changes to the Tyne Tees express service was cause for particular concern. Also, the fact that there was not a London to Middlesbrough direct service is seen as a disadvantage to businesses looking to invest in the area as people's perception of distance between Middlesbrough and Darlington was far greater than the actual.

46. In speaking to the Joint Strategy Unit about rail provision the panel found that the Unit's main objective was to campaign to try and retain the services currently supplied and restore some of the recently withdrawn services. The panel was interested in, and supportive of, the proposed additional stations at the James Cook Hospital and Middlehaven and also the possibility of a commuter service from Yarm to Nunthorpe via Middlesbrough. In terms of increasing rail provision the panel recognised that this was very difficult within the current financial climate and an area where the Council had little or no influence.
47. The Mayor had held a series of public debates across the town over a number of months to enable the people of Middlesbrough to attend and discuss their views, concerns and problems with regard to transport issues. The Executive Member for Transport and Housing noted that as a result of the debates the Mayor has agreed to produce a master plan to examine the issues that have arisen from the debates such as congestion, public transport and parking, that report was due for completion on 1 July 2005.

IMPROVING HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Corporate Performance Plan

48. The Corporate Performance Plan states that maintaining and developing the highways infrastructure is critical in delivering transport and social policies and as part of that the Council's key targets were to produce a Highway Maintenance Management Plan and to improve the A66 at the Hartington Road Interchange.

Findings

49. The panel found that with regard to the Policy Framework for Highway Maintenance, officers were hoping to re-write their policies jointly with other authorities in the Tees Valley, matching the Council's practices against national standards and codes of practice. However, this exercise was 5 months behind schedule at the time of this panel's meeting in 7 September, this was due to work pressures.
50. The Head of Transport and Design gave Members an update on the alterations to Hartington Road Interchange. The panel learned that a Project Manager was due to be appointed and a detailed design underway by an appropriate contractor by the end of December 2004. The aim of the alterations to this highway was to reduce congestion and to provide better access to Riverside Park. The Government had given a grant of almost £12 million and the work is programmed for completion in mid-2007.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO BUSES AND OTHER FORMS OF TRANSPORT

Corporate Performance Plan/Shared Priorities

51. The Corporate Performance Plan states that the Council must understand, monitor and evaluate the travel and mobility needs of its locality in order to develop effective public transport and accessibility policies. The planned actions to address this priority theme include:
- the introduction of real time bus information;
 - the development of a bus strategy to improve public transport; and
 - to undertake a Travel Awareness campaign.
52. The Council's priority contributions to the theme can be drawn from the Mayor's 'Raising Hope' agenda which is to develop 'a transport network which can meet the needs of a town on its way up'
53. The Shared Priorities also state that Councils must develop and implement a strategy for buses.

Findings

54. The panel learnt that during 2004 there were a number of meetings between the Mayor, Council officers and the two main bus operators, Arriva and Stagecoach to discuss service provision, reliability and punctuality which would culminate in an agreed joint action plan.
55. During the course of the review the panel also met with representatives from Arriva and Stagecoach in order to ascertain what the bus operators thought were the key issues facing bus transport in Middlesbrough.
56. From those discussion the panel learned that there were a number of issues that had an impact on bus travel in Middlesbrough, those issues included:
- Congestion;
 - Patronage loss;
 - parking charges and the impact of out of town shopping;
 - Access to Riverside Park;
 - Access to James Cook Hospital; and
 - Methods of making bus travel attractive.
57. Those findings are detailed as follows:

Congestion

58. The panel learnt that the rise in car ownership had not only contributed to the increase in the numbers of cars on the road but that it had taken away passengers from buses. The rise in the numbers of households that had a second car had also had an effect in reducing the number of bus passengers. It was also considered an increasing challenge to persuade people to use public transport. As such when people are sitting in traffic and also see buses sitting in that traffic, it can reduce the incentive for them to switch to bus transport as a means of getting into the town.

59. The bus operators noted that the use of bus lanes during peak hours can help speed up journey times and they have been in consultation with the Mayor regarding this issue.

Patronage Loss

60. In terms of the statistics regarding the number of people travelling by bus in Middlesbrough, the numbers fall by 2-3% per year, although in general bus patronage is high in relation to the rest of the Country. The bus operators considered that the way to increase that patronage was to work in partnership with the Council. To consider such issues as investing in new buses, investing in new shelters, and dissuading people from using cars for certain journeys.

Parking Charges and the impact of out of town shopping centres

61. Free parking in out of town shopping facilities means that people are more inclined to use their cars in order to access those facilities. This results in the town having to compete with out of town centres. The panel learned that the Government had backed away from implementing car parking charges in out of town centres. Officers considered that if a parking fee was levied for car users at out of town facilities then that money could be used to provide bus services to those facilities to provide an alternative for car users and to enable non car owners to access those facilities.

Access to Riverside Park

62. The panel had previously discovered that there was an issue with the lack of provision of public transport to the Riverside Industrial Estate. The panel was interested to hear that the Council had successfully bid for Urban Challenge Funding which would improve bus services in the area and help to provide an early morning service from Middlesbrough's estates to Riverside Park.

Access to James Cook Hospital

63. In addition to the service to Riverside Park the Panel were pleased to hear that the funding would also be used to provide a demand responsive service from the town to the James Cook Hospital. On a cautionary note however, the bus operators informed the panel that routes had previously been introduced in order to serve the hospital however this had proved unsuccessful due to the lack of patronage.

Methods of making bus travel attractive

64. The panel learned that there were a number of methods that were being used by both the Council and bus operators in order to make travelling by bus more attractive. The bus operators were investing in new buses, and in particular buses that provide access to the elderly and disabled and the Council have provided new bus shelters.

65. In order to assist passengers with bus timetable information the Travel Line, which is a number that can be found on bus stops, provides a point of contact in order for the public to find out details of bus routes and timetables.

66. The panel was encouraged to hear that people's experience of bus travel is to be further enhanced with the introduction of Real Time bus information from March 2005. The Council are working with Arriva to ensure that information will be available at a number of bus stops that will indicate when the next bus will arrive. Passengers will also be able to access information about the arrival of their bus via their mobile phone

by the use of a text messaging service. Unfortunately due to commercial reasons Stagecoach could not be involved with the scheme in the early stages.

67. Although there is a perception of crime occurring on buses, and in particular late night travel, the reality is that crime on buses is rare. However the Council have helped to install CCTV cameras on a number of buses in the area in order to monitor this issue.
68. In terms of helping the bus companies plan new routes, the bus operators noted that when the authority is planning new housing developments they currently find out when the planning advert goes in media. It would help if the Council could involve bus operators more with the Council's planning department at the initial planning stage.
69. With regard to a Travel Awareness Scheme as outlined in the priorities the service area noted that they were currently working on a campaign which would get the public to question "Do You Really Need To Take It (your car) Everywhere?" Therefore raising awareness of the alternatives to car travel and getting the public to think about the sort of journeys they use their cars for.

CONGESTION

Corporate Performance Plan/Shared Priorities

70. The Shared priorities state that the Council should have a clear understanding of the character and severity of local congestion and have systems in place to allow congestion to be monitored and measured.

Findings

71. Journey patterns across the Tees Valley can cross one or more of the borough boundaries due to the nature of multiple retail and commercial centres. This has led to joint working arrangements across the sub regions. There are a number of key issues that the Tees Valley Authorities are progressing to reduce congestion, which include:
- A policy framework for demand management
 - Decriminalised parking enforcement
 - Investigating the feasibility of a Rapid Transit system and
 - Real Time bus passenger information
72. The Council prepares a congestion statement that notes that evidence from the Transport Statistics Bulletin states that 'out of the 18 areas, the highest average traffic speed, for both peak and off peak periods, was in Teesside (almost 35mph)'. The Traffic Speeds in English Urban Areas states that 'Teesside had by far the highest average peak time traffic speed in 2002'
73. In planning for peak time congestion officers noted that an element of control can be used to manage the flow of traffic, this has been introduced by including the removal of roundabouts and the insertion of signalised junctions which can be controlled through the Urban Traffic Control System.

74. The panel learnt that there are a number of ways that can be used by the Council in order to achieve traffic reduction targets. The Tees Valley Demand Management Framework sets out how this will be achieved. It includes methods such as targeting single occupancy cars, managing journeys to school, dissuading short journeys and bulk long distance freight. Other methods available to local authorities are: increasing the cost of long stay parking, reducing the supply of parking, reallocation of road space and public information campaigns.
75. The panel felt that not enough was being done to encourage alternative forms of transport and reducing the dependency on the car and that it this was imperative when designing the Middlehaven development that consideration be given to pedestrian access into the town and provision for alternative forms of transport. The panel recognises that car use is on the increase and that once single action won't alleviate the problem. Despite the steady increase in car use and the reduction in bus patronage the panel recognises that the methods of discouraging people from using their car to enter to town need to be balanced with encouraging economic growth.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Corporate Performance Plan/Shared Priorities

76. One of the shared priorities is 'Pollution and the Local Environment', which involves the impact of transport on the local environment in terms of air quality and noise and on the global environment in terms of climate change.
77. Working towards this priority the council would have to draw up action plans to set out measures to achieve air quality objectives, ensuring air quality is handled in a corporate way, enforcing reductions in local air pollutants through vehicle emissions checks and traffic management schemes. With regard to climate change it would involve ensuring that climate change is an integral part of transport strategy and planning decisions, leading by example by developing staff travel plans etc and ensuring that the transport infrastructure is robust enough to cope with current weather impacts.

Findings

78. The panel was reassured to hear that the air quality in Middlesbrough was better than most towns and cities in the United Kingdom. Local authorities have a legal responsibility to carry out air quality checks which are measured across three sites in Middlesbrough and the panel found that all air quality standards will be met for the foreseeable future.
79. The quality of air is handled in a corporate way through the publication of a voluntary Air Quality Action Plan. The plan ensures that the local air is clean as is practicable to avoid the need to declare an air quality management area. The Council also produce an Environmental Sustainability Strategy for which lead officers are tasked with the responsibility for co-ordinating actions across the council. Progress reviews are taken to the Corporate Management Team and the Executive.

80. In terms of the Council's powers to enforce reductions in local air pollutants the panel found that the Council had been part of a pilot scheme which enabled officers to enforce roadside emission checks up to MOT standards, backed up with minor work to correct engine faults. However, since 2003, the regulatory powers to carry out such checks have only been available to councils who have declared air quality management areas, ie those with poor air quality. Officers suggested that the Council's authority to make roadside checks should be discretionary however despite lobbying Ministers, the ability to undertake roadside checks remains only with Councils where air quality management areas have been enforced. Officers estimated that 20% of local vehicles are responsible for 80% of total emissions and that by having the authority to make roadside checks it could reduce the number of emissions. At present the Vehicle Inspectorate is the national body with the legal responsibility to regulate vehicle emissions visit Middlesbrough about once a year.
81. However the panel were pleased to hear that the Taxis which are licensed by the Council were subject to emissions testing 3 times a year.
82. The panel also learned that the Council was one of a few councils who had developed a Community Climate Change Action Plan. Middlesbrough's plan has been identified by the Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA) as a good example of best practice amongst local authorities. The plan provides a long term framework for the whole community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the growing impact of climate change.
83. The panel were informed that with regard to baseline emissions 815,000 tonnes were predicted of which 177,000 tonnes (22%) was transport related. As such the Council must develop the Local Transport Plan by balancing the need to reduce emissions against the effects and the needs of the regeneration agenda in the town. The impact of regeneration will undoubtedly result in the increased viability of the town leading to increased wealth and therefore increased car ownership.
84. In order to balance this the Council are engaged in encouraging different modes of transport such as cycling and walking and working to increase bus patronage. In terms of cycling the lengths of cycle paths have been increased, cycling parking is provided and there has been a cycling awareness campaign.
85. A major initiative in Middlesbrough is the development of Travel Plans. If workers coming into the town sought alternative transport for one day per week it would reduce the number of trips by 20%. As such all new developers must produce a travel plan as part of their planning application. As one of the largest employers in the town the Council is undertaking a survey of existing travel plans in order to lead the way amongst all of the major employers in the town.

OVERARCHING THEME FROM THE MAYOR'S VISION OF 'MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE TOWN ON ITS WAY UP'

86. The Mayor's vision for the future is built on four pillars:
- A clean and safe environment;
 - Physical regeneration of the town's run down sites and buildings;
 - A business friendly enterprise culture which welcomes would be investors; and
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- A transport network that can meet the needs of a town on its way up.
87. The panel heard from the Mayor with regard to his views on the key transport issues facing the town in the future. The Mayor considered that the Council needed to be radical in its approach to the reduction in car usage not only around the town centre but also on the town's roads.
88. One of the main considerations was of the environmental impact that the increase in car usage will have. The Mayor saw the Council's role as that of a 'reduction Council' in that they had a responsibility in respect of transport in Middlesbrough to reduce the number of cars, reduce congestion and reduce pollution.
89. The Mayor highlighted the importance of working with external partners such as the bus operators, the local hospital and other local authorities in order to discuss transport issues and to work with developers when planning new facilities for the town to ensure all transport aspects have been considered.

SECTION TWO - IF THE STRATEGIC TRANSPORT AIMS CONTAINED WITHIN THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PLAN AND THE SHARED PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORT ARE NOT STATUTORILY REQUIRED TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN ARE THEY INCLUDED WITHIN ANY OTHER PLANS OR POLICIES AND HOW WILL THEY BE DELIVERED, MONITORED AND EVALUATED?

90. In discussions with Malcolm Rivett from Government Office North East the panel learnt that unlike the last LTP, the policy will now not be used as a bidding document. The Council will be given an indication of the likely settlement which will be based on a formula method. However the policy will be assessed on its ability to demonstrate that the Council will be able to deliver its key outcomes.
91. The government are looking for a plan that is fully integrated with transport objectives across the Tees Valley which will provide details of the wider picture of the objectives that the Council is setting out to achieve. The plan should not be restricted to the details regarding the development and maintenance of the transport infrastructure but should also include how it will integrate with the Council's wider objectives, such as those for health, education and regeneration for example. The plan must also consider the implications for transport amongst those priorities. The plan must demonstrate that the town's transport needs are fed into the decision making process at an early stage and that when developing all the council's initiatives that the transport implications are taken into account.
92. The panel learnt that the 7 shared priorities that the Government had agreed with the Local Government Association would need to be addressed within the LTP. Those aims were as follows
- i. improving access to jobs and services
 - ii. improved public transport
 - iii. reduced problems of congestion
 - iv. pollution and safety

93. Officers noted that the new LTP would be based on those shared priorities. With regard to the new Middlesbrough Community Strategy, the Transport Theme Group, which is made up of a number of transport stakeholders including the Council, has developed the vision, priorities and actions for inclusion in the transport section of the strategy.
94. The guidance suggests that a good LTP should encourage high quality planning and delivery of local transport, and also provide a basis for tracking performance locally. The plan should aim to set transport into a wider context, identify locally relevant targets, identify the best value for money solutions and set trajectories for key targets. In setting targets within the LTP they should be challenging but realistic and visibly support local targets for sustainable economic growth, housing and social inclusion. They should relate to outcomes rather than inputs or outputs, and should be focussed on the shared priorities whilst taking national targets into account.
95. The panel considered that from the evidence received throughout the review that they were satisfied that the actions that were being undertaken by officers and the methods and initiatives that were in place or currently in progress would work towards the achievement of the Council's transport objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

96. Based on the evidence received throughout the review the panel concluded that:
- a) That the transport issues facing Middlesbrough were not uncommon to the issues facing many towns in England.
 - b) That the panel is supportive of the progress that the Environment Department has made in order to achieve the targets set out in the Corporate Plan and the Shared Priorities.
 - c) The panel were pleased to hear of the announcement by Government Office North East that the Council's Annual Performance Report had been given an 'above average' rating and also of the progress in the implementation of the current Local Transport Plan.
 - d) That the Council had been successful in reducing the number of road accidents in Middlesbrough and the panel were supportive of the work that officers had undertaken in order to achieve this reduction.
 - e) Whilst the two objectives of reducing car usage and increasing economic vitality need to be kept in balance, the panel believes that, in the long term, the economic and environmental interests of the town would be best served by reducing car travel. The panel also understands that this may mean accepting some short-term economic disadvantage and unpopularity.
 - f) That whilst car parking provision is currently at an acceptable level, that consideration should be given to potential demand in the longer term.

- g) The panel considers that highway maintenance and improvements are necessary and that the Policy Framework for Highway Maintenance should be completed as soon as possible. The panel recognised that new roads only produce more cars and that priority should be given to concentrating expenditure on road maintenance and improving safety rather than reducing congestion.
- h) The evidence has showed that the levels of bus patronage are decreasing and that there is a need continue to work closely with bus operators and to focus development on schemes to increase bus use and ensure that bus transport is a viable alternative to car travel.
- i) That there needs to be more emphasis on encouraging alternative forms of transport, such as public transport, walking and cycling, especially when embarking on new developments such as the Middlehaven project.
- j) The panel was encouraged to hear that the Middlesbrough has relatively low levels of air pollution when compared to other urban centres of a similar size and that the Climate Change Action Plan has been highlighted as good practice. The panel therefore considered that it was important to maintain this good practice and that staff travel plans for Council employees should be produced as a matter of urgency.
- k) That the panel concur with the Mayor's vision of a transport system that must meet the needs of a town on the way up and are supportive of the development of a masterplan which will be produced as a result of the public transport debates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

97. Based on the evidence received by the panel over the course of the review, the panel would like to make a series of recommendations.

98. That the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive:

- (a) The central objective of the Local Transport plan should be that of containing the rise in the numbers of car journeys within the town and eventually reducing them. This can only be achieved by developing public transport and making it more attractive to travel into the town centre by alternative means. It is recognised that there may be an economic disbenefit to the town in the short term.
- (b) That the Council seek funding to encourage major employers/schools to establish travel to work plans, which would include car sharing schemes, to promote the use of public transport.
- (c) Recognising that new roads only produce more cars it is recommended that the emphasis in the Local Transport Plan should be on expenditure on road maintenance and improving safety.

- (d) The Local Transport Plan should contain proposals that will encourage bus usage by giving buses more priority, by encouraging new bus routes and supporting the electric or alternative fuel bus experiments.
- (e) The Local Transport Plan should contain measures that encourage cycling by better maintenance of cycle routes, building more cycle routes and more places to park bikes.
- (f) In order to cater for the increased economic growth in the town centre and at Middlehaven, in addition to promoting public transport, cycling and walking, consideration could be given to planning for a Park and Ride scheme. This would be for implementation in the medium term and would entail identifying, in co-operation with our near neighbours, appropriate sites and devising a plan to implement them during the life of the Local Transport Plan.
- (g) Whilst it is recognised that the Council's ability to influence rail service is limited the Local Transport Plan should make reference to clear objectives to working with the appropriate bodies to:
 - i. Make the best possible use of the existing rail lines within the town for commuter travel.
 - ii. Modernising and better maintaining of Middlesbrough Station.
 - iii. Building new stations at Middlehaven and the James Cook University Hospital.
 - iv. Maintaining and adding to existing local services on the Esk Valley line, to Nunthorpe, to Darlington and on the coastal line to Sunderland.
 - v. Encouraging new, faster intercity services directly to Newcastle and London
- (h) That the panel receives details at an appropriate time of the progress of the completion of the Policy Framework on Highway Maintenance.
- (i) That the finalised plan is submitted to an appropriate meeting of the panel for information before approval by Council and Government Office North East

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

99. The Panel is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

- The Mayor – Ray Mallon
- Brian Glover – Head of Transport and Design Services
- Lesley Jackson – Local Transport Plan Co-ordinator
- Ian Busby – Highways Services Manager
- Councillor Ron Lowes – Executive Member for Transport and Housing

- Alistair Bolton – Group Leader Transport and Policy
- Dave Carter – Group Leader Road Safety and Traffic
- Ros Pluck – Road Safety Officer
- Sandra Carlidge – Head of Economic/Community Regeneration
- Chris Hawking – Group Leader Planning
- John Chester – Urban Traffic Control Centre
- Tony Batty - Business Development Manager, Arriva
- Doug Elphee – Commercial Manager, Stagecoach
- Alan Hyams – Head of Transport, Joint Strategy Unit
- Malcolm Rivett – Government Office North East

COUNCILLOR MARTIN BOOTH
CHAIR OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL

22 December 2004

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:

- (a) Middlesbrough Council's Corporate Performance Plan 2004/05
- (b) Middlesbrough Council's Annual Progress Report 2004
- (c) Middlesbrough Council's Annual Progress Report 2003 - Congestion Statement
- (d) Middlesbrough Council's Local Transport Plan 2001-2006
- (e) The minutes of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel taken at the following meetings: 12 August 2004, 7 September 2004, 22 September 2004, 14 October 2004, 3 November 2004, 25 November 2004
- (f) Shorter Guidance for Second Local Transport Plans – Government Office North East
- (g) Middlesbrough Flexible Health and Employment Link – Urban Bus Challenge Bid 2003
- (h) Transport Statistics Bulletin – Traffic Speeds in English Urban Areas 2002 – National Statistics
- (i) Middlesbrough Council's Police Framework for Highway Maintenance
- (j) Middlesbrough's Local Transport Capital Settlement Letter – 2 December 2004