

## SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

### SEVENOAKS DISTRICT TRANSPORT STUDY

Report of the: COMMUNITY AND PLANNING SERVICES DIRECTOR

*Also considered by:* LDF Advisory Group (26<sup>th</sup> September 2007)  
Environment Select Committee (23<sup>rd</sup> October 2007)

Status: For Information

---

**This report supports the Community Plan Key Aim of Green Environment, 'Responding to air pollution issues' and also Sustainable Economy, 'Improving the range of transport options across the district.'**

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Mrs Jill Davison

Cllr. Gary Williamson

**Head of Service** Acting Head of Policy and Environment – Tony Fullwood

---

**Executive Summary:** The Transport Study forms part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF). It reviews the transport issues in the district and makes recommendations on potential options for inclusion within a future Sevenoaks District Transport Strategy to deal with the identified issues.

---

**Recommendation:** It be RESOLVED that:

- a) Members note the findings of the Transport Study and;
  - b) taking into account copying and administration charges, approve the cost of supplying the Transport Study at £30 per paper copy.
- 

#### **Background**

- 1 The LDF process, as set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated regulations and guidance, makes clear that LDF policies should be based on a robust and credible evidence base.
- 2 The findings of this report will form part of the evidence base for LDF documents such as the Core Strategy and the Balanced Communities Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). It will allow the Council to prepare spatial development policies that will assist the balanced communities agenda.

- 3 In addition, the Transport Study will form the basis for preparation of the Sevenoaks Transport Strategy.

### **Introduction**

- 4 Through consultations carried out as part of the Local Development Framework process, the District Council has collected qualitative information about transport issues in the District, but little empirical data. JMP consultants were commissioned to in January 2007 to address this.
- 5 The study was undertaken in line with government guidance and good practice, including Planning Policy Guidance 13 (PPG13): Transport.

This report sets out the following:

- a) Key Transport Issues;
- b) Potential Objectives of Transport Strategy
- c) Potential Options for Formulation of Transport Strategy

### **Key Transport Issues**

- 6 This section of the report sets out a number of the key features of the district's transport situation and the conclusions of the report, briefly summarised below:
- 7 Congestion in the Sevenoaks District is not exceptional with the main concentration of congestion being around Sevenoaks Town and Swanley.
- 8 Overall accident levels are low in the district with only three junctions identified where four accidents have taken place in a 36 month period. These are not accident black spots according to KCC definitions.
- 9 Heavy dependency on rail for commuting: In order to satisfy this growing need, further negotiations for improvements to services are needed.
- 10 There are major gaps in the current bus network to the north east of the district, as well as poor access to and from the villages between Sevenoaks Town and Chiddingstone Causeway.
- 11 There is high car ownership in an affluent district.
- 12 Provision for cycling and pedestrians are generally low throughout the district with only four cycle routes in place.
- 13 The rural areas in the district have a dispersed population with a reliance on the car. As a result it is difficult to maintain a frequent, reliable, viable bus service.

- 14 Community transport is currently provided and its importance will increase as the currently ageing population will increase its reliance on those facilities and they no longer have access to a car.
- 15 Development pressures will continue to exist for Sevenoaks District due to its accessible nature for commuting to Central London.
- 16 Parking problems exist around commuter stations and in town centres.
- 17 Air quality management areas are increasing from eight to 12 at the end of 2007 and will require traffic management to assist in abating the problem

### **Potential Options for the formulation of the Transport Strategy**

- 18 The development of options has included consideration of the Kent County Council Local Transport Plan Schemes, Local Plan measures, Sevenoaks Community Plan, as well as consultation with the Sevenoaks Transport Forum, and recommendations from the consultant.

### Network Management

- 19 Network Management is a tool that can be used to improve the road network and thus help to reduce congestion on the District's roads.
  - Develop a Kent Traffic Management & Information Centre. This Centre allows Kent County Council to watch the County's roads through cameras to ensure that accidents are cleared as soon as possible and that congestion is kept to a minimum.
  - Introduce Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS). This includes bus priority measures, smart cards which are a form of intelligent ticketing allowing you to only rely on one card when making journeys (similar to the Oyster Card that is used in London) and also Variable Message Signs (VMS) that appear on motorways in the District.

### Smarter Choices

- 20 Smarter Choices are a range of 'soft' measures which are designed to encourage more sustainable travel. The options for the consideration in the Transport Strategy include:
  - Expand the use of school, workplace and area travel plans
  - Promote car sharing and car clubs
  - Encourage different work patterns e.g. tele-working
  - Promote travel awareness campaigns

### Provision for cyclists and pedestrians

- 21 Walking and cycling form a key role in promoting sustainable both through encouraging healthy lifestyles of residents in the District and also

helping to reduce congestion on the District's roads. The study sets out potential options:

- Improve pedestrian routes, e.g. A25 Seal Road
- Build better provision for pedestrians into new developments
- Develop the Rights of Way network
- Provide cycle friendly routes into major developments, e.g. employment centres
- Improve road safety e.g. provide cycle crossings, advanced stop lines
- Construct cycle lanes
- Provide secure cycle parking
- Provide secure motorcycle parking

### Provision for buses

22 The use of buses in the District is much lower than the national average, and the following measures can be used in order to encourage more residents to use the bus network. The Study options include:

- Improve bus services
- Expand bus priority
- Introduce network wide low floor buses to assist with access
- Improve safety/ security at bus stops and on-board
- Maintain the concessionary fares scheme for residents over 60 and also disabled persons.
- Continue to provide revenue support for non-commercial services
- Develop a Quality Bus Partnership between or Punctuality Improvement Plan which is an agreement between the District and County Council and Arriva and would improve bus services in the District

### Community transport and taxis

23 The majority of the District is rural, and as a result Community Transport plays a key role in helping to ensure that those people that could not normally access public transport can still utilise services in the District. Options recommended for consideration include:

- Maintain community transport services
- Introduce supplementary Dial-a-Ride. This is a demand responsive scheme which allows those that would not normally have access public transport to access services. This includes those in rural areas that do not have a bus service.
- Promote the introduction of new coach services
- Improve accessibility of taxi vehicles
- Provide taxis for home to school transport

### Provision for rail

- 24 Rail plays an important part in the Transport network of the District as many residents use the train to get to work in London. Further options for consideration include:
- Programmed improvements, which includes improvements to stations, engineering works and other similar works
  - Enable rail capacity enhancements
  - Create and promote a Sevenoaks integrated interchange. Improvements to Sevenoaks station should be made so that the Station is fully accessible when connecting with other modes of transport for example buses or cycling
  - Develop the Integrated Kent Franchise. The Council should work with South Eastern Trains in order to ensure that the Franchise develops accordingly and benefits residents

### Improved information and integration

- 25 By improving information and integration this will ensure that residents of the District will utilise public transport more frequently. The study suggests:
- Improve bus to rail timetable integration
  - Introduce integrated ticketing
  - Provide assisted journey planning
  - Improve public transport information

### Highways

- 26 The Council can work with Kent County Council and the Highways Agency in order to improve roads across the District through:
- Facilitate road building and improvement program
  - High Occupancy Lanes which allow cars that have more than 1 passenger in them to use
  - Construct a M25/A21 link
  - Improve motorway access into Sevenoaks District
  - Introduce corridor improvements e.g. M25 widening with the Highways Agency
  - Press for additional east facing slip roads at M26/ Riverhead Link Road

### Parking

- 27 The Council can determine parking in new developments and the overall provision of off-street and on-street, parking in the town via development control decisions, parking management strategy, the determination of Controlled Parking Zones and pricing levels. The Study suggests:

- Reduce parking standards on-street and in new developments, reduce car parking availability
- Change balance of short/long stay parking to discourage long stay
- Adopt the parking plan for Sevenoaks District

### Road Safety Improvements

28 The Council can work with Kent County Council in order to improve the safety on roads for residents of the District through the following options

- Introduce additional speed/ safety cameras
- Re-engineer highways to protect vulnerable users
- Encourage safer driving
- Ensure visible speed limit signs
- Investigate accident reduction measures

### Land Use Planning Measures

29 Council can influence land-use patterns over the longer term through the Local Development Framework (LDF) by:

- Higher densities which mean that more opportunities can be reached within a certain distance, which may in turn encourage cycling and walking. This can also help to make public transport more viable and locating new developments near public transport corridors
- Requesting contributions to transport infrastructure through Section 106 and 278 agreements

### **Proposed Objectives**

30 The following objectives have been recommended for the Transport Strategy.

1. Investigating viable alternatives to the car;
2. Identify barriers to the take up of alternative forms of transport and recommend actions to address this issue;
3. Reducing traffic congestion by improving traffic management to reduce congested areas;
4. Identifying schemes which target casualty reduction and reducing inappropriate speeds to improve road safety;
5. Reducing travel demand by reducing and controlling the number of car journeys made into town centres and locating new development close to good transport links and local facilities to reduce car journeys;
6. Improving travel awareness by encouraging travel plans and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders and transport providers;
7. Improving access for all including rural accessibility and access to

- healthcare; and
8. Improving the environment, air quality and the quality of life.

### **Options (and Reasons for the Recommendation)**

- 31 The Transport Study is a background document to the LDF. As such, it is essential that it is available to the public as it will be utilised to inform LDF policy. It will, therefore, be made available for free download from the District Council website and the public will be able to obtain printed copies at a cost of £30 to cover the printing and administration costs.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

- 32 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### Legal, Human Rights etc

- 33 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated guidance and regulations make clear that LDF policy should be based on a robust and credible evidence base. As such, it is essential that reports such as the Transport Study should be prepared and published to support the LDF policy. Therefore, studies such as this are being prepared to ensure that there are no legal or human rights implications.

#### Resource (non-financial)

- 34 No additional resources are required as a result of this report.

### **Conclusions**

- 35 The Transport Study has highlighted the key transport issues in the District and identified options to help resolve these issues.
- 36 The key issues and options that have emerged from the Study will be further examined and will aid the Council together with Kent County Council to develop the Transport Strategy.

**Sources of Information:** Sevenoaks District Transport Study (2007)

**Contact Officer(s):** Matthew Hogben Ext. 7357

**Kristen Paterson**  
**Community and Planning Services Director**

## **RISK ASSESSMENT STATEMENT**

When the LDF Core Strategy goes under examination in 2009, the Planning Inspector will review the evidence base to ensure that the data is valid. The Transport Study will form part of this evidence base. Failure to ensure a robust and credible evidence base will mean that the Core Strategy will not pass the Test of Soundness and as a result will found unsound.

The Community Plan states that Transport is a key issue for many people. If this Transport Study is not published then the Transport Strategy will not be able to be commenced, which is one of the targets of the Community Action Plan, that the Strategy is to be finalised by 2010.

It is likely that this Study will be used for future Kent Local Transport Plan funding. By producing this study, West Kent Highway Services will be able to bid for funding for the District that is deemed as important from being highlighted in the Study. Failure to produce this study will mean that that funding may not be used for the most important areas / issues that have been highlighted in the Study.