

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transport affects our quality of life in many ways and every day most of us will make a journey of one kind or another. Cars, in particular, have radically changed how we live, bringing greater independence and increased opportunities, especially in rural counties like ours. Some people, however, do not have access to a car, and therefore find it difficult to get to the jobs, opportunities and services that they need.

Having talked with and listened to our customers for many years, we know that they want a sensible and long-term transport strategy. They want to see real transport improvements now, but also want to know that these are part of our plans for the future. They want to know that our vision, our strategies and our plans will secure real benefits for their children and grandchildren, and will improve safety, safeguard health and preserve the environment.

That is what we are seeking to achieve in this, our Second Local Transport Plan (LTP). It describes our long-term 20-year vision for transport, identifying the wider policy framework that sets the boundaries for our work. It also explores the problems and opportunities that face Buckinghamshire, and sets out our transport strategies and plans for action for the next five years (between 2006 and 2011).

As a corporate strategy document, it considers and has been shaped by local political priorities as well as national and regional influences. Importantly our LTP is also customer focused, and we have made significant efforts to identify and respond to the needs and aspirations of people who live, work and travel in Buckinghamshire.

Using market research (MORI polls, BVPI and annual transport surveys, and project specific research), regular customer and stakeholder consultation (annual transport symposia, joint Cabinet Member meetings, regular liaison with District Council colleagues, Local Committees, and Local Strategic Partnerships) and feedback from individual customers ('Highways On Call' customer contact centre, distribution of 'Transport Matters' to all households, and specific LTP consultation events) we have been able to identify a clear set of priorities for local transport improvements:

- Improving the condition of roads and pavements
- Improving public transport
- Tackling congestion
- Improving road safety

This has enabled us to develop an LTP that is more targeted, realistic, and crucially, customer-focused, with a coherent vision for the future and an ability to meet daily travel and transport needs in the present. It is structured as follows:

- Part One: Our vision for transport
- Part Two: Our transport priorities
- Part Three: Our plan for the future
- Appendices

To make our LTP as accessible as possible and for ease of reference we have used colour coding and symbols throughout to highlight links across the document. These are shown in the following text.

Part I: Our vision for transport



Part One sets the context and background for our LTP. It identifies the national, regional and local influences, including the growth agenda, the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan. This has enabled us to set a twenty-year transport vision that aims to:

Secure the strategic and local transport infrastructure and services to sustainably develop the economy; to facilitate growth; and improve accessibility; whilst balancing free, safe and efficient movement of people and goods with protection of the environment

Supporting this aim, we have identified four cross-cutting themes for public service, economic, environmental and social development:

- 1. Transport, growth and the economy**
- 2. Transport, customer priorities and meeting personal access needs**
- 3. Transport and the environment**
- 4. Transport and the development of safe, strong and healthy communities**

These four themes have a total of 14 associated key policy objectives:

1. Transport, growth and the economy

- a) Deliver the strategic transport infrastructure to support sustainable growth, balance housing and employment growth, and minimise growth in commuting
- b) Ease or prevent congestion to enable the efficient movement of people and goods and support economic development
- c) Reduce the need to travel and improve access to employment

2. Transport, customer priorities and meeting personal access needs

- a) Address local priorities for transport improvements, including condition of roads and pavements, public transport, congestion and road safety
- b) Address the travel needs of children and young people, including access to employment, education and leisure
- c) Address the travel needs of older people, with a focus on improving public transport access to healthcare, food shopping and other essential needs

3. Transport and the environment

- a) Maintain and protect the rural environment whilst improving access and amenity, supporting tourism and the rural economy
- b) Enhance urban areas by addressing the impacts of traffic and transport on the 'street scene' and the local environment
- c) Improve local air quality, especially in Air Quality Management Areas

4. Transport and the development of safe, strong and healthy communities

- a) Reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on the roads of the County
- b) Promote 'healthy' travel choices (i.e. walking and cycling)
- c) Seek to improve access to healthcare facilities
- d) Reduce crime and the fear of crime by enhancing community safety in the maintenance and management of the transport network
- e) Work with local communities to develop transport services tailored to the needs of local people, supported by 'localised' delivery and decision making

These cross-cutting themes and policy objectives are clearly linked to our performance indicators and outcome targets.

Part 2: Our transport priorities

Based on our vision for transport, cross-cutting themes, policy objectives, the Department for Transport and Local Government Association's 'shared priority for transport', and the local priority for maintenance, we have identified five priorities and developed five transport strategies. Each one includes a summary table showing the relevant performance indicators, targets, policies and actions.

Section A: Enhancing access



This strategy has three objectives:

- **Mainstreaming accessibility** to ensure all Council services and stakeholders fully consider and address 'access to goods and services' in their activities
- **Meeting strategic accessibility needs** to improve people's ability to access major centres (particularly for young and older people)
- **Meeting local accessibility needs** by working with local communities to understand access problems and develop local accessibility action plans

Section B: Tackling congestion



This strategy has four objectives:

- **Keep traffic moving** by maximising the use of infrastructure to increase travel capacity, prioritising work on 'Priority Congestion Management Corridors'
- **Achieve modal shift** from the private car to more sustainable travel by providing and promoting high quality cycling, walking and public transport routes
- **Manage demand and reduce the need to travel** by working closely with District Councils to integrate land use, transport planning and parking policies
- **Increase or build new transport capacity** by providing new infrastructure or significant facilities

Section C: Improving our environment



This strategy has three objectives:

- **Improving air quality** by working closely with other partners, especially the District Councils in designated Air Quality Management Areas
- **Addressing transport impacts in urban areas** by ensuring transport schemes fully consider quality of life issues
- **Protecting and Promoting the rural environment** by safeguarding the unique landscape, heritage and biodiversity of the county

Section D: Improving safety



This strategy has three objectives:

- **Mainstreaming road safety** throughout all transport schemes and projects
- **Targeting 'at risk' groups** especially the younger male (17-40) car driver and motorcyclists to develop interventions that improve safety for all road users
- **Targeting sites, routes and areas of concern** to improve the safety of the road environment in Buckinghamshire

Section E: Managing and maintaining the transport asset



This strategy has three objectives:

- **Maintaining our transport asset** to a very high standard, using nationally recognised technical assessment methods
- **Meeting customer priorities** using feedback to identify and respond to customer concerns and aspirations
- **Meeting wider transport objectives** to maximise the benefits of maintenance schemes for other transport strategy areas

Part 3: Our Plan for the Future

Part Three of our LTP sets out the indicators and targets (28 in total) that will be monitored to measure our performance, supported by the TRANstat performance management system. It also describes the indicative funding programme and major schemes that we will be progressing between 2006 and 2011, including A418 route improvement (Aylesbury to Milton Keynes), Urban Traffic Management & Control systems and a regional coachway facility at Handy Cross in High Wycombe.

Appendices

Appendices to our LTP are incorporated in a separate document and include:

- Bus Strategy Area
- Action Plans for Aylesbury and High Wycombe
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (Summary)
- Supporting Statements
- Cross boundary Transport Strategies
- Rail Strategy
- Network Management Duty
- Every Child Matters

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I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statutory requirements

As a local transport authority, under the requirements of the Transport Act (2000), we have to produce a five-year Local Transport Plan (LTP). It should be a corporate strategy document, covering the full range of local authority objectives and service provision, and not developed in isolation by the Transportation service. Indeed, the Audit Commission has proposed that an authority's approach to transport, informed by LTP assessment, will be a major feature of the corporate aspect of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime from 2005.

1.2 Key policy influences

Despite the title, an LTP cannot be written solely from a local perspective, but has to respond to both national and regional influences. The Transport Ten Year Plan (2000) set targets for congestion, public transport, road safety, and air quality to be achieved by 2010, many of which still apply.

This has now been superseded by the 'The Future of Transport: a network for 2030' (July 2004). It confirms that transport will continue to receive sustained funding but emphasises the importance of securing value for money by maximising the use of existing infrastructure. It also formally recognises the role that LTPs can play in meeting national and local objectives, by addressing the 'shared priority for transport'.

1.2.1 The 'shared priority for transport'

The 'shared priority for transport' was agreed by the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Local Government Association (LGA) and involves:

*"improving **access to jobs and services**, particularly for those most in need, in ways which are sustainable: **improved public transport**, reduced problems of **congestion, pollution and safety**."*

DfT has emphasised the delivery of the shared priority within the guidance issued for LTPs and is looking for policies and strategies that deliver on the following objectives:

(With an overall priority on public transport improvement)

- Air quality
- Congestion
- Safety
- Accessibility

LTPs are also expected to contain targets for outcomes (rather than outputs) with clear milestones that chart progress against these objectives.

1.2.2 Network Management Duty - Traffic Management Act

The Traffic Management Act (2004) places a duty on local transport authorities to manage their networks to secure the safe and expeditious movement of traffic, including pedestrians. It requires authorities to act to avoid, reduce or minimise congestion or disruption so that the transport network is used more efficiently. The way Buckinghamshire County Council intends to manage this statutory function is outlined in Part Two, Section B 'Tackling Congestion' with details of progress to date and future actions included in Appendix 8.

1.2.3 Sustainable Communities Plan

In February 2003, the Government published 'Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future', which included plans for four housing growth areas in the wider South East (including the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-region). The Sustainable Communities Plan shows that LTPs can contribute to the development of vibrant and prosperous urban areas by improving the environment, access, and road safety, and by supporting sustainable economic growth.

1.2.4 Every Child Matters

In December 2004, the Government published 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children', which set out a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. It aims that every child will have the support they need to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being.

Every local authority will need to work with its partners through children's trusts and with the active involvement of children and young people, to find out what works best for them in its area and act on it. Transport issues are central to the achievement of the aims of 'Every Child Matters' and more details about the County Council's approach can be found in Appendix 9.

1.2.5 Regional influences

Our LTP also has to respond to regional influences, particularly important in an area containing and surrounded by growth proposals. The emerging South East Plan, the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy, the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Transport Strategy all need to be considered and addressed by the LTP to ensure a consistency in the delivery of shared objectives, plan and programmes.

1.2.6 Best Value Review

A Best Value Review of Transportation was carried out between July 2004 and May 2005 to evaluate the improvements made since the first review in 2000/01 and identify further

improvements for the service between 2006 and 2011. The review was carried out at the same time as the development of the Second LTP and the County Council's Medium Term Plan that focuses on the authority's priorities for revenue expenditure for three years (currently 2005/06 – 2007/08).

Effectively the Best Value Review and its Improvement Plan concentrates on improving 'how' we deliver our services, and the organisation of individual teams and groups to meet our priorities, rather than 'what' we will deliver, which is the role of the Second LTP.

1.3 A plan for Buckinghamshire

The challenge that we face is making our Second LTP relevant at a national, regional and local level. Above all, it is a plan for Buckinghamshire and therefore has to respond to and address residents' concerns. To achieve this, it has been developed in partnership with our District Councils, neighbouring authorities, transport operators, and other organisations; and most importantly, with the active participation of those who make journeys on the transport network every day, the public.



2 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE TODAY

Buckinghamshire has a population of approximately 479,000 people living in 188,000 households (Census 2001). Twenty-two percent of our residents are aged 16 and under, whilst 19% are 60 and over. It is projected that the 50+ years age group will grow as a proportion of the total number of people living in Buckinghamshire to 38% by 2011 and 41% by 2016.

People who come from a 'white' ethnic group currently dominate the population, accounting for between 88% and 96% of people depending on the district and 92% for the whole of Buckinghamshire. Wycombe has the highest proportion of non-white population (12.1%), followed by Aylesbury Vale (5.9%), South Bucks (6.6%) and Chiltern (4.5%). The Asian group dominates the non-white population across all districts accounting for 4.6% of the population across Buckinghamshire. Mixed and Black ethnic groups make up 1.3% whilst Chinese is the smallest proportion with 0.7%.

With respect to health and disability, 13% of people in the County are reported to have limiting long-term illnesses compared to 18% in England and 15% in the South East.

Overall, Buckinghamshire is relatively affluent, with average household income 34% higher than the UK average, and we have high levels of both car ownership and use. Generally, Buckinghamshire has a thriving economy, with a low level of registered unemployment, 1.3% compared to 1.5% in the South East and 2.3% for England. Whilst the workforce is highly qualified (1 in 4 educated to degree level), many of whom are managers / senior officials and in professional occupations (51% compared with 41% in England), there are growing concerns about shortages of suitable staff, skill gaps and retention problems, with 38% of local employers reporting recruitment difficulties. With easy access to the capital, both by road and rail, 13% of residents who work commute to London.

Our county is one of contrasts – the north is predominantly rural, with small market towns, whilst the south is more urbanised. Over a quarter of Buckinghamshire is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) and a further third is protected as Metropolitan Green Belt, mostly in the south of the county. Within rural areas agriculture is the predominant

land use, over 70% by area. The rural nature of Buckinghamshire presents a number of challenges including constraints on land development and access to key services and facilities for rural communities, particularly for young and older people.

Our two largest centres of population are urban areas encompassing the towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe, with total populations of 69,000 and 118,000 respectively. These urban areas accommodate nearly 40% of the total population. Whilst much of Buckinghamshire is affluent and over three quarters of Buckinghamshire's population live in areas within the 30% least disadvantaged in the country, small areas of disadvantage exist and 1% of people live in areas that are within the 30% most disadvantaged in the country. All agencies face a challenge in seeking to meet the diverse needs of urban and rural communities and different user groups, particularly those experiencing significant relative deprivation.

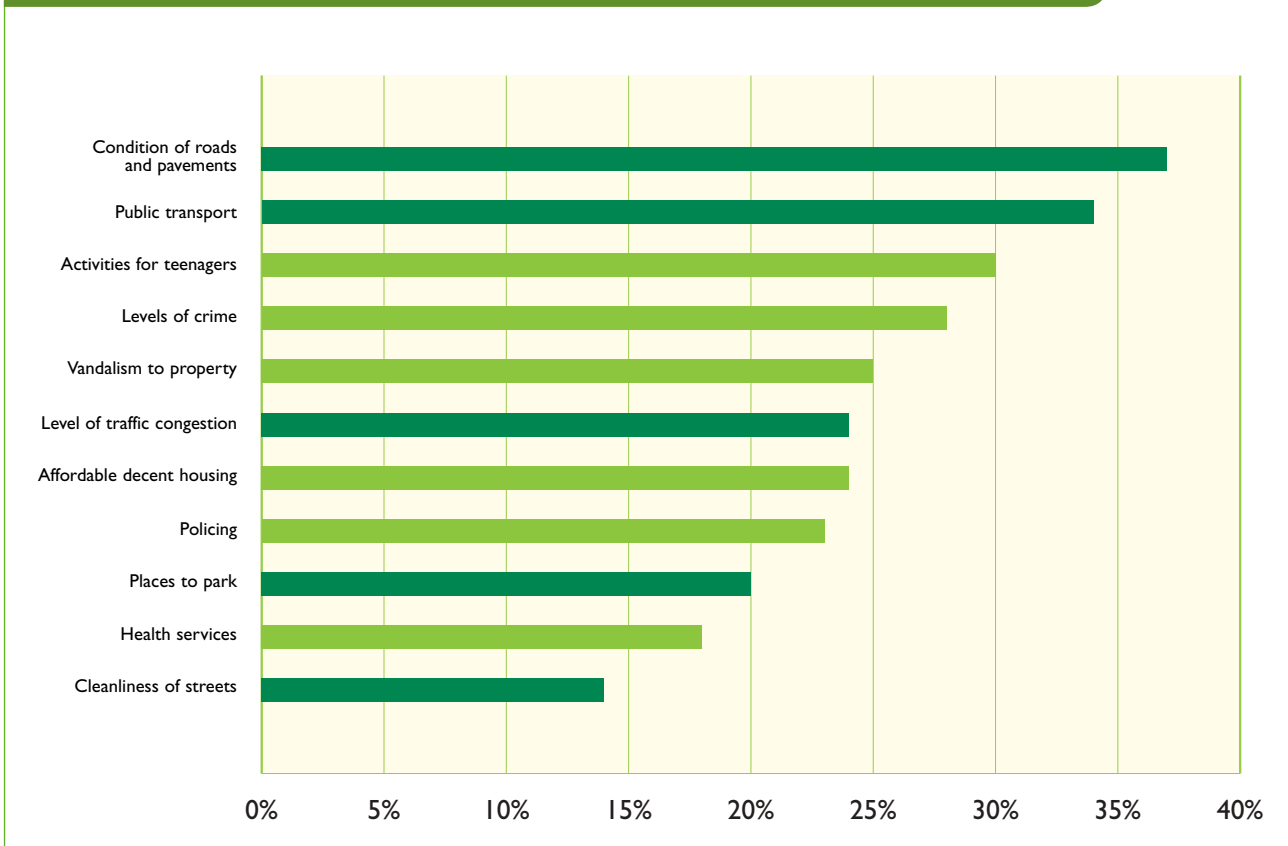
Our rich historic heritage and landscape sets Buckinghamshire apart from the counties that surround it. There are 141 scheduled ancient monuments, 34 registered historic parks and gardens and 6,000 listed buildings.

Many of these are accessible to the public and may be enjoyed by the community, such as the 17 National Trust properties within the county. Over 16,000 archaeological sites or features are recorded on our Sites and Monuments Record.

The Government's Sustainable Communities Plan identified Milton Keynes and South Midlands as one of four growth areas in the wider South East. As part of this growth area, the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy envisages an additional 15,000 new homes in the Aylesbury urban area by 2021. Delivering this scale of growth, whilst sustaining the environment and the quality of life in Buckinghamshire, will be one of the biggest challenges we face over the next 15 years.

We commission regular customer satisfaction surveys into the full range of publicly provided services in the county with a tri-annual MORI poll. Transport features strongly as one of the priorities for improvement (see Figure VI).

Figure VI: Top Quality of Life Concerns for Buckinghamshire Residents (MORI, 2002)



We recognise, however, that transport is a derived, rather than a primary social need since our customers need transport to help them access services and facilities. This may enable them to get to work, school, hospital or shopping and leisure centres. This means that for our LTP to be effective in delivering these needs, it must integrate with broader community aspirations and priorities.

3 THE FUTURE FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

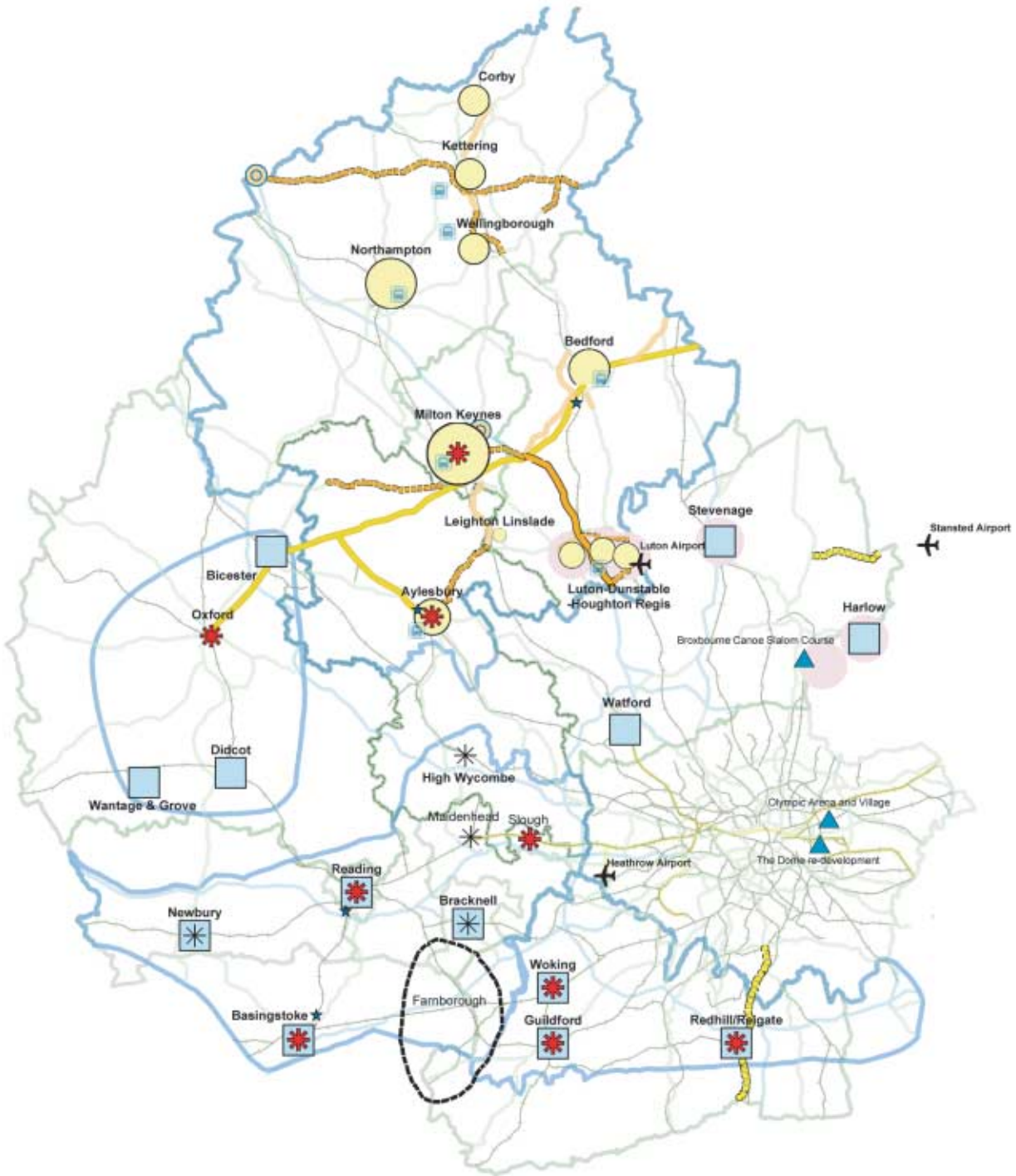
The nature of Buckinghamshire and its future size, shape and demography depends upon a number of factors. These include proposed and potential land use, economic growth and development, and the priorities of residents, communities, and public service providers. We have sought to identify and consider the main influences and their likely impacts, to not only determine the future for Buckinghamshire but to also help shape our vision for transport.

3.1 Spatial Strategy

The development of the Sustainable Communities Plan and changes in planning legislation provide a challenging context for land use and transport planning.

As well as the homes and associated jobs planned within Buckinghamshire, the county is at the heart of many other plans for growth across the South East region (see Figure V2). Across the wider sub-region, over a quarter of a million houses and a similar number of jobs are planned for the next 20 years; to the north (Northampton, Kettering, Wellingborough and Corby), the east (Milton Keynes, Bedford, Luton and Leighton / Linslade) and the south and west (Western Corridor & Blackwater Valley and Oxfordshire).

Figure V2 - Planned & proposed growth in & around Buckinghamshire



Map Key

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sub-regional boundary Blackwater Valley Buckinghamshire County Counties Unitary Authorities Greater London Authority Motorway Major A-roads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railway Regional Transport Hub (RTS) Sub-regional transport hub (TVMMS) New station (proposed) East-West Rail (proposed) Crossrail Public transport links (proposed) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed public transport improvements (including park and ride) Main growth towns outside MKSM (proposed) Significant permanent Olympic area (proposed) Airport Expansion (proposed) | <p>Milton Keynes & South Midlands (MKSM) sub-region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main growth towns in the sub-region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10,000 (No. of homes planned) 1,000 (No. of homes planned) Priority area for regeneration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed public transport improvements (including park and ride) Motorway Junction Improvements Motorway widening Road Improvements (under consideration) Road improvements (committed) |
|--|---|--|---|--|

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In Buckinghamshire, the spatial vision for the nature and location of this growth to 2011 is set out in the County Council's Structure Plan. Beyond 2011, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) replaces the Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9). Structure Plans will also cease to exist, and Local Development Documents (LDDs) will replace District Local Plans. In this area, the RSS will be known as the South East Plan and covers the period to 2026. Whilst it has a wider scope than RPG9, the South East Plan does not include the regional economic or housing strategies.

The emerging South East Plan includes the following objectives:

- To plan positively for a reasonable level of housing development
- To plan positively for a reasonable level of economic growth, with consequent labour supply, physical and social infrastructure implications
- To protect and improve the best of the region's natural environment both for its own sake and to underpin the social and economic development of the region
- To improve transport and other access, especially for disadvantaged groups
- To provide infrastructure in a timely fashion that keeps pace with development and greater reassurance on that issue through a dialogue with Government on how to plan for that development
- To develop clear investment priorities and improve key transport links

Within the South East Plan the nature, shape and scale of growth beyond 2011 are defined by sub-regional strategies. Those most affecting Buckinghamshire are:

- Milton Keynes and South Midlands
- Western Corridor
- Central Oxfordshire

3.1.1 Milton Keynes and South Midlands

The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy will have most impact on Aylesbury, which is set to grow by an extra 10,600 homes by 2016 in the urban area and by a further 3,300 homes in the same period across the rest of the Aylesbury Vale District, excluding those that form part of the expansion of Milton Keynes.

Neither the location for housing in and around Aylesbury, nor the amount of housing to the west of Milton Keynes within Buckinghamshire's borders is yet agreed. It is however, already clear that a central objective for the second and subsequent LTPs, will be to deliver the transport infrastructure necessary to support the growth and the potential increase in trips generated by both housing and employment areas.

We are working closely with Aylesbury Vale Advantage (AVA), the Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) for Aylesbury Vale, established to progress the delivery of the growth agenda. Its membership includes County and District Councillors, Aylesbury Vale Primary Care Trust, South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), English Partnerships, the voluntary and business sectors and environmental organisations. We are pleased that, with the support of AVA, we have received full approval via the Community Infrastructure Fund for the Aylesbury Public Transport Hub, Southcourt pedestrian / cyclist bridge, and Aylesbury Parkway station projects. Once complete, these will enable us to improve access for public transport, walking and cycling and provide the infrastructure for the required 'step change' in travel patterns in the town.

With our support, AVA has commissioned the development of a master plan for Aylesbury that will help determine the most appropriate and sustainable sites for growth. This will ensure that the town, and the facilities and services it provides, are capable of meeting the needs of an expanding population, to secure the economic vitality of the area and minimise the need for commuting.

Whilst the sustainability of Aylesbury as a growth area depends upon the quality of its internal transport system, the ability to attract inward investment relies upon the development of Aylesbury's inter-urban links, both with other towns in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Region and with towns outside the sub-region. We are already taking forward proposals for rail and express bus links to Milton Keynes and beyond, and for the improvement of the A418/A4146 road corridor linking Aylesbury to the rest of the sub-region. Other inter-urban links are also being considered, some of them in the context of other sub-regions.

3.1.2 Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley

South Bucks District and the southern part of Wycombe District, including High Wycombe and Marlow but not Princes Risborough, fall within the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley Sub-Region. Whilst it is not defined as a growth area in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan in the same way as the Milton Keynes and South Midlands area, its continued prosperity is seen as crucial to the continued buoyancy of the South East Region, and transport initiatives will be a key element in maintaining its economic vitality.

Levels of housing growth for the sub-region have yet to be definitively set, although the draft South East Plan prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) envisages levels similar to those in current Regional Planning Guidance. Whilst new housing is not expected to be provided in the urban areas alone, growth proposals are anticipated to have a strong urban emphasis. High Wycombe is one of the towns that may be identified to support the growth, although severe physical and environmental constraints may mean that other major settlements in the sub-region (such as Reading and Basingstoke) will be expected to absorb much of the growth.

SEERA, with the support of both County and District Councils, have proposed that High Wycombe is designated a Regional Hub, and this has recently been endorsed by the Regional Planning Committee, along with a change to the Key Diagram illustrating transport 'hubs and spokes' (see 4.1 below). Further ratification is required, but the proposal is likely to feature in the final Plan.

The sub-region is largely coincident with the Thames Valley Multi-Modal Study (TVMMS) area, and local authorities across the area will be actively seeking the implementation of the TVMMS strategy, including improvements to junctions on the A404 and the implementation of an inter urban express bus and coach network supported by high-quality interchange facilities. These and other improvements to the transport network (including rail services) are critical in Buckinghamshire, where existing north-south links are inadequate. With no operational railway link crossing an area from Greenford in West London across Buckinghamshire to Bicester in

Oxfordshire, and reliance on the A404 as the only north-south trunk road link in the area between the M25 and the A34, it is difficult to provide adequate transport facilities to link the majority of the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region to High Wycombe and on to the Milton Keynes and South Midlands growth area.

3.1.3 Central Oxfordshire

The consultation draft South East Plan does not contain proposals for a conclusive way forward in the Central Oxfordshire Sub-Region. There are options for the expansion of Oxford into land currently designated as Green Belt, or for the expansion of other towns, such as Didcot and Bicester. However, the more recent version of Part One of the Plan handed over to ODPM in July 1995 comes out firmly against strategic releases of Green Belt land, so the first option does not look likely to feature in the final sub-regional strategy.

In these circumstances, it is difficult to be precise about implications for Buckinghamshire, although growth at either Oxford or Bicester would increase the significance of the East-West Rail project, since it could absorb some of the additional pressures. Remaining pressures, combined with the growth of Milton Keynes would have a major impact upon the section of the A421 between Milton Keynes and Tingewick. Improvements to this route are detailed in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy, and this need would be further strengthened with growth at Oxford or Bicester.


Improvement of the A418 between Leighton / Linslade and Aylesbury is already planned, to provide for movement between the growth nodes at Milton Keynes and Aylesbury, but the corridor also serves movement from the growth areas of Luton / Dunstable / Houghton Regis and Leighton / Linslade, to Aylesbury, Oxford and Bicester. Levels of growth in the Central Oxfordshire Sub-Region therefore directly affect transport links in Buckinghamshire and increase the need for improvements to a range of routes including the A41 between Aylesbury and Bicester, the A418 and A41 / A34 routes between Aylesbury and Oxford, and the public transport services (existing or proposed) that join the centres.


3.2 Economic Strategy

The South East has the fastest growing economic sector in the country and is seen as a gateway of international, national and regional significance and the Regional Economic Strategy (2002-12) sets out the overall framework for a sustainable approach to economic development. It identifies five objectives, recognising that transport and infrastructure issues are central to economic success:

- Encouraging competitive business
- Developing successful people
- Developing vibrant communities
- Effective infrastructure
- Sustainable use of natural resources

The strategy identifies the Buckinghamshire Economic Partnership (BEP) as the delivery mechanism within Buckinghamshire. Major economic pressures include skills shortages and high land prices. Priorities include rural regeneration and investment in the county's higher education institutions and facilities.


 Surveys of local businesses identify traffic congestion at key sites, such as the M40 junction at Handy Cross and in both Aylesbury and High Wycombe, as a constraint on business activity. With the plans for growth there is also a clear need to attract inward business investment. The 'Economic Development Action Plan' (2003/4) developed by BEP, incorporates strategies to ensure that business is welcomed into areas that can best accommodate growth. It recognises that Buckinghamshire is on the brink of an exciting era, but that continued economic growth and success depends upon increased investment in transport infrastructure and services.


 To support BEP and attract the necessary inward investment, we launched the 'Buckinghamshire Five Star County – the Place of Choice' initiative in 2004, working with BEP and AVA. Based on the five themes of Business, Europe, Funding, Knowledge and Environment, it seeks to ensure that our economy is able to respond to the changes, challenges and opportunities it will face over the coming years.

Southern Buckinghamshire sits within the South East's economic 'power house', the Thames Valley, whilst the northern half of the county, currently less economically developed, is at the centre of a high tech, high skills based 'knowledge triangle',

bounded by Oxford University in the west, Cambridge in the east and Imperial College London in the south. Using this geographical advantage, we will link economic development in the north to the 'Oxford – Cambridge Arc' initiative, to develop new business and attract high tech and high value companies.


Our target is to support the creation of 13,000 jobs by 2021, by attracting new companies and encouraging 'start ups'. Central to the success of this strategy is the creation of new and improved transport links both to and from Aylesbury and on the Oxford – Cambridge arc across the north of the county.

 Our vision for Aylesbury is to develop a town with a vibrant and dynamic economy that balances growth in housing with growth in jobs, to minimise the need for commuting, and controls and manages traffic growth and congestion. To achieve this it is vital that we effectively integrate land use, economic and transport planning.

 To sustain the quality of life and ensure the competitiveness of the local economy in southern Buckinghamshire we need to address the negative impacts of economic success, particularly traffic congestion and environmental damage. In the urban area of High Wycombe, the demand for growth and the necessity for regeneration will require a delicate balance between potentially conflicting priorities.

An essential part of our economic strategy over the next five years will therefore be to ensure that transport links are provided, improved and developed to sustain and deliver our economic vision and secure the efficient and free movement of people, goods and services across (and beyond) Buckinghamshire.

3.3 Community Vision

 To shape our services and priorities to meet local needs, we work in partnership across the authority and with others (e.g. District Councils, health and police authorities, and the business community), as part of the countywide Local Strategic Partnership known as the Buckinghamshire Strategic Partnership (BSP). This has enabled us to articulate a vision for the future of Buckinghamshire in a Community Strategy.

3.3.1 Community Strategy



The first Community Strategy for 2002-2005 (known as the Community Plan) identified seven key themes and associated actions and targets that the partners agreed would improve the quality of life for everyone in Buckinghamshire. These were developed through consultation with and surveys of a wide range of stakeholders. A number of the targets were achieved as part of the first Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) negotiated between the County Council, District Councils and the Government. An LPSA offers reward funding in return for meeting ambitious 'stretched' targets for public services.



The countywide Community Strategy is complemented by local community plans, developed in the District Council areas by Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). Whilst these may reinforce the Community Strategy themes and targets, most identify issues of greatest concern at a more local level, but together they set out a package of measures designed to improve the quality of life for Buckinghamshire residents.

The BSP has developed a new Community Strategy that includes a vision for the county through to 2015.

In 2015 Buckinghamshire has maintained its economic success and its position as one of the most prosperous counties in England. At the same time it has enhanced its environment and improved the well-being and quality of life of all its residents.

The Community Strategy sets:

- A medium / long term vision
Including outcomes for issues important to residents and significant in shaping the future of Buckinghamshire
- A common agenda for action
To inform the strategic plans, policies and decision making of partners and provide a framework for partnership working
- A three year action plan
Linked to specific targets, including new LPSA targets, to support the outcomes

It is structured around a series of themes that describe how we will promote the development of sustainable communities in Buckinghamshire. The themes and the aim for each one are set out below.

Improving the quality of life for children and younger people

We want all our children and young people to have the best start in life, to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives and to be able to make a positive contribution to their communities and to society. We will ensure access to a range of universal services as well as developing more targeted ones to meet their specialist needs.

Improving the quality of life for older people

We aim to enhance the quality of life of people in Buckinghamshire enabling safe, independent lives for as long as possible, recognising the contribution that older people play in society, their needs and aspirations.

Safe communities

We aim to work in partnership to reduce crime and the fear of crime, and to create stronger, safer, cohesive and sustainable communities that improve the well-being and quality of life of Buckinghamshire residents.

Cohesive communities

We aim to support the development of strong, cohesive communities throughout Buckinghamshire and to empower them to deliver local solutions to local issues. By targeting resources and support towards local areas of particular need, we will work with those communities to tackle inequalities and improve their quality of life.

Healthy communities

We aim to promote the physical and mental health and well-being of people in Buckinghamshire and to tackle health inequalities through partnership working.

Prosperous communities

We aim to promote a competitive and diverse business community with a particular emphasis on high technology, knowledge-based sectors. A key goal is to improve the skills and qualifications of the workforce, particularly for those who lack further education.

Accessible communities and transport

We aim to provide access to all, supporting sustainable growth and economic development, enhancing and protecting the environment and ensuring people and goods can move safely and efficiently.

Superb environment

We aim to secure a safe, prosperous and high quality environment in both rural and urban areas of Buckinghamshire. This means providing places for people to live that are well designed and built and considerate of their environment. It also means enabling a lifestyle that minimises negative environmental impact and encourages an efficient use of natural resources.

Consideration of each theme includes a ten-year vision and targets to measure our success. The themes are reflected in a range of local plans and strategies, prioritised and developed according to local needs. Two agreements set out some specific projects that partners are working on together to deliver the themes, and provide the mechanism for delivering the Community Strategy priorities.

3.3.2 Second Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2)

A second LPSA has been agreed with Government for Buckinghamshire for 2005-2008. This sets out twelve target areas in which the BSP will seek to deliver significant improvements for residents in Buckinghamshire. These targets reflect priorities identified in the Community Strategy. If the partners are successful in achieving the targets, the Government will pay a reward grant of £12 million.

3.3.3 Local Area Agreement

The LPSA is supplemented by a further set of targets in a Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Buckinghamshire. This is a contract between the partners in Buckinghamshire and central Government for the period 2006-2009. It sets out how partners will work together to deliver improved outcomes for Buckinghamshire residents in the priority areas identified in the Community Strategy. Unlike the LPSA, the LAA targets will not attract additional resources, although the aim of the LAA is to achieve better results through strengthened partnership working.

3.4 The Corporate Plan

We produce a four-year strategic 'corporate plan' (previously known as the Council Plan), setting out our overall ambitions and objectives for the life of the Council. This was revised after the County Council elections in May 2005. It builds on the vision set out in the Community Strategy and focuses on those aspects of delivery that are the direct responsibility of the County Council.

The corporate plan has seven objectives:

- To involve, represent and serve all who live and work in Buckinghamshire
- To provide efficient and effective services
- To give children and young people the best possible life chances
- To improve quality of life for adults and older people
- To provide support to help families cope with their responsibilities
- To build safer, stronger and healthier communities
- To maintain a vibrant economy whilst protecting the environment

Our transport policies, strategies, and service delivery support all seven of these objectives, and specific actions and targets are included and described in both the Second LTP and the Corporate Plan.

4 THE FUTURE FOR TRANSPORT

For Buckinghamshire, the overriding factor in our vision for transport is the growth agenda. In the coming years we need to secure the delivery of the infrastructure and services to accommodate and cater for growth both within the county and across the wider sub-regional areas. As well as facilitating housing and business expansion, this must sustain and improve the environment and the quality of life.

Strategic transport planning is a long-term process. The Community Plan sets a framework for local transport policy development for the next ten years. At the regional level, the emerging South East Plan and Regional Transport Strategy provide a context until 2026 whilst, nationally, the Future of Transport, the Sustainable Communities Plan and the associated Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy provide a framework for almost thirty years.



4.1 Regional Transport Strategy

The principal transport influence for our Second LTP is the Regional Transport Strategy (part of the South East Plan) developed by SEERA, in conjunction with the principal transport authorities across the South East. It commits local authorities to support and seek to implement a series of general transport policy objectives (largely reflecting national transport policy), including:

- Innovative approaches to public transport in rural areas
- Policies that support public transport access to Heathrow and Gatwick
- Policies that foster improved and integrated public transport
- Travel plans for major travel generating developments
- Increased freight movements by rail

It also includes a number of regionally significant proposals that directly impact upon the development of our LTP. Perhaps, the most significant is the adoption of a network of defined multi-modal, but primarily public transport oriented ‘hubs’ and ‘spokes’ to identify key corridors of movement, modal interchange and urban activity across the region. Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, Slough and Oxford are all defined as regional hubs, with key spokes connecting them. In Buckinghamshire, the most important spokes are Aylesbury to Milton Keynes, Milton Keynes to Oxford, and Aylesbury to London, and the corridors that reflect the routes of the M40, M25, M1 and M4 that pass through the county (see Figure V3).

Figure V3 - Regional Hubs and Spokes



Map Key

- Regional Spoke
- International Gateway
- Regional Hub
- Transport Interchange
- Channel Tunnel
- Motorway
- Trunk Road
- Railway
- Airport
- Port

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We are pleased that, in response to our comments in the provisional LTP, the most recent version of the Key Diagram for the South East Plan now includes a 'spoke' connecting Aylesbury, High Wycombe and the Thames Valley, and we trust that this will be retained in the future as the Plan develops. We believe that the existence of the regional 'hubs and spokes' strategy has helped strengthen and reinforce the need for funding of long standing major scheme proposals including: the East-West Rail Project; the A418 improvements, connecting Aylesbury to Milton Keynes via Wing and Bierton; and the improvement of north-south links between Aylesbury and High Wycombe.

The Regional Transport Strategy also proposes a network of express bus and coach services, linked to rail services, to deliver modal shift from car based journeys and ease the burden of traffic growth on the region's already overcrowded strategic road system. This network includes a significant proposal to provide a coachway / Park & Ride facility in the Cressex / Handy Cross area of High Wycombe to support high quality express links and interchange with other modes of public transport.

We are the lead authority on the development of this project and during the Second LTP period we will work to facilitate and / or enable the delivery of this and other regionally significant projects and infrastructure.

4.2 Cross-boundary transport strategies

At a sub-regional level we are involved in developing cross-boundary transport strategies with neighbouring transport authorities, including:

- Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead, Hillingdon, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham
Southern cross-boundary transport strategy
- Oxfordshire
Western cross-boundary transport strategy
- Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire
Milton Keynes and South Midlands cross-boundary transport strategy
- Bedfordshire
N.E. Buckinghamshire and S.W. Bedfordshire cross-boundary transport strategy
- Hertfordshire
Eastern cross-boundary transport strategy
- BAA Heathrow
BAA Heathrow cross-boundary transport strategy

We have incorporated priorities and actions arising from these strategies throughout our Second LTP, and particularly within our Area Action Plans, whilst copies of the strategies can be found in Appendix 6. We are also developing a cross-boundary transport strategy with Transport for London and anticipate that it will be completed during 2006.

Collectively, these cross-boundary transport strategies ensure that transport issues are effectively addressed across local authority boundaries and that our transport planning and delivery fits into a wider sub-regional, inter-regional, and regional context. In addition the supporting statements from all four of our District Councils included in Appendix 5 illustrate that we have worked hard to integrate land-use and transport planning across the County.

5 OUR 20 YEAR VISION FOR TRANSPORT

To develop and shape our long-term vision for transport we have considered the national, regional and local influences that impact upon our work, and encompassed the key issues and drivers that face Buckinghamshire in the coming years. Our overall aim will be:

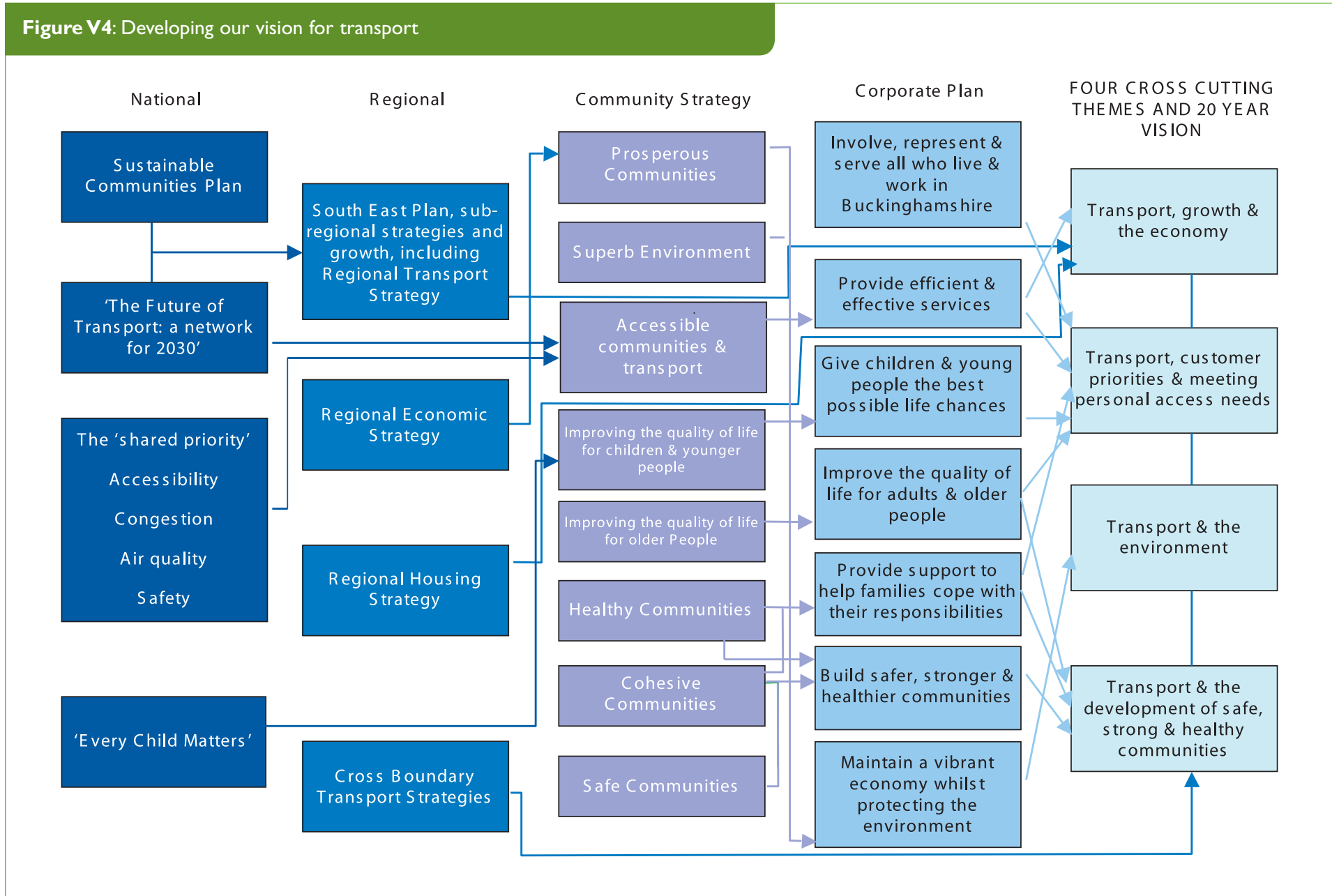
To secure the strategic and local transport infrastructure and services to sustainably develop the local economy; to facilitate population growth; and improve accessibility and social inclusion; whilst balancing free, safe and efficient movement of people and goods with protection of the environment

Supporting this overall aim, and taking account of the aims, objectives and aspirations of the Community Strategy, Corporate Plan and the regional and sub-regional strategies and plans set out above, we have identified four cross-cutting themes for public service, economic, environmental and social development, as follows:

- **Transport, growth and the economy**
- **Transport, customer priorities and meeting personal access needs**
- **Transport and the environment**
- **Transport and the development of safe, strong and healthy communities**

Figure V4 illustrates how these four themes have been determined and how they relate to the national, regional, sub-regional and local policy drivers and community vision outlined above.

Figure V4: Developing our vision for transport



5.1 Cross-cutting themes

Beneath these four cross-cutting themes we have identified a total of 14 associated key policy objectives that are considered in more detail below, with appropriate supporting commentary to explain their significance to Buckinghamshire.

5.1.1 Transport, growth and the economy

Policy objectives

Ia Deliver the strategic transport infrastructure to support sustainable growth, balance housing and employment growth, and minimise growth in commuting

Ib Ease or prevent congestion to enable the efficient movement of people and goods and support sustainable economic development

Ic Reduce the need to travel and improve access to employment

To sustain economic prosperity and contain travel demand it is essential that growth in population is balanced by job creation. Therefore, one of our primary strategic aims is to grow the local economy to match the housing growth. This will require the improvement of key sustainable

transport links, particularly north – south between Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, High Wycombe and the Thames Valley, and enhancing the ‘connectivity’ of Aylesbury by both road and rail.

Failure to achieve this could lead to a lack of inward investment in the area, and a reduction in good quality local employment. As well as undermining the prospects of continuing economic prosperity, this could reduce the quality of life and standard of living for many Buckinghamshire residents and, potentially result in increased levels of ‘out commuting’ by people seeking employment. Clearly this would impact upon traffic levels, congestion, and air quality.

Failure to match population growth with investment in other public infrastructure (i.e. schools, healthcare, shopping, leisure facilities), supported by high quality transport links, would also reduce access to basic services and increase the risk of community severance and social exclusion. This would clearly undermine the aim of the Sustainable Communities Plan, to create high quality economically, environmentally and socially sustainable communities for the 21st century.



5.1.2 Transport, customer priorities and meeting personal access needs

Policy objectives



- 2a Address local priorities for transport improvements, including condition of roads and pavements, public transport, congestion and road safety
- 2b Address the travel needs of children and young people, including access to employment, education and leisure
- 2c Address the travel needs of older people, with a focus on improving public transport access to healthcare, food shopping and other essential needs

In recent years, we have made major strides improving how we identify and respond to priorities and concerns of local residents. Our ‘customer led’ approach, adopted in 2002 after the Best Value Review of Roads and Transport, ensures that customer needs are at the heart of our transport decision-making at both a strategic and operational level.

At a strategic level, we are putting customer needs and priorities first by developing a ‘market led’ approach to policy development. The overall approach, which seeks to move the service from a primarily ‘technically led’ approach, working within ‘customer constraints’, to one that sets

customer / resident and stakeholder aspirations as a primary goal and treats technical, legal and financial requirements as constraints on the achievement of those goals (rather than as objectives in themselves) is illustrated in Figure V5.

We have identified a set of public and customer priorities using market research, customer and stakeholder consultation and feedback from individual customers. Specific research methods and consultation mechanisms adopted include:

Market Research

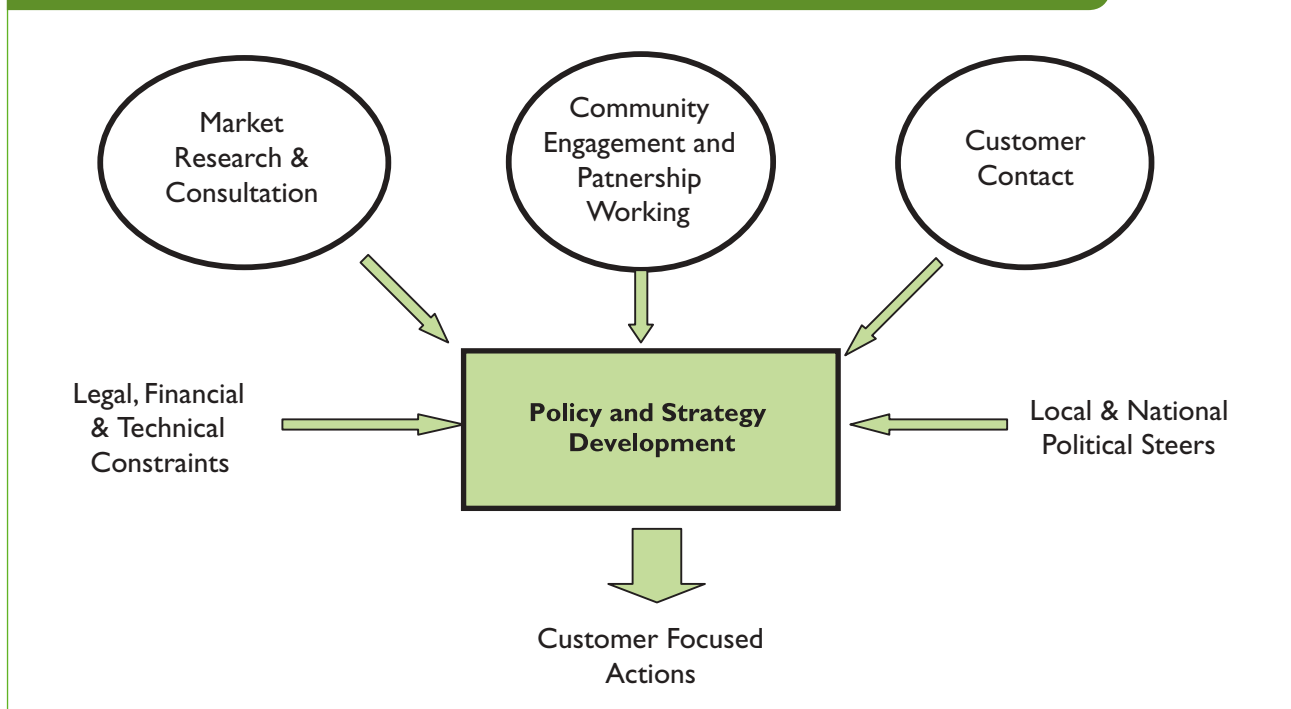
- Tri-annual countywide MORI poll of residents
- Tri-annual BVPI surveys
- Annual customer satisfaction survey for transport
- Annual stakeholder / Member satisfaction surveys
- Project and / or mode specific research (i.e. quality bus route development)

Consultation / Stakeholder Engagement



- Annual transport symposia for stakeholders in the District Council areas (including County, District and Parish councillors, transport operators, voluntary organisations, business community representatives, local interest groups)

Figure V5: Our ‘customer led’ approach



- Joint County / District Council Cabinet Member meetings
- Regular liaison with District planning and environmental services
- Close operational working with other partners (via Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Committees, local area working and joint authority working groups)

Individual Customer Contact

- Analysis of customer enquiries and customer satisfaction call back surveys through our 'Highways on Call' customer contact centre
- Distribution of 'Transport Matters' to all households to highlight the progress we have made and to enable people to identify their main transport concerns
- LTP specific consultation events, sharing Area Action Plans with local communities

As part of our Best Value Review of Transportation, we produced a comprehensive 'Voice of the Customer' document summarising public satisfaction with all aspects of our service delivery. The information it contains was used to inform the development of our LTP and a copy of it is available on request. We plan to update this report on a regular basis.

Emerging from this work is a set of customer priorities for the improvement of transport services that are generally consistent across Buckinghamshire, and they are:

- **Improving the condition of roads and pavements**
- **Improving public transport**
- **Tackling congestion**
- **Improving road safety**

Indeed, improving the condition of roads and pavements and improving public transport rate as the top two public priorities for 'Quality of Life' improvements in the MORI poll of all the County Council's services. We also conduct more detailed surveys to identify specific issues in these areas that would bring about major improvements in public satisfaction and to support the prioritisation of schemes and resources. This data has been collated in the 'Voice of the Customer' report.

Local and countywide consultation with residents has also helped to inform the development of the Community Strategy and District Community

Plans. These have clearly identified that the needs of young and older people are important to the public. Consequently, we are working with BSP Task Groups, Local Strategic Partnerships and other partnerships to identify actions that will improve access to key facilities and services for both young and older people. One of our strategic priorities for accessibility planning is to improve access to major centres to help meet the needs of both groups.

To address issues for young people, we have recently completed a survey, supported and assisted by the Youth Parliament. The survey sought to identify obstacles for public transport use and determine if concessionary fares would improve patronage amongst this group. This data is being used to inform the actions of our Bus and Accessibility strategies.

5.1.3 Transport and the environment


Policy objectives

- 3a *Maintain and protect the rural environment whilst improving access and amenity, supporting tourism and the rural economy*
- 3b *Enhance urban areas by addressing the impacts of traffic and transport on the 'street scene' and the local environment*
- 3c *Improve local air quality, especially in Air Quality Management Areas*


The environment in Buckinghamshire is perhaps our greatest asset and identified as a key reason why residents enjoy living in the county. One of the biggest challenges facing us, now and in the future, is protecting and enhancing that environment, in the face of major change. Growth, advances in technology, and economic prosperity all have the potential to undermine and compromise the unique rural nature of Buckinghamshire.

We are working to ensure that our strategies, policies and schemes not only maintain but also improve the quality of life for all our communities. Whilst in areas of global and national concern, such as climate change, our ability to make a positive impact is minimal, our activities can make a significant difference to local air quality, noise, landscapes and streetscapes, and enable people to feel safer in their local area.

Our Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is






 at the heart of this approach since it reviews all LTP policies, strategies and proposals to ensure that we have considered the environmental impacts of all our activities. Not only has this enabled us to adapt specific projects to protect or enhance the environment, but has also helped us to examine the wider consequences of our strategies and develop approaches that improve the quality of life for our residents.

Whilst the car has given greater independence and improved access to employment, education and leisure facilities for many people, it has also contributed to a decline in local air quality. Improved technology and cleaner fuels are helping reduce the amount of some air pollutants, but projected traffic growth could outstrip these gains in the near future.

 The Government has set improving air quality as one of the shared priority areas because of the environmental and health impacts of transport. Whilst poor local air quality is not a major problem across Buckinghamshire, some sites do suffer from high levels of pollutants at certain times of the day or year, and anecdotally the number of affected areas is likely to increase in the coming years.


5.1.4 Transport and the development of safe, strong and healthy communities


Policy objectives


-  4a Reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on the roads of the County
-  4b Promote 'healthy' travel choices for all (e.g. walking and cycling)
-  4c Improve access to healthcare facilities and services conducive to healthy living
-  4d Reduce crime and the fear of crime by enhancing community safety in the maintenance and management of the transport network
-  4e Work with local communities to develop transport services tailored to the needs of local people, supported by 'localised' delivery and decision making

Safety on the roads is an important national and local priority, and we are committed to meeting the national road safety target set out in 'Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone' to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads of Buckinghamshire by 2010.

In line with 'Every Child Matters' we are working with a range of partners to promote healthy and safer lifestyles for children and young people. To ensure that there is no conflict between safety and sustainability we will ensure that schemes and initiatives to promote walking and cycling incorporate appropriate safety education and training.

 Community safety is a key ingredient for strong communities. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) requires all County Councils (and other public authorities) to ensure that their services consider crime and the fear of crime. Our Community Safety Strategy, 'Safe and Strong Communities', challenges all organisations to build stronger communities by working with them to identify and solve problems. We need to ensure that our transport strategies and schemes enable the travelling public to feel comfortable and safe, because fears for personal security can be a major obstacle that prevents access to services and facilities.

 Fears about safety, whether real or perceived, affect quality of life and transport improvements can significantly reduce these fears. We already work with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and other partners to meet community safety targets in our second Local Public Service Agreement. Working with the Districts and the Police we are employing Police Community Support Officers, whose presence in local communities helps address safety fears. We also plan to use number plate recognition and Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) technology in a co-ordinated way during the Second LTP to enable faster detection and recovery of stolen or 'wanted' vehicles and their drivers.

 The County Council's 'Getting Closer to Communities' strategy (GC2C) is a significant corporate initiative, which recognises that we cannot effectively meet local priorities working at a countywide level. Whilst a clear strategy for Buckinghamshire provides a coherent approach for our services and economies of scale in delivery, the needs of local communities can only effectively be met if elements of service delivery are delegated to a more local level. We have been doing this in transport for many years, with large parts of our services delegated to area offices in High Wycombe, Winslow and Amersham (as well as County Hall in Aylesbury).

In 2001, after adopting the Cabinet model for local government, we established four 'Local Committees' (one in each District). These bring together County, District and Parish Councils and other local interest groups to provide local consultative advice and take formal decisions on local maintenance and integrated transport schemes (totalling £2.3 million in 2003/4). Potential projects are identified by Committee members or by our staff and are prioritised against countywide and local priorities and targets. Increasingly projects are being suggested that have matched funding or joint investment from other sources.

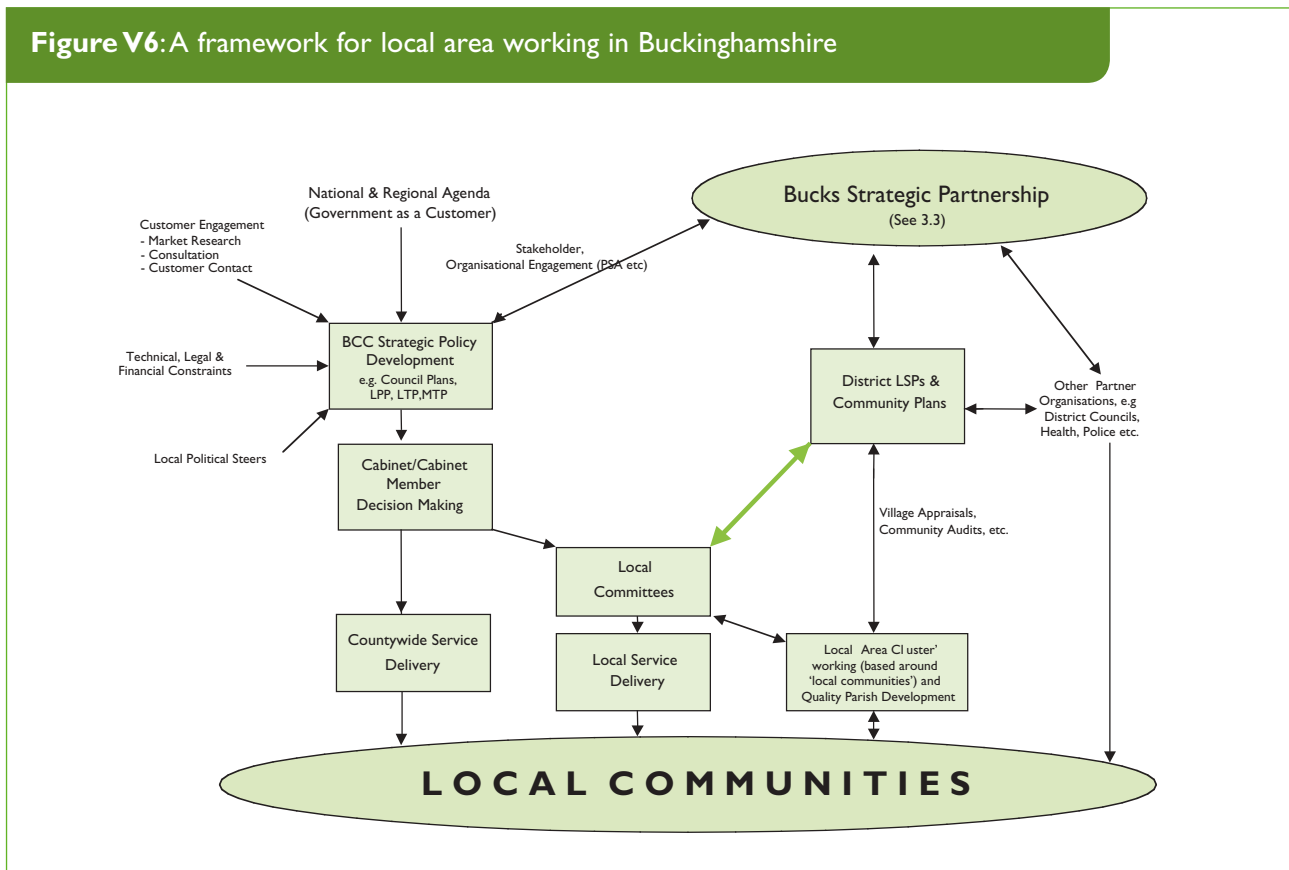
The emergence of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) at District level has also enhanced local decision-making and important links have been developed with Local Committees. Whilst some of the issues that they both identify will be addressed at a countywide level, others will remain a lower strategic priority. To address this, Local Committees have recently been enhanced to cover a broader environmental agenda and to be the County Council's main link with LSPs, enabling them to prioritise and deliver projects of local importance arising from the Community Plan (i.e. from village appraisals or parish plans) unlikely to be met by broader strategic policies.

The next logical step that we have taken, as part of the GC2C initiative, has been the establishment of 24 'Local Communities', based around clusters of parishes or ward boundaries. Not only do these provide a focus for strategic service planning and encourage local involvement in the development of plans, but they also reinforce local service delivery through Area Management teams, supported by Area Managers and co-ordinators.

Our final consultation on the provisional LTP between October and December 2005 involved preparing, presenting and discussing 19 Area Action Plans at specific 'Local Community' events across Buckinghamshire (see Appendix 2 for example Area Action Plans). These events not only gave communities the opportunity to comment on and help shape locally relevant actions for transport during the LTP period but were also used to introduce and explain the GC2C initiative to stakeholders and partners. GC2C supports the devolution of service delivery to larger Parishes through the 'Quality Parish' initiative and wider strategic policies for local service delivery, including public transport provision, central to our objective of improving accessibility, particularly in rural areas.



Figure V6: A framework for local area working in Buckinghamshire



The development of the GC2C initiative and 'Local Communities' also completes the link between national and regional strategic planning, enabling our LTP to effectively respond to issues, priorities and targets on five distinct levels:

- Nationally
- Regionally / sub-regionally
- Countywide
- District / Area based
- Locally, within 'local communities'

Figure V6 shows how countywide strategic objectives and service delivery are linked to local area delivery through the LSP framework and local area working:

5.2 The spatial vision for transport

Ultimately our LTP is about describing strategies and policies that translate into services, schemes, projects and initiatives to meet our wider economic, social and environmental objectives. The following section seeks to put a physical shape to the delivery of our longer-term aspirations, and sets a vision for their development over the next twenty years, until 2026. It is described in five levels:

- Countywide strategic transport links
- Aylesbury
- High Wycombe
- Other urban areas
- Rural areas

Our specific visions for Aylesbury and High Wycombe have also been shaped and influenced by the Parking and Access Strategies developed in conjunction with District Council partners.



5.2.1 Our vision for countywide strategic transport links

Generally Buckinghamshire has very good transport links to London. Indeed, it was the third most popular response when residents were asked what made the county unique for them or their family, in the development of the Community Strategy. The M1, M40 and A41 and the West Coast Mainline and Chiltern lines from Aylesbury and Bicester all provide excellent links, although they can experience major congestion and / or over-crowding at times.

However, north-south links (between Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, High Wycombe and the Thames Valley) and east-west links (between

Oxford and Aylesbury, and between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, Bedford, Cambridge and the east coast) are less well developed. And whilst the major urban areas of Milton Keynes and High Wycombe have good road and rail links north to Birmingham and beyond, the central towns of Amersham and Chesham are poorly served. The existing strategic transport links map (Figure V3) highlights a number of missing links that our vision for transport infrastructure is seeking to address.

Aylesbury to Milton Keynes


The Regional Transport Strategy has identified both Aylesbury and Milton Keynes as regional 'hubs' with a connecting 'spoke' and therefore it is crucial that we seek to strengthen the connection between the two growth areas. There is currently no rail link between Milton Keynes and Aylesbury, but we are working to address this issue and lead the consortium of authorities for the western section of the East West Rail project (from Oxford to Bedford via Bletchley, with a spur to Aylesbury). Supported by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) we are strengthening the business case and helping to establish a delivery vehicle for the project and will continue to do all we can to secure its approval and implementation.

We have also been working hard for many years to improve the A418 / A4146 between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes, and it is clear that this task assumes greater urgency now that the route is recognised as part of the regional 'spoke'. The A418 provides a link not only between Milton Keynes and Aylesbury, but also to other identified growth areas in Bedfordshire (such as Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Luton and Leighton / Linslade).

The first phase of the £50m Stoke Hammond and Linslade Western Bypass, known as the 'Northern Link' (funded principally by developers) was completed in February 2004 and we are now constructing the second and main phase that will enhance the strategic route between Milton Keynes and Wing. We are pleased to report that this is currently on course to be completed ahead of schedule.

We are also progressing work on the section of the A418 between Wing and Aylesbury, including a link to the A41 Aston Clinton Road (effectively a Bierton bypass) and a connection to Aylesbury town centre (via Stocklake). It should be noted

that developing a major scheme is a two-stage process: firstly, scheme development, design and completion of statutory processes; and secondly, obtaining approval for funding and construction from Central Government. Subject to securing ongoing resources we will continue to develop the A418 improvements and start work as soon as approval and monies are received.

 We will also continue to work closely with Aylesbury Vale District Council as their Local Development Document (LDD) progresses. The LDD will determine the locations for further growth in Aylesbury, which will allow decisions to be taken on further infrastructure proposals for the town. An earlier draft of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional strategy did identify a possible southern distributor road to support housing growth in that area of Aylesbury.

If this road were to be confirmed, we believe it should link A41 (Aston Clinton Road) and A418 (to Thame). This combination of schemes provides eastern and southern (partial) bypasses to Aylesbury. With current national transport policies and the prevailing economic climate, future development of any bypass would have to be linked to further significant housing growth.


Our principal bus operator, Arriva, has made a commitment to introduce a high quality, express bus service between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes upon completion of the Stoke Hammond and Linslade Western bypass, which would be enhanced by improvements to the link between Aylesbury and Wing. We are also working with Arriva and other bus operators to secure improved or new services that connect with communities along this regional spoke, both in and outside the county. Our vision is that improvements to this route would help create an important public transport corridor between the two growth areas.

Aylesbury to High Wycombe and the Thames Valley

Whilst road and rail connections between Aylesbury and High Wycombe exist they are currently inadequate if we want to attract business investment and create new jobs to develop sustainable communities. We are pleased that the Regional Transport Strategy now appears to recognise this difficulty, with the proposal for a regional 'spoke' between Aylesbury and High Wycombe and we trust that this is retained.

However, in our view this proposal does not go far enough since the 'spoke' does not currently extend to the Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley sub-region. We hope that this is merely an oversight, which will be rectified.

Our longer-term aspiration is to ensure that the regional network of 'hubs' and 'spokes' retains the 'missing link' between Aylesbury and High Wycombe, and extends it to the Thames Valley. Enhancements to existing rail services between Aylesbury and High Wycombe and express coach links between High Wycombe and the Thames Valley would clearly support sub-regional growth and productivity, and there may also be a case for reviewing the potential of re-establishing rail links south from High Wycombe.

 We recognise that the topography of High Wycombe and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty may prevent the development of direct transport links between Aylesbury and the A404 south of Handy Cross and therefore believe we may need to consider alternative routes or alignments for longer-term improvements. We recognise that any route in this area presents major environmental and other difficulties and are therefore working closely with District Councils, neighbouring authorities (in particular Oxfordshire County Council) and other organisations to consider the wider implications of proposals.

This forms part of a wider review of strategic routes across Buckinghamshire, including the A418 and A41 / A34 between Oxford and Aylesbury and the A421 connecting Oxford with Milton Keynes via Bicester and Buckingham. Improvements to the latter and development of the East West Rail project between Bedford, Bletchley, Bicester and Oxford (with a spur to Aylesbury) are likely to be critical to the delivery of growth in all four areas.

To fully consider the contribution that all transport modes can make in the development and provision of north-south links, and to determine how such links could be accommodated we would like to undertake a wide ranging feasibility study of transport across Buckinghamshire and particularly between Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Oxford and the Thames Valley. We recognise that such an exercise, whilst vital, could be costly, and will therefore lobby for national or regional funding to support the study.



We are also working with the Highways Agency to secure a more strategic role for the A404, improving links south to the Thames Valley and north from Windsor, Maidenhead and Slough. The inter-urban express coach links proposed in the Regional Transport Strategy depend upon junction improvements at both the Westhorpe interchange in Marlow and the Bisham roundabout, for which the Highways Agency are responsible. These improvements would not only enhance the A404 corridor for all traffic, but would also enable us to reclassify the less suitable A355 through Farnham Common and Farnham Royal.

Other countywide strategic transport links

The Crossrail project proposes to link Essex and Kent in the east with the Thames Valley in the west through London, with Maidenhead as the proposed western terminus and serving Iver and Taplow stations within Buckinghamshire. The timescale for construction of Crossrail is between 2007 and 2013. During the Second LTP period we will explore ways to maintain and improve public transport, walking and cycling access to the stations and across the area to maximise the opportunities arising from the scheme.

In the light of the announcement of London as the host city for the 2012 Olympic games, and the possibility that some events will be held in Buckinghamshire, we will be working closely with the Olympic Transport Authority, the Olympic Organising Committee, Transport for London (TfL) and other organisations during the Second LTP period to secure long-term transport improvements. These will be designed not only to support the transport needs of those attending Olympic events, but also to improve accessibility and enhance transport services for Buckinghamshire residents. Initial discussions with TfL suggest that the proposed regional coachway could act as a strategic Park & Ride site for the Olympics, which clearly strengthens the case for its early implementation.



5.2.2 Our vision for Aylesbury

Our vision for Aylesbury, shared by Aylesbury Vale Advantage (AVA), is to develop a town with a vibrant and dynamic economy that balances growth in housing and jobs, minimises increases in commuting and controls traffic growth and congestion. Whilst the identification of sites for



growth and the 'master planning' of a town centre capable of sustaining a town of possibly 130,000 people has yet to be completed, it is clear that it requires the development of a radical transport strategy for the town. This will not only have to make the best use of existing infrastructure, but with the proposed growth, will also require major investment in new local transport infrastructure.

Whilst traffic congestion in Aylesbury is not currently as severe as in High Wycombe (see Part Two, Section B), the town centre and the Wendover Road gyratory system have been identified in our surveys and research as congestion 'hot spots'. Traffic levels will almost definitely increase with the scale of growth proposed, which could create serious congestion problems in the future unless mitigated by an effective strategy. The ongoing development and use of a new transport model for Aylesbury will help us assess the impact of growth and test different options for schemes, interventions and projects.

Our strategy for transport in Aylesbury is to support the sustainable growth of the town, and facilitate and improve access to jobs and services by:

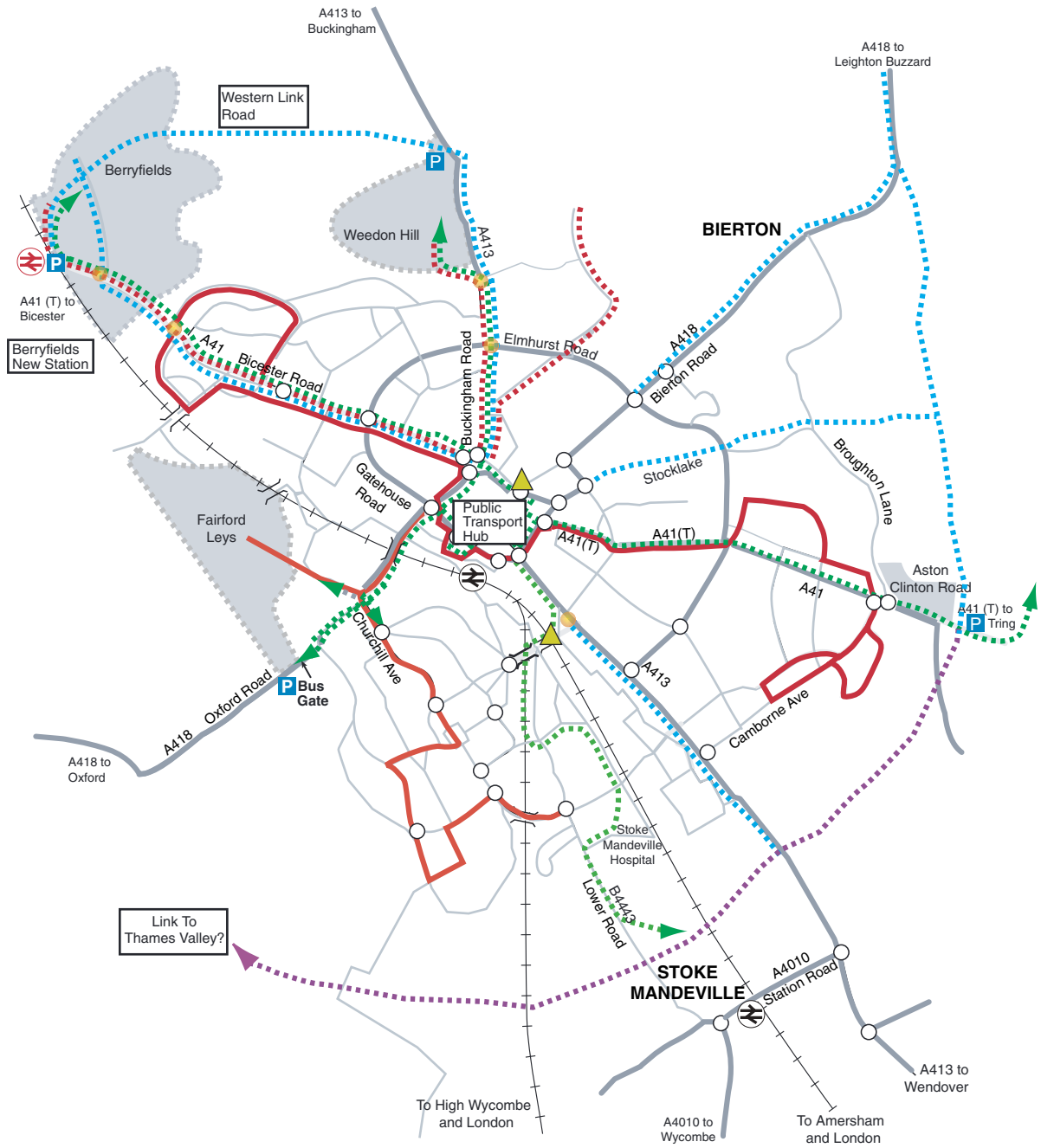
- Keeping traffic moving
- Managing travel demand
- Prioritising road use on key corridors
- Promoting sustainable transport alternatives to achieve modal shift
- Minimising traffic growth



Central to the strategy is a radical development and transformation of public transport to achieve major changes in travel patterns across the town. In the longer term, this will be supported by the introduction of a comprehensive Urban Traffic Management and Control system to maximise travel capacity and make best use of the road network.

Our aim is to improve public transport capacity in the town centre, to support a network of high frequency radial quality bus routes. The 'Aylesbury Public Transport Hub' major scheme, that has gained full approval from the Community Infrastructure Fund, will help provide this additional capacity. It will link the town centre, the railway station and provide an upgraded bus station to create a high quality multi-modal interchange capable of sustaining major public transport improvements.

Figure V7 - Our Transport Vision for Aylesbury



Map Key

- - - Proposed Road Network and Road Improvement
- - - PPTC
- Existing Quality Bus Partnership Routes (Including Silver Rider)
- Major Development Areas
- Junction Improvements
- P Park-and-Ride Site
- - - Proposed Quality Bus Routes
- ▲ Bridge Improvement
- - - Indicative Road Improvement
- + | + Railway
- Major Roundabouts

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Up until 2016 growth will be focussed north of the town, with Berryfields and Weedon Hill Major Development Areas (MDAs) providing most of the housing, whilst employment will be centred south of the town at the proposed Aston Clinton Road MDA. To meet transport needs we will complete three Primary Public Transport Corridors (PPTCs) on the Tring, Bicester and Buckingham Roads, using the existing Oxford Road PPTC as a model. These will benefit from Park & Ride services, linked on Bicester Road to the proposed Aylesbury Parkway station, at the Berryfields MDA. This new station will provide a new northern link for rail services to London and has recently received full approval from the Community Infrastructure Fund.

As part of the A418 improvement proposals, identified in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional strategy, to enhance links to the strategic road network for employment growth at the Aston Clinton Road MDA, we are actively pursuing feasibility studies on a link between A418 Hulcott crossroads to A41 (Aston Clinton Road) with a spur to Aylesbury (via Stocklake), subject to available funding.

Although the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional strategy is not prescriptive about the type of or location for longer-term housing growth and potential infrastructure beyond 2016, it does still identify a possible southern distributor road. In earlier drafts of the strategy, which defined broad locations for development which needed to be served by it, this road was shown as running between the A41 (to London) and the A418 (to Thames). We believe that it should also connect with the A418 improvement proposals described above to:

- Improve access to Aston Clinton Road MDA
- Remove cross-town traffic from town centre
- Concentrate Milton Keynes traffic on A418 / A4146 corridor

The distributor road could also present an opportunity to provide a new principal and high quality road link into Aylesbury from the south, using the new road and an improved A413 corridor. It would not only serve routes to / from London (A41), Amersham / Beaconsfield (A413) and Wycombe (A4010) but would also support the development of PPTCs on both Tring Road and Mandeville Road / Lower Road (B4443) serving the employment and housing growth, and



on Tring Road help address air quality issues. However, we need to wait until locations for further growth have been specifically identified in the District Council's LDDs, before progressing related infrastructure proposals.

5.2.3 Our vision for High Wycombe



The Community Plan vision for Wycombe District is of an area that is economically strong and a good place to live, work or visit. Our strategy for High Wycombe is to support urban renaissance, to achieve sustainable communities and sustainable growth in areas that are, or can be, well integrated with the town. In terms of transport this means:

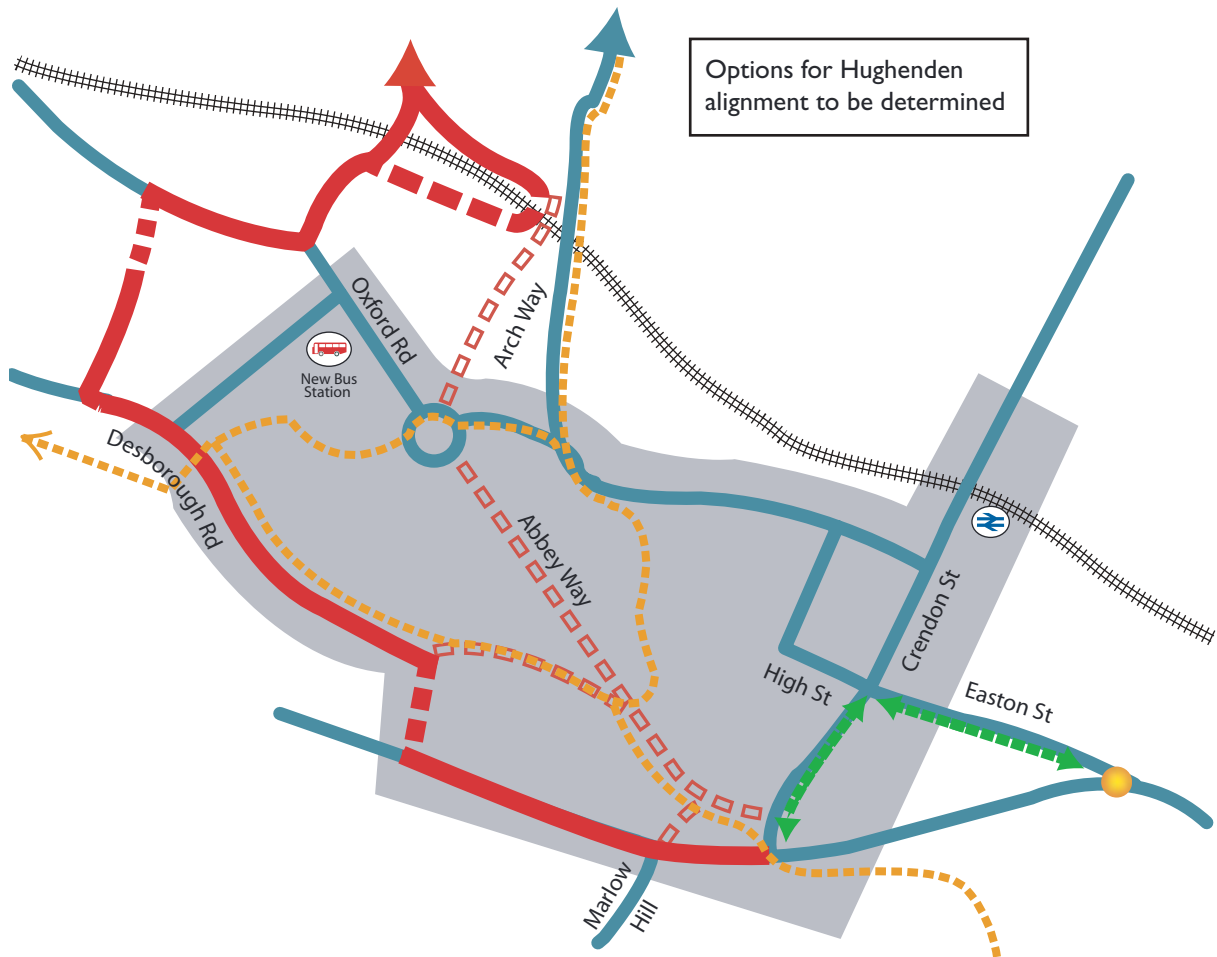


- Promoting sustainable transport alternatives to improve access to jobs, homes and services, and in particular to improve access between local and regional hubs and major development opportunities.
- Keeping traffic moving
- Managing travel demand and minimising traffic growth
- Maximising travel capacity on key corridors



High Wycombe town centre is at the heart of this vision and has a central role as part of a strong and vibrant economy that is attractive, people-friendly and accessible to everyone.

Figure V8a - High Wycombe Town Centre



Map Key

- - - Pedestrian and Cycle route
- ← → One way converted to two way working
- Roads downgraded/closed
- New Interim Roadline
- Existing roads
- Junction Improvement
- High Wycombe station new transport interchange
- New bus station - part of 'Eden' development
- Free/Reduced fare zone & Public Transport Hub

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This not only requires an innovative vision for the town centre (see figure V8a), described by the masterplan, but also a clear transport strategy to support such major improvements.

Physical changes to the town centre layout to improve pedestrian and cyclist access and minimise the impact of traffic are integral to the masterplan but cannot be adopted in isolation. Equally important to achieving the vision and meeting our objectives is the accompanying package of transport measures that not only manages traffic and travel demand across the town, but also enhances access. Both authorities are committed to being bold to realise our transport strategy and the masterplan vision.

This package builds on the proposals from the High Wycombe Town Centre Parking and Access Strategy that was approved by both Councils in 2004, whilst taking account of developments since then, including regional priorities such as the Thames Valley coach network. The key elements of the package of transport measures for High Wycombe include:

- Emphasis on short stay parking in the town centre to increase economic vitality and make best use of available space
- Long stay parking at edge of town sites supported by enhanced public transport services including frequent and efficient north-south cross-town Park & Ride services that reduce the need to travel by car to the centre and across town. These are envisaged as bus based services for the foreseeable future but the opportunities for other more innovative options in the longer term will be considered
- Creation of a transport hub close to the M40 on the south side of High Wycombe ('Wycombe M40 Gateway') to provide a local interchange for journeys within High Wycombe (to the town centre and new rail station) and a regional interchange for inter-urban journeys, including to the Thames Valley, Heathrow, London and the Aylesbury / Milton Keynes growth area
- Creation of a public transport hub across the town centre between the redeveloped rail station and new bus station to improve multi-modal interchange for all urban and inter-urban bus services, which could include a reduced / free fare zone in the town centre
- Investment in the major radial transport

corridors to improve traffic and travel capacity, supported by the phased introduction of Urban Traffic Management and Control systems, incorporating bus priority measures

- Improving the quality and reliability of the urban and inter-urban bus network to make public transport a reliable and attractive alternative for people who live, work or travel in High Wycombe
- Introduction of traffic management and control measures to discourage displaced traffic from using residential or inappropriate areas and enhance the quality of the local street scene
- Creation of an attractive and continuous network for pedestrians and cyclists that provides links between and within communities, including reuse of the High Wycombe Bourne End former railway alignment where practicable, whilst safeguarding its possible role as a public transport corridor
- Expansion of the Wycombe Special Parking Area to the whole of the District to enable better enforcement of parking controls, improved management of traffic and improvements to the quality of the local environment

Decisions on the masterplan and the transport network are fundamentally intertwined and such measures are the essential underpinning if the radical improvements proposed for the town centre are to be realised. As a result progress in these two areas must be in step.

These measures will come at a cost and we recognise that the LTP will not deliver the necessary funds to realise such a vision. Indeed, many of the measures will require significant levels of developer and / or third party funding yet to be identified. To secure the necessary transport services and infrastructure that offer the widest possible benefits to the town, its environment and all travellers the Councils will work together to identify and realise all potential funding opportunities.

5.2.4 Our vision for other urban areas

We expect other new development to be more limited. Despite this the intensification of existing development, replacing current properties with higher density housing, is likely to put additional

pressure on existing transport infrastructure, particularly in areas with limited public transport services. Some of our larger towns, such as Chesham, Amersham, Beaconsfield and Buckingham already experience peak time congestion, and we will work during the Second LTP to limit or reduce its effect at specific identified sites (see Part Two, Section B – Tackling Congestion).

We are developing a transport strategy for Chesham & Amersham, our third largest urban area, that sets out long-term proposals based on problems and opportunities identified by technical assessment and public consultation. These proposals aim to encourage safer and more sustainable use of the transport network, enhance accessibility and preserve the natural environment across the area. Any development proposed close to the A416, linking the towns, will enable us to review junction layouts and minimise congestion, and we will improve sustainable access to the stations across the area to achieve modal shift.

During the Second LTP period we will continue to implement appropriate measures arising from the Beaconsfield Transport Study, to tackle congestion, enhance accessibility and improve safety. Such actions will be included in the Beaconsfield Area Action Plan. We are developing and refining other Area Action Plans for larger towns using local knowledge and consultation, and information from Market Town Health Checks (where these are available).

5.2.5 Our vision for rural areas

We need to ensure that rural issues are integral to our work during the Second LTP. Our rural strategy ('Rural Strategy: Value in our rural communities') aims to develop and maintain a sense of community in rural areas by providing community facilities that ensure a thriving and vibrant countryside, without negative impact upon the natural environment. The delivery of and access to these facilities and services is clearly central to that aim.

Our rural areas are also a leisure facility for many people, and therefore need to be easily accessible yet protected. Our Rights of Way network is key to providing such access, opening up leisure opportunities and potentially improving the health of individuals. We have supported the preparation of the Rights of Way Improvement

Plan (see Appendix 3), which assesses the network to judge the relative value of different routes, and we will assist in its implementation, particularly where mutually beneficial routes are identified for improvement.

Our schemes are designed so that they are sensitive to the needs of the rural environment (as set out in the Chilterns AONB Management Plan), whilst providing for and considering visitor movements into the area (as set out in the Buckinghamshire Tourism and Action Plan). We are tackling the issue of car access and parking in rural areas by promoting more sustainable travel to and in the countryside, and we have adopted sensitive traffic management methods, such as the 'Alternative rural traffic management proposal' pilot scheme, to reduce speeding in rural areas. However, perhaps the most important issue in rural areas remains the need to provide adequate access to services. To address this we aim to develop more flexible public transport systems (see Bus Strategy, Appendix 1).

The implementation of our 'Getting Closer to Communities' strategy and local community Area Action Plans, supported by local involvement and consultation, will set out how we will address these challenges and improve transport services and facilities across the county. In many respects the biggest challenge we face is protecting and enhancing the exceptional rural environment, including our heritage towns, recognised as possibly Buckinghamshire's greatest asset (thanks to the contribution it makes to economic prosperity and quality of life), whilst accommodating the major growth and development and providing the enabling major transport and other necessary infrastructure.

6 DELIVERING OUR VISION

6.1 Our strategies

We have already shown that our vision for transport and accessibility has been shaped by national, regional and local influences and priorities, enabling us to identify four overarching themes, supported by 14 policy objectives. To meet these objectives, address the 'shared priority for transport' and deliver our transport vision, we have developed five LTP strategies:

- Enhancing access
- Tackling congestion
- Improving our environment (including air quality)
- Improving road safety
- Managing and maintaining the transport asset

These strategies have enabled us to ensure that our activities are more effectively integrated and will deliver schemes that not only meet national, regional and local priorities, but also secure best value. Figure V9 illustrates how these five

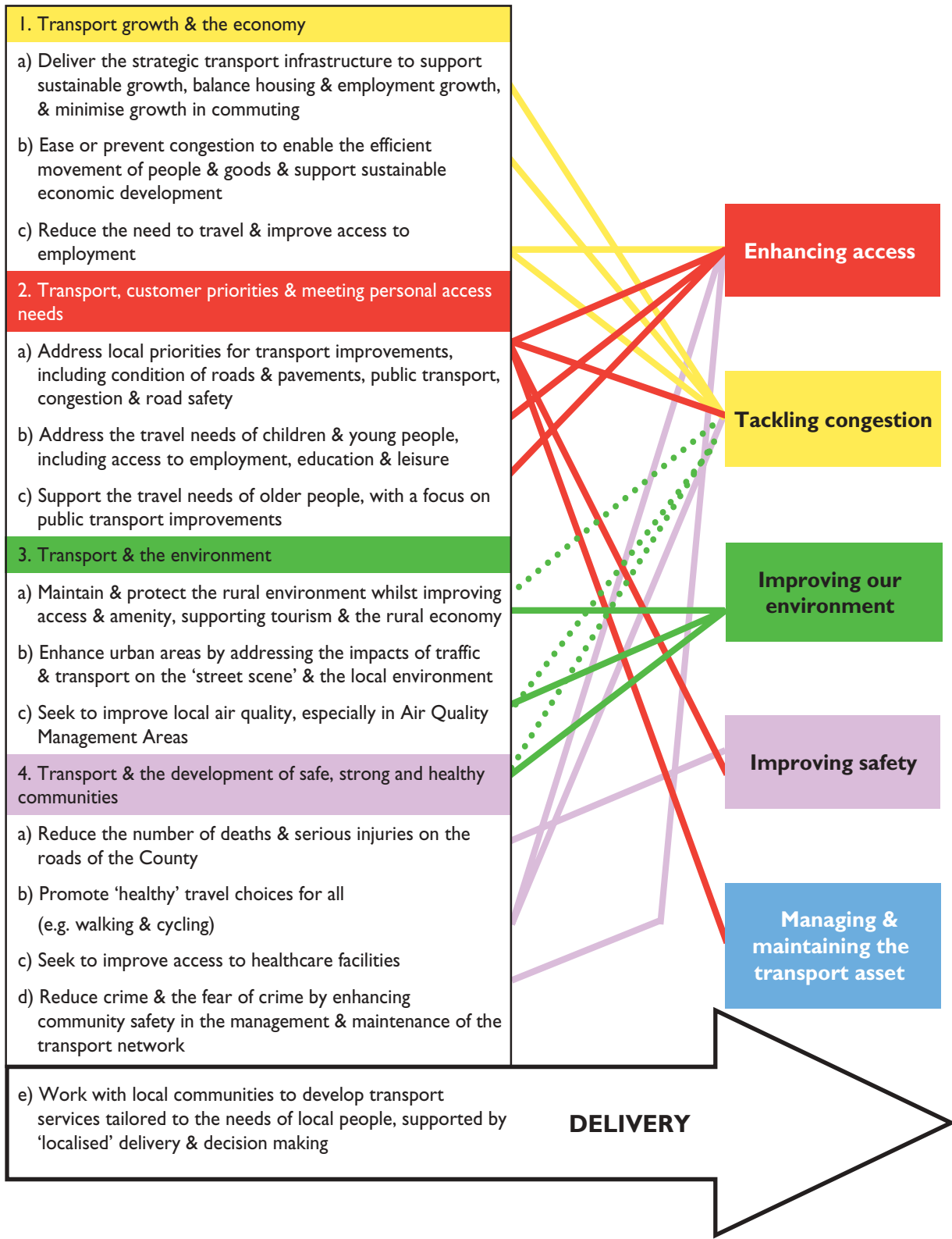
strategies relate directly to our policy objectives described in 6.1 above.

This shows that whilst four of our LTP strategies relate closely to the 'shared priority', all five and their associated work streams have been developed from our four transport themes and 14 policy objectives. We have chosen to prepare a strategy specifically for the management and maintenance of the transport asset because of the importance that our residents place on the quality and condition of the transport network in Buckinghamshire.

Our five strategies can be found in Part Two (Our transport priorities). Each strategy includes objectives, targets, policies and actions that we plan to complete or achieve during the Second LTP or beyond. Specific projects, schemes and measures to deliver our strategies, meet our objectives and achieve our targets are also identified in Part Three (Our plan for the future) and some can also be found in the example Area Action Plans included in Appendix 2.



Figure V9: Links between overarching themes, 14 policy objectives & LTP transport strategies



6.2 Working in partnership

Central to the delivery of our strategies will be maintaining, developing and enhancing productive relationships with a wide range of partners from both the public and private sectors. We already enjoy excellent partnership arrangements with a number of agencies and organisations, including our contractors and consultants, and look forward to building and extending these in the future.

But we recognise that partnership working is not just about service delivery and needs to be embraced at both strategic and operational levels. Increasingly we will be forging broader partnerships, currently in their infancy. To promote social inclusion and improve accessibility we will work more closely with Jobcentre Plus and Business Link, Youth and Community, Youth Councils and the Youth Parliament, Lifelong Learning Partnerships, Primary Care Trusts and Hospital Trusts to ensure that real improvements can be made with employment, education and health care access (see Part Two, Section A – Enhancing access).

A large number of successful operational partnerships are already in place. Joint working with our principal bus operator, Arriva, has enabled us to develop showcase Quality Bus Partnerships whilst we have improved access to stations and provided new facilities by working with Chiltern Railways. Active membership of the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership has helped reduced collisions and injuries, particularly at safety camera sites. We have worked with the Rural Transport Partnership, a multi-agency steering group, to reduce social exclusion and improve accessibility in rural areas by providing alternative and innovative transport choices. Buckinghamshire Community Action, another voluntary partnership focussing on community development initiatives in rural areas, has also helped to deliver practical local transport benefits.

Increasingly our services need to meet a wide range of aims and objectives that are not exclusively transport related, and we recognise that this is not possible without effective partnership working with other agencies and interests. To ensure that we meet our policy objectives and support the aims of others, we are auditing our existing partnerships (at both

strategic and operational levels) to identify their potential future role in the delivery of our five strategies and the gaps that still need to be filled by new or expanded relationships during the Second LTP period.

6.3 Measuring our success

At the heart of our vision for transport is a set of challenging and ambitious targets, linked to performance indicators, to help us demonstrate whether we are meeting our objectives and implementing our strategies and schemes effectively. Table VI shows the indicators we are proposing and how they relate to the overarching themes, policy objectives and strategies.

Wherever possible, we have sought to identify the outcomes we want to achieve and specifically measure these, rather than judge our performance based on the number of schemes we have completed, the money we have spent, or the materials we have used. These key outcomes have influenced the development of our five strategies, to ensure that our work programmes are focused on delivering real transport improvements that can be measured and demonstrably proved.

We will continue to use and develop our performance management system *TRANstat*, during the Second LTP to ensure that the excellent progress we made during the First LTP is maintained and enhanced. By regularly reviewing performance data, performance indicators and targets with *TRANstat* and comparing and prioritising schemes and proposals based on their ability to meet wider objectives and achieve value for money (using our scheme assessment matrix, see Part Three – Our plan for the future) we are confident that not only will we use our resources effectively, but will also complete schemes and activities that contribute to existing and future stretched targets.

Table VI: Policy objectives, cross-cutting themes, performance indicators & links to strategies

Policy objective	Performance Indicator (Target)	Strategies
1) Transport, growth & the economy		
a) Deliver the strategic transport infrastructure to support sustainable growth, balance housing & employment growth, & minimise growth in commuting	NO PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	Tackling congestion
b) Ease or prevent congestion to enable the efficient movement of people & goods & support sustainable economic development	Measured journey time reliability for defined journeys over the Priority Congestion Management Corridors (Baseline & target to be determined in 2006/07)	Tackling congestion
	Number of days of temporary traffic controls or road closures on traffic sensitive roads caused by local authority road works per km (0.15 days by 2010/11)	Tackling congestion
	Number of single occupancy car journeys reduced through personalised travel planning (3,000 per year – measured annually)	Tackling congestion
c) Reduce the need to travel & improve access to employment	Annualised index of access to railway stations by sustainable modes (130 by 2010/11)	Tackling congestion
	Percentage of households within 30 minutes of a strategically significant town centre by a public transport service operating at least five times a day (95% by 2010/11)	Enhancing Access





Policy objective	Performance Indicator (Target)	Strategies
2) Transport, customer priorities & meeting personal access needs		
a) improvements, including condition of roads & pavements, public transport, congestion & road safety	Principal Road Condition <i>(Baseline & target to be determined in 2006/07)</i>	Managing & maintaining the transport asset
	Non Principal Classified Road condition <i>(Baseline & target to be determined in 2006/07)</i>	
	Unclassified road condition <i>(5% in need of structural repair by 2010/11 – CVI)</i>	
	Footway condition <i>(15% in need of structural repair by 2010/11 – CVI)</i>	
	Percentage of households within 30 minutes of a strategically significant town centre by a public transport service operating at least five times a day <i>(95% by 2010/11)</i>	Enhancing Access
b) Address the travel needs of children & young people, including access to employment, education & leisure	Mode share of journeys to school <i>(Baseline & target to be determined by March 2007)</i>	Tackling congestion
	Number of schools with school travel initiatives <i>(All schools – 240 – by 2010)</i>	
	Percentage of households within 30 minutes of a strategically significant town centre by a public transport service operating at least five times a day <i>(95% by 2010/11)</i>	Enhancing Access

Policy objective	Performance Indicator (Target)	Strategies
2) Transport, customer priorities & access for all		
c) Address the travel needs of older people, with a focus on improving public transport access to healthcare, food shopping & other essential needs	Percentage of respondents satisfied with the local bus service (50% by 2009/10)	Tackling congestion
	Bus patronage growth on urban quality bus network (3.9 million passenger journeys by 2010/11 – areas combined)	
	Bus patronage growth on inter-urban core 'quality' bus network (5.6 million passenger journeys by 2010/11)	
	Total local transport journeys per year by bus (9.7 million passenger journeys by 2010/11)	
	Percentage of scheduled services one minute early to five minutes late (or excess waiting times for frequent services) (75% by 2010/11)	
3) Transport & the environment		
a) Maintain & protect the rural environment whilst improving access & amenity, supporting tourism & the rural economy	The percentage of the total length of rights of way in the local authority area that are easy to use by the general public (79% by 2010/11)	Improving our environment
	Change in area wide road traffic mileage (2% reduction on projected rate of growth by 2010/11)	
b) Enhance urban areas by addressing the impacts of traffic & transport on the 'street scene' & the local environment	Change in peak period traffic flows to urban centres (Aylesbury – 33% reduction on projected rate of growth by 2010/11) (Wycombe – 33% reduction on projected rate of growth by 2010/11)	Tackling congestion





Policy objective	Performance Indicator (Target)	Strategies
3) Transport & the environment		
c) Improve local air quality, especially in Air Quality Management Areas	Reduction in NO2 concentrations in identified Air Quality Management Area within our control – Tring Road, Aylesbury (15% reduction by 2010/11)	Improving our environment
4) Transport & the development of safe, strong & healthy communities:		
a) Reduce the number of deaths & serious injuries on the roads of the County	Number of killed & seriously injured casualties (All ages) (260 by 2010/11)	Improving safety
	Number of killed & seriously injured casualties (Children) (19 by 2010/11)	
	Number of slight casualties (All ages) (1925 by 2010/11)	
	Number of collisions at sites where maintenance has been identified as a contributory factor (15% reduction by 2010/11)	Managing & maintaining the transport asset
b) Promote 'healthy' travel choices for all (e.g. walking & cycling)	Annualised index of cycling trips (150 by 2010/11)	Tackling congestion
c) Improve access to healthcare facilities & services conducive to healthy living	Percentage of households within 30 minutes of a strategically significant town centre by a public transport service operating at least five times a day (95% by 2010/11)	Enhancing access
d) Reduce crime & the fear of crime by enhancing community safety in the management & maintenance of the transport network	NO PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	Managing & maintaining the transport asset
e) Work with local communities to develop transport services tailored to the needs of local people, supported by 'localised' delivery & decision making	Completion of Area Action Plans (19 Area Action Plans completed by 2007/08)	NOT APPLICABLE

6.4 Our transport priorities

Part Two sets out our transport priorities, by describing our five strategies:

- Enhancing access (Section A)
- Tackling congestion (Section B)
- Improving our environment (Section C)
- Improving road safety (Section D)
- Managing and maintaining the transport asset (Section E)

Each strategy sets the national and local context, considers the current situation and identifies the key problems and opportunities that need to be addressed, before identifying objectives and work streams. A summary of targets, policies and actions is included at the end of each strategy.

The five strategies are not only an integrated part of our Second LTP, but also work as standalone documents for both operational and consultation purposes. As standalone documents the strategies will be a guide for action for the new service areas, reshaped to align closely with our transport priorities, as part of the Best Value Improvement Plan.

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USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Accessibility has become a primary aim of local transport planning in the UK, underpinned by a new process called accessibility planning. It would therefore be helpful to many readers to initially clarify a few key concepts

- **Accessibility:** The availability of and ease of reaching particular services or activities
- **Mobility:** The ability to move or travel - conventionally the primary focus of transport planning up till now
- **Social exclusion:** The inability to participate in normal activities, especially those most necessary for a healthy, productive and sociable life
- **Need:** The gap between a current and a desired minimum state
- **Accessibility planning:** A process for promoting social inclusion by identifying and tackling accessibility problems and meeting accessibility need

I INTRODUCTION

Buckinghamshire County Council is committed to improving people's ability to access jobs and key services, and addressing the symptoms and causes of social exclusion. This commitment was shown in our First Local Transport Plan (LTP), which included a comprehensive framework for integrating wider policy objectives with transport. Since 2001/02 we have also continued to direct large amounts of financial support into meeting 'social need' through public and community transport services. The Council's corporate commitment to addressing social exclusion and access is also demonstrated by its Public Service Agreement action plans, other policies and initiatives stemming from a Social Exclusion and other Best Value Reviews, and the overarching *Stronger and Cohesive Communities* strategic framework currently under development.

Accessibility is greatly influenced by the geography of Buckinghamshire. The majority of the population live in the south of the county, while most of the north, with the exception of Aylesbury, is semi-rural and sparsely populated. Just over one-third of the population reside in a few medium-sized towns, with the rest living in small towns, villages, and isolated rural households. On almost every side the county is surrounded by major development... corridors and centres and at the moment, therefore, no

single Buckinghamshire town is capable of acting as a strong internal focal point for most activities. The consequences include highly dispersed patterns of travel, with corresponding high levels of car use and dependency.

Despite its perceived affluence, Buckinghamshire contains significant clusters of relative deprivation and potential exclusion, mainly in the larger towns. Outside these neighbourhoods there are also many people that are disadvantaged or at risk of exclusion due to accessibility problems, mobility impairment, or other factors. In both urban and rural areas these problems tend to impact disproportionately on older and younger people, people with physical and learning disabilities or mental health problems, ethnic minorities, low income groups, and the unemployed.

The Council is finding it increasingly costly to sustain a 'safety net' of passenger transport services to meet even the most basic social needs outside our larger towns and off the main public transport corridors. Even in our larger towns it is evident that current local bus services cannot meet all of the community's more complex needs. It is also apparent that while various local transport planning initiatives - and initiatives in other policy sectors - can and do deliver accessibility improvements they have not always been clearly focused on addressing accessibility and social inclusion objectives.

The Council's aim will be to promote social inclusion by improving access for all those who live, work, shop, and make use of key services in the county, but especially for those people without access to a private car and those with mobility impairments.

The primary focus of Accessibility Planning in Buckinghamshire will be on access to employment, learning, healthcare, and services and activities that promote healthy living, particularly food shopping, physical activities and leisure.



The Second LTP, with its focus on accessibility planning, provides the opportunity to strengthen our commitment to addressing accessibility and inclusion needs, and undertake this more systematically and effectively. Together with our partners inside and outside the Council, this will be achieved by targeting and co-ordinating resources more effectively, and mainstreaming accessibility and social inclusion objectives and principles throughout the planning and delivery of services. A rigorous evidence-led planning process for identifying and prioritising needs, and developing cross-cutting solutions will underpin this approach.

2 OUR WIDER LTP VISION

In Section 1 we described the context for and influences upon transport, both now and in the future, and set out our vision for transport, identifying four themes and fourteen associated policy objectives. The objectives that directly relate to accessibility are detailed below.

To meet these policy objectives through our accessibility strategy we have considered the national, regional and local context and analysed the current situation to identify problems and opportunities within the county. Together these have helped shape our accessibility objectives and approach over the next five years.

Transport theme	Policy objective	Targets (where appropriate)
1. Transport, growth and the economy	a) Reduce the need to travel and improve access to employment	% of households in Buckinghamshire within 800m of a bus/train service and 30 minutes of a local or regional town centre by a public transport service operating at least once an hour during the working day
2. Transport, customer priorities and meeting personal access needs	a) Address local priorities for transport improvements, including condition of roads and pavements, public transport, congestion and road safety	
	b) Address the travel needs of children and young people, including access to employment, education and leisure	
	c) Support the travel needs of older people, with a focus on public transport improvements	
3. Transport and the environment	a) Maintain and protect the rural environment whilst improving access and amenity, supporting tourism and the rural economy	
4. Transport and the development of safe, strong and healthy communities	c) Seek to improve access to healthcare facilities	% of households in Buckinghamshire within 800m of a bus/train service and 30 minutes of a local or regional town centre by a public transport service operating at least once an hour during the working day
	d) Reduce crime and the fear of crime by enhancing community safety in the maintenance and management of the transport network	
	e) Work with local communities to develop transport services tailored to the needs of local people, supported by 'localised' delivery and decision making	

3 ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

3.1 What is the purpose of Accessibility Planning?

Increasing prosperity has contributed to growing car ownership and use. To accommodate this change, society, and specifically transport and land use systems, have become increasingly organised around the car. This has led to a worsening in the conditions for reaching destinations by public transport, walking, or cycling. The main types of accessibility barrier are listed in the box below.

Accessibility barriers:

- the location of services
- availability of transport (or substitutes)
- physical accessibility
- the costs of travel
- time-related factors
- perceptions of safety and security
- inadequate information
- people's knowledge and attitudes

Problems with transport, or access, can contribute to social exclusion and deprivation by constraining or preventing some people from accessing important services and activities. This can lead to, compound or perpetuate unemployment, anti-social behaviour and crime, low educational standards, poor physical and mental health, and other associated problems.

Accessibility planning is an attempt to address these problems. It is a very significant policy development because it:

- helps focus resources on meeting user needs;
- helps integrate transport and land use planning with wider policy objectives and initiatives
- complements other aspects of transport policy e.g. anti-congestion and traffic reduction strategies.

Besides providing greater opportunities for individuals and families to live healthier, more productive, and sociable lives, action to improve accessibility has major potential benefits for communities, businesses, the government and public services as shown below.

Potential benefits

Communities:

- Stronger community cohesion
- Less crime and anti-social behaviour
- More local investment
- Environmental improvement
- Less traffic congestion

Businesses:

- Overcoming recruitment and retention difficulties
- More customers

Central & Local Government:

- Improved participation, attendance and attainment in education
- Better health and less health inequality
- Lower unemployment and higher levels of employment
- Lower crime & anti-social behaviour
- Lower benefit payments and higher tax revenues
- More efficient and effective targeting of resources



3.2 The accessibility planning process: past and future work

In this, our full Second Local Transport Plan, we have built on the 'framework accessibility strategy' contained within the Provisional LTP submitted in July 2005. In particular it contains our first tranche of accessibility action plans and shows the progress we are making in mainstreaming accessibility.

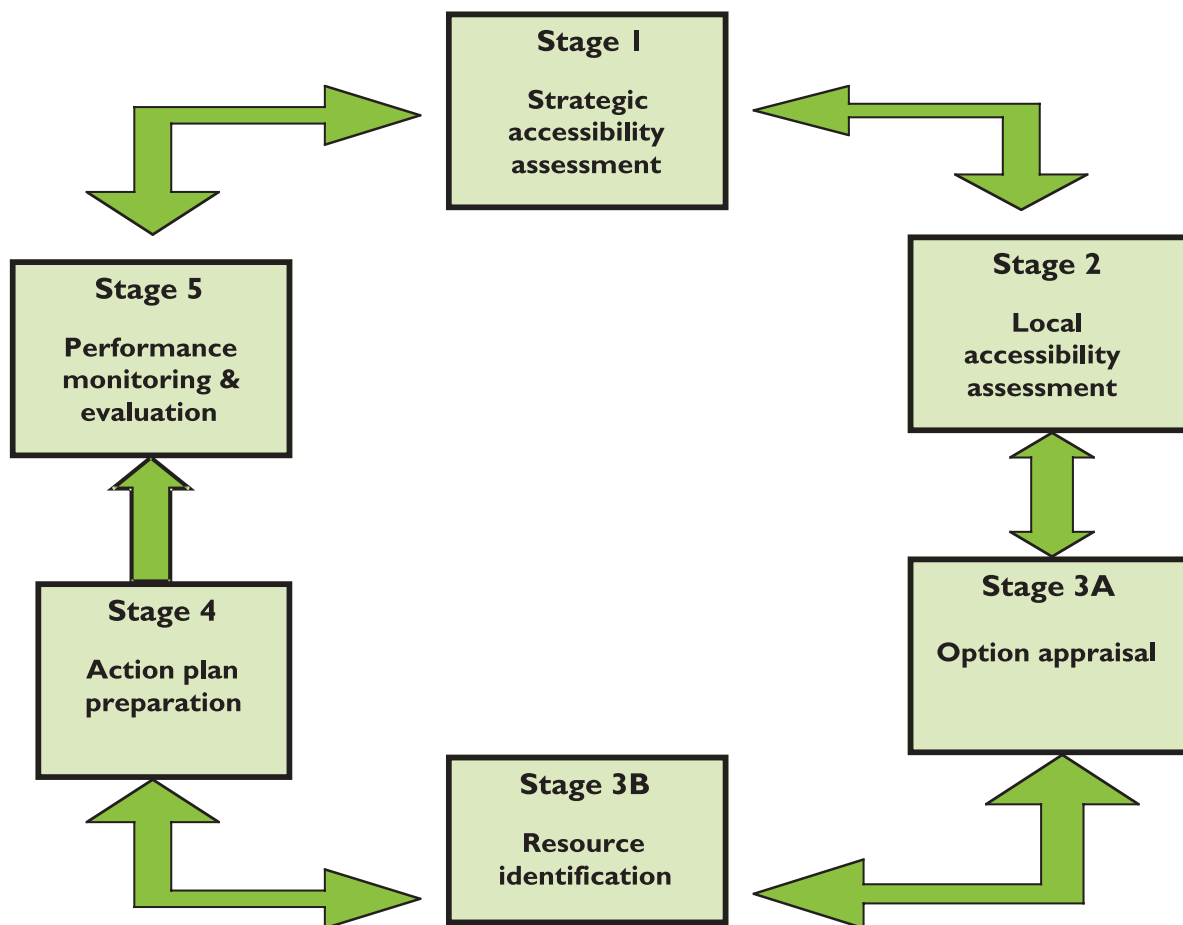
In developing our accessibility strategies we have decided, where appropriate, to follow the DfT's recommended accessibility planning process consisting of the main stages shown in figure A1 below:

Several significant areas of work to improve our understanding of the current situation and our ability to deliver accessibility improvements on a cross-sectoral basis, have been completed or begun including:

- a review of relevant policies and strategies to identify national and local priorities
- consultation with the general public and important stakeholders
- selected strategic mapping audits
- ongoing strategic dialogues with key stakeholders
- mainstreaming accessibility planning principles, objectives, and methods into the planning and delivery of transport and other Council services
- developing outline action plans for 2006/7 and indicative 5 year programmes

Specific work undertaken to date to shape our accessibility strategy, including consultation and developing partnership with key stakeholders, is outlined in the table that follows.

Figure A1: Main stages of accessibility planning process



Work to date	Date
'Connecting Communities: Accessibility Planning in Buckinghamshire' conference - launched accessibility planning and began engagement of individuals from voluntary and public sector organisations	July 2003
'Activity & Transport Needs Survey' - targeted at areas of relative disadvantage, access disadvantaged individuals in rural areas, and older school children outside the larger towns.	2004
Participation in an NHS Transport Partnership Group to consider and deal with consequences of restructuring of acute care services in the county	2004 / 05
Participation in an education-transport partnership to improve access to learning specially for 16-19 year olds	2004 - 06
Forging links with other key agencies and partnerships, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Centre Plus • The Learning & Skills Council and Bucks Lifelong Learning Partnership • Countywide and district level Local Strategic Partnerships • NHS Trusts (PCTs, Hospital Trust, etc.) • County Council service areas including education, social care, childcare & youth & community 	2004 - 06
Wide-ranging policy review, considering exclusion & accessibility issues, based on examination of selected plans, policies & strategies and discussions with experts in other fields	2005
Strategic mapping audits for the main destination types (education, employment, health care & shopping) using Accession software	2005
Accessibility consultation workshop - to share our findings from the policy review & strategic mapping audit with voluntary & public sector organisations, & seek their assistance in determining strategic local accessibility priorities	June 2005
19 'Transport Matters' events as part of the council's wider 'Getting Closer to Communities' programme - to consult with community and voluntary sector representatives and members of the general public on provisional LTP	Oct – Dec 2005
Three Annual Transport Symposia events - to consult with community and voluntary sector representatives on past performance and future directions	Jan - Feb 2006
Various initiatives to mainstream accessibility (see Section 7.2)	2005-6



The following strategy sets out what we, together with our key partners, have identified and prioritised from a review of the currently available evidence, as the most important accessibility needs and barriers to address within the second LTP period, the strategic approaches identified for doing so, and outlines of our future work programmes.





Accessibility planning will however be an ongoing and iterative process rather than purely linear. Monitoring and evaluation of our policies and plans, and annual action planning, will be reported as part of the regular reporting process.



3.3 Links to other parts of the LTP

Accessibility Planning is a systematic process which underpins much of our LTP, and is expected to lead to a realignment and co-ordination of many transport-related policies and activities. In our 'mainstreaming accessibility planning strategy' we have alluded to some of the main connections between this accessibility strategy and other strategies in the LTP.

The main links between accessibility planning and the other strategic themes are briefly described below:

- 
 • **Improving road safety:** work that is specifically aimed at improving safety for vulnerable users and reducing community severance contributes to improving accessibility.
- 
 • **Tackling congestion:** congestion increases travel times and journey time unreliability, and reduces accessibility; tackling congestion, particularly by redressing imbalances between different transport modes, is an important component of an overall accessibility strategy
- 
 • **Managing and maintaining the transport asset:** highway maintenance and street lighting targeted to improve physical accessibility and personal security for pedestrians and cyclists, contributes to improving accessibility
- 
 • **Enhancing our environment:** poor environmental conditions, resulting from traffic impacts or poor maintenance of the pedestrian environment, can act as barrier to walking and cycling; therefore tackling these impacts contributes to improving accessibility by non-car modes

Links between accessibility planning and other transport strategies and policies will be strengthened with the development and implementation of the accessibility strategy.

4 THE POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 The national policy context

'Making the Connections' (2003), a report by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), set out the link between transport, accessibility and social exclusion. In particular it found strong links between levels of accessibility and outcomes in key public services. It concluded that part of the reason access for non-car users has worsened in

recent years is that there is no single body with overall responsibility for co-ordinating transport, land use, and service decisions. It went on to outline a cross-Government strategy for improving access to jobs and essential public services, which officially introduced accessibility planning in England.

Since this report, addressing the links between social exclusion and accessibility has become a high government priority. For instance, accessibility is now one of the four issues in the shared priority for transport and is described as:

'The local community, and in particular disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, having access to work and important services including health care, education and shopping.'

Whilst it is expected that Second LTPs will systematically incorporate the accessibility planning process and pursue accessibility objectives, it is recognised that accessibility planning is not only a transport issue. The national accessibility strategy is therefore based on the idea of better cross-sector working both nationally and locally to improve policy development and service delivery and meet accessibility needs of local communities.

At a local level, local transport authorities are expected to take a leading role and work with professionals, managers and representatives in a wide range of other fields. Local agencies have been informed of the contribution that this process can make to achieving their own key objectives and targets.

Given that accessibility planning is a wide-ranging cross-cutting process the number of policy initiatives that have significant implications for it are vast. A few of the more significant recent policy developments are mentioned below.

The ***Crime and Disorder Act 1998*** is a key policy because of the connection between personal security and accessibility, and the legal requirement to work with partner organisations to tackle crime and disorder, and ensure that we exercise our functions with due consideration to their effect on this issue.

The purpose of the ***Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995*** is to end the discrimination which many disabled people face. It gives disabled

people rights in many areas of life including access to goods, facilities and services. In particular, the Act allows the government to set minimum standards so that disabled people can access public transport more easily. Since 2004, the DDA has required businesses and organisations to take reasonable steps to tackle physical features that act as a barrier to disabled people to access services. The provisions of the DDA are being gradually extended to include public transport infrastructure, though full accessibility to taxis, buses and coaches will take until 2020 to achieve. Recently local authorities were given a new duty to actively promote disability equality.



A government White Paper called **'Every Child Matters: Change for Children'** (December 2004) is expected to have a profound influence on public services for younger people. It sets out a new approach to improve the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. It aims to ensure that every child will have the support they need to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society, and achieve economic well-being. The main mechanism for meeting this aim will be children's trusts, which will bring together local authorities and other partners. (See also Appendix 9)

It is not only services for children that are changing substantially, **'Independence, Well-Being and Choice'** a government Green Paper (April 2004) is set to have a radical effect on adult



social care and other public services over the next 10-15 years. Its starting point is that everyone in society has a positive contribution to make and should have the right to control his or her own lives. It aims for services for adults to be 'seamless', more person-centred, proactive and preventative, and for there to be to be much more extensive client and stakeholder involvement. Better information, 'streamlined' (i.e. integrated) person-centred assessment, individual flexible care packages based on a mixture of public services, and partnership working are key ways to achieve this vision.

'Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier', a Health White paper, sets out a new approach to public health in England that contains important links with transport policy. For instance, two priorities include improving diet and nutrition and increasing exercise to help reduce obesity. The paper also sets out action to address health inequalities, which includes the aim of securing better access to healthier choices for people in disadvantaged groups or areas. The LTP process and Children's Centres are specifically mentioned as important mechanisms. The main aim of the latter is to provide joined up health and social care for children under 5 in a single facility. The health impacts of local environments, social networks, and local facilities and resources, are also well recognised.



4.2 Regional and sub-regional policy influences

The draft South East Plan (2005) - incorporating the Regional Transport Strategy - provides the principal regional influence on the development of this LTP. As part of the Plan, the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF), adopted by the Regional Assembly and its partners in 2004, establishes a shared vision and set of objectives that underpins the Plan, and which organisations are encouraged to use to try and achieve more sustainable development. The key objectives in the IRF with greatest relevance to Accessibility Planning are listed in the table below.

Spatial policies in the Plan of most significance for the development of Accessibility strategies for Buckinghamshire include:

- inter-regional co-ordination with adjoining regions will be fostered to address inter-connectivity, development need and opportunities
- the relationship between the Milton Keynes/South Midlands Growth Area and the East Midlands will grow in significance
- the Oxford-Milton Keynes arc and Oxford-Southampton corridor may become increasingly important in terms of long-term development patterns
- several areas outside or extending into Buckinghamshire are defined as sub-regions, and will have significant impacts on accessibility within Buckinghamshire
- future development should be focused in and around urban areas to help improve accessibility to employment and services and enhance the viability of existing public transport and community service provision
- growth is to be redistributed to middle and lower order centres to achieve a more even distribution of facilities and activities to ensure that people's everyday needs can be met at the local level - to this end the Plan defines a network of "strategic town centres" (see appendix I) intended to be the primary focus for development

Draft South East Plan	
IRF Objective(s)	Contribution of accessibility planning
Improve the health & well-being of the population & reduce health inequalities	Partnership working to improve access to healthcare across the County, particularly for disadvantaged groups
Reduce poverty & social exclusion & close the gap between the most deprived areas & the rest of the region	Targeted partnership working on disadvantaged areas & groups at risk of social exclusion
Raise educational achievement levels in the region & develop opportunities for all to acquire skills needed to find & remain in work	Partnership working to improve access to all phases of lifelong learning across the County, particularly for disadvantaged groups & those seeking employment
Reduce crime & fear of crime	Partnership working to tackle anti-social behaviour in the transport system, improve access to life opportunities and address anti-social behaviour
Protect, enhance & improve access to the region's countryside & historic environment	Partnership working to improve access to the countryside, supporting tourism & the rural economy (linked to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan)
Ensure employment levels are high & stable so everyone can benefit from economic growth	Partnership working to improve access to employment, particularly for disadvantaged groups

The Regional Transport Strategy commits local authorities to support and work towards the implementation of a set of general transport policies. Those with significant implications for accessibility planning are listed in the table below:

Regional Transport Strategy	
Objective(s)	Contribution of accessibility planning
Favour non-car modes for access & encourage development located & designed to reduce journey lengths	Integrated land-use & transport planning to secure good non-car access & provision of locally appropriate services
Promote equal opportunities by prioritising improvements in access, taking account of gender, ethnicity, disabilities & age	Partnership working to systematically identify & address strategic accessibility priorities
Develop innovative approaches to public & community transport & seek to improve provision for cyclists and pedestrians (in rural areas)	Partnership & community working to develop local accessibility action plans (linked to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan)
Foster an improved & integrated public transport network, including DRT services for areas with low accessibility	Provision of more accessible public & community transport services linked to local accessibility action plan development
Prioritise investment to support the region's gateways & key corridors	Partnership working to systematically identify & address strategic accessibility priorities
Develop the role of primarily public transport oriented regional "hubs" (urban centres/ transport nodes) and "spokes" (corridors);	Highway and public service improvements along 'spokes', and improvements of interchange in 'hubs'
Develop scheduled coach & express bus services along spokes & key corridors	Provision of more accessible public & community transport services linked to local accessibility action plan development
Develop rail services to provide better inter & intra-regional connections	Partnership working to secure improvements to local & regional rail infrastructure & services
Consider park & ride facilities to cater for modal interchange for inter-urban trips	Provision of more accessible public transport services linked to local accessibility action plan development
Use of ICT to reduce need to travel	Partnership working to promote increased ICT use
Identify major travel generating developments for which travel plans should be sought	Integrate transport development control process with accessibility objectives



The Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy has shaped the development of this LTP. The sub-regional growth strategy focuses on certain major towns and promotes others for smaller-scale growth (listed in appendix I) and also defines locally and regionally important transport infrastructure and links. The objectives of the growth strategy for Aylesbury are listed below.

It is clear that our emerging accessibility strategy must reflect and address the objectives, while ensuring that it also addresses more local circumstances and needs.

Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy - Aylesbury

Objective(s)	Contribution of accessibility planning
Provide high added value employment opportunities to support housing growth	Partnership working to improve access to new & existing employment centres
Link growth areas with new & enhanced public transport services & good links to the strategic rail network	Integrated land-use & transport planning to provide new & improved public transport services
Integrate delivery of growth (to include public services, community facilities, & high quality environment)	Integrated land-use & transport planning to secure high quality environments with provision of locally appropriate services
Enhance local transport to support increased facilities in town centres	Integrated land-use & transport planning to provide new & improved public transport services
Increase recreational & sporting facilities	Partnership working to improve access to leisure facilities
Increase educational facilities for further & higher education	Partnership working to improve access to education facilities

4.3 The local context

Social exclusion in Buckinghamshire is a growing concern to the general public and local authorities. Qualitative research, completed by MORI in 2004 for the Best Value Review of Social Inclusion, identified that poor transport links and high travel costs increased rural and physical isolation and limited access to and the use of services.

Whilst our activities during the period of the First LTP have secured access improvements across the county, generally they were not specifically designed to enhance accessibility or promote social inclusion. Given the new objective we recognise that all transport policies, programmes and schemes in the future will need to be developed with full consideration to their potential impacts on, and contribution to,

accessibility and social inclusion.

The local level policy review included consideration of:

- the Buckinghamshire Community Strategy
- the Corporate Plan
- service plans across the authority
- Best Value Reviews
- district level Local Strategic Partnerships Community Plans
- reports and plans of external agencies e.g. the Learning & Skills Council-led Strategic Area Review

Key local influences upon accessibility and transport, and how our accessibility activities will support them are described in the table below.

The Buckinghamshire Community Strategy is fast evolving as the overarching strategic framework for local service delivery and partnership working

at a County-level. Accessibility planning has a major contribution to make to achieving the partnership's vision: through the accessibility strategy, and LTP more generally, strong links are being developed to many of the other key themes and sub-objectives, as can be seen in sections 6.2 - 6.3.



Buckinghamshire Community Strategy	
Objective(s)	Contribution of accessibility planning
Safer communities	Partnership working to: tackle anti-social behaviour in the transport system; improve access to life opportunities mitigating conditions for anti-social behaviour; reduce road traffic accidents involving vulnerable road users
Creation of healthy communities	Improve access to healthcare facilities and to healthy lifestyle resources, particularly for those most in need
Significant increase in community based health services	Consistent with accessibility planning approach - identify suitable sites
Use of health impact assessments in development planning	Consistent with accessibility planning approach
Development of a range of recreational activities for whole population	Consistent with accessibility planning approach - identify suitable sites
Maintaining a dynamic economy	Consistent with improving access to employment
Facilitate a large increase in jobs in growth sectors	Improve access to learning and employment, especially for those seeking employment
Reduce the level of out-commuting from Buckinghamshire	Improve access to employment centres in Bucks
Develop an increasingly skilled workforce	Improve access to learning, especially for those of post-compulsory age
Show recognition of the importance of jobs in rural areas	Improve access to employment, for those living and working in rural areas
Improve employment opportunities, health, and participation in education and cultural activities of those living in targeted disadvantaged areas	Partnership working to improve access in these areas by delivering joined up and improved services
Improve life chances of young people	Partnership working to improve young people's access to appropriate facilities (including education, recreation & leisure)
Involve young people in service planning & delivery	Involvement of young people (i.e. Youth Parliament & Youth Councils) in accessibility action plans & associated schemes



Buckinghamshire Community Strategy	
Objective(s)	Contribution of accessibility planning
Improve access to leisure & recreation facilities for young people	Partnership working to improve young people's access to appropriate facilities (including education, recreation & leisure)
Increase opportunities for older people to contribute to local community life	Involvement of older people in development of accessibility action plans & associated schemes
Improve access to key services & facilities for older people	Partnership working to improve older people's access to appropriate facilities
Improve access to leisure & recreation facilities for older people	Partnership working to improve older people's access to appropriate facilities
Corporate Plan	
Objective(s)	Contribution of accessibility planning
Give children & young people the best possible life chances	Partnership working to improve young people's access to appropriate facilities (including education, recreation & leisure)
Improve quality of life for adults & older people	Partnership working to improve adult access to appropriate facilities (including employment, shopping & leisure)
Build safer, stronger and healthier communities	Partnership & community working to develop local accessibility action plans
Other plans	
Objective(s)	Contribution of accessibility planning
Improve opportunities for children in 'pockets of disadvantage' (Childcare Services)	Partnership working to improve access to education & key services, particularly for disadvantaged groups
Improve range of choices for students accessing higher education (Lifelong Learning Partnership)	Partnership working to improve young people's access to a wider range of higher education facilities

5 ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

Our consideration of national, regional and local guidance, policies, strategies and plans not only sets the context for accessibility planning in Buckinghamshire, but also gives us a clearer idea of what our strategic priorities are likely to be. However, we recognise that basing our judgement on a policy review alone reflects only part of the picture. To ensure that our objectives and priorities are based on robust evidence and sound analysis we have completed a detailed study of the current situation, using both strategic mapping audits and evidence from consultation exercises and dialogue with strategic partners.

It is helpful for planning purposes to break this analysis down into three main parts:

- accessibility from the perspective of specific social groups (based on consultation with representatives of the target groups and relevant service providers)
- accessibility from the perspective of specific accessibility themes (based on consultation and mapping audits)
- a geographical analysis of the accessibility problem across Buckinghamshire

5.1 Accessibility concerns of specific social groups

5.1.1 Introduction



Social exclusion and deprivation are commonly thought not to be problems in Buckinghamshire. In reality however, there are several relatively highly deprived neighbourhoods in the larger towns characterised by higher levels of unemployment, crime and anti-social behaviour, and poorer educational attainment, housing and health. In recent years the County Council and other agencies have targeted various initiatives at the worst of these. There are also known to be clusters of deprivation in some smaller towns, and cases of deprivation in rural areas and smaller settlements.

Disadvantaged people and people at risk of being excluded are however not only clustered in a few neighbourhoods: some are disadvantaged because of their individual life circumstances e.g. health, disability, age, sex, ethnicity, or income level, and lack of access to private transport. Such people are widely scattered across rural and urban Buckinghamshire. Our accessibility strategy will need to address both clustered and scattered exclusion and accessibility disadvantage.

Qualitative research on communities at greater risk of exclusion, undertaken for the Council's Best Value Review of Social Inclusion (2004), found that transport and various types of accessibility barrier were considered to be one of the major contributors to social exclusion including the failure to take up council and other public services. Participants made suggestions about the importance of community participation and the design of council services to overcome social exclusion, for example saying that:

- additional efforts need to be made to reach out to target communities without a history of using council services
- greater awareness of cultural differences and language needs is required
- more person-centred planning needs to be adopted

The review is continuing to have a profound effect on a number of council initiatives and processes, particularly 'Customer First', 'Getting Closer to Communities', and the drive to achieve Level 2 Equalities Standard.

5.1.2 Older people's identified access needs

The 2001 Census confirmed that almost 15% of Buckinghamshire residents were of pensionable age, and that the percentage of elderly residents in Chiltern and South Bucks Districts was well above the national average (see table A1).

Table A1: Percentage of older people in Buckinghamshire

	England & Wales	Aylesbury Vale	Wycombe District	Chiltern District	South Bucks
% of population aged 60 to 74	13.3%	11.4%	12.3%	14.7%	15.1%
% of population aged 75 and over	7.6%	5.9%	6.4%	7.7%	8.2%



Table A2: Projected population growth aged 60+ in Buckinghamshire

	2001	2006	2011
Number of people aged 60-74	64,300	71,700	82,800
Number of people aged 75+	32,000	35,200	38,700
Population over 60 as a % of the total population	20.1%	22.3%	25.8%

Demographic projections indicate that older people will become a growing proportion of the population of Buckinghamshire and this change is happening very quickly, as table A2 shows. The population of Buckinghamshire aged over 65 is expected to increase by over 54% between 2001 and 2031. This massive demographic shift poses a major adaptive challenge to all public services, including transport.

Extensive consultation with older residents in Buckinghamshire conducted, by Age Concern in 2001, revealed the following main accessibility-related concerns

- current demand responsive type services perceived to be useful but inadequate
- the high cost of taxi services
- the inconsistency and limitations of the current concessionary fare schemes
- bus services thought to be inefficient, unreliable, and insufficiently flexible, especially for attending hospital appointments or GP surgeries
- inconvenient siting of bus stops, especially in relation to key destinations
- the poor standard of disabled access to most buses
- personal security fears
- standards of customer care and cleanliness of public transport

Our research also found that for older people public transport accessibility and cost tends to restrict access to services outside the immediate locality, particularly hospital services and out-of-town shops.

The Buckinghamshire Strategic Partnership's Older Person's Group believes that public services for the elderly focus too narrowly on health and social care, and insufficiently on issues relating to participation in lifelong learning, employment, and other activities. Transport is perceived to be one of the most important barriers to be overcome.

BSP Strategy for Older People

- To promote quality of life and well-being to improve health and increase independence into later life
- To enable older people to access information, advice and advocacy to obtain greater choice and control, especially at key points of transition in their lives
- To address the failure of the market to deliver the types of products and services that older people want
- To ensure that future consultation on new policies includes the participation of, and engagement with, older people at all stages
- To challenge and address discrimination against older people

5.1.3 Younger people's identified access needs

The ageing of the population is commonly seen as only an older people's issue. However, we recognise that a consequence of ageing will be a corresponding decline in the proportion - and possibly numbers - of younger people across much of the County (although probably not in the northern part because of major growth), which could have wide ranging repercussions for planning for younger people. This will therefore be an important consideration in the ongoing development of our long-term transport strategy and evolution of the accessibility strategy.

Surveys and consultation have shown that transport and access problems impact considerably on younger people's quality of life and life chances in Buckinghamshire. Common accessibility-related concerns included:

- Public transport services seen as inadequate, either because they are too expensive, unreliable, or not available at the appropriate times.
- Inadequate public transport restricts access to education, and leisure community and support services, and leisure.

- Limited provision of, or access to, community services for older teens was felt to exacerbate problems of anti-social behaviour
- Concerns about personal safety on and waiting for public transport - in particular at our main bus stations, which inhibits use of buses after 9pm
- Concern about peer group bullying in public places - some evidence that bullying and other anti-social behaviour occurs on certain public and school bus services, particularly in High Wycombe


The 'Supporting Young People' Community Plan vision

- To provide adequate access to services and efficient means of transport for young people - a safe, reliable, frequent, and affordable transport service
- To encourage active lifestyles, specifically to improve access to and participation in leisure opportunities and facilities

Young people's key accessibility-related demands included:

- Making public transport more affordable for young people
- Improved marketing of existing services
- A wish for more active involvement in decisions affecting them

5.1.4 Identified access needs of people with learning disabilities

 The Best Value Review of Learning Disabled Services in 2001 found that better access to specialist health services and general health care was considered a priority for people with learning disabilities in Buckinghamshire. It also heard that transport has a significant role to play in meeting learning disabled people's wider needs including leisure and social activities, which contributes to their health and general well-being, particularly with the move towards more 'person-centred' and 'supported living' planning principles in social care.

In addition, the local Strategic Area Review process in 2004 found that almost half of education and training providers in Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire identified lack of safe, suitable transport as very

important barriers impeding access to relevant learning provision for students with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. This was found to be especially true for individuals living in rural areas.

The Social Inclusion Best Value Review research found that the most common accessibility concerns of people with learning disabilities in Buckinghamshire include:

- concerns about personal safety and harassment
- lack of disability awareness among public transport staff
- insufficient independent travel training opportunities
- inflexible special transport services provided by social service departments
- lack of flexibility within transport provision generally
- the high cost of transport
- transport not given sufficient consideration when completing individual care plans
- the limited use of direct payments to purchase flexible transport solutions
- unclear, inaccessible information

5.1.5 Other groups' identified access needs

Research for the Review of Social Inclusion found that black and ethnic minority (BME) women, who are traditionally responsible for the care of children and dependent relatives, reported that cost and problems accessing and using public transport with children limited their mobility, and that the lack of childcare at educational facilities discouraged further learning.

The same research also found that lone parents face similar barriers which restricted their access to education and employment, and shops and leisure facilities outside their immediate locality. They also reported that they are often forced to rely on expensive taxis.

We have learnt from service providers that BME people in different age groups and genders tend to have limited participation in physical activities, and some sections of this population also have limited participation in leisure and social activity.

We are generally well informed about the local accessibility needs of people with physical disabilities by the local access groups and other representative groups. Many of their concerns and needs are similar to those experienced by older people, and people with learning disabilities.

We recognise however that we currently have fairly limited local information about the views and accessibility needs of other groups at risk of social exclusion, particularly black and minority ethnic (BME) people, the unemployed, those on low income, and people with mental health problems, despite attempts to engage where possible with representatives of these groups.

5.2 Access to essential services & activities

This strategy focuses on the four main types of service or activity most important to people's wellbeing and life chances, and that of society as a whole. These include:

- Access to education and training (learning) opportunities
- Access to employment opportunities
- Access to healthcare services
- Access to healthy lifestyle resources (i.e. healthy and affordable food, physical and leisure activity, and social interaction)

We have confined ourselves at this stage to only modelling access to the national core indicator destinations, on the basis that this will provide a useful broad brush picture of accessibility in Buckinghamshire.

The following evidence and issues were considered by stakeholders at the key stakeholder workshop held in early 2005 to determine our possible strategic priorities.

5.2.1 Educational deprivation and access

The 2004 Index of Deprivation for education shows that the county's worst clusters of educational deprivation (below ward level) are in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham, but also in some smaller towns and large villages e.g. Haddenham, Buckingham, Princes Risborough, Steeple Claydon and Iver Heath (see Figure A2).

The DfT's core accessibility indicators for education, relate to primary schools, secondary schools and further education for 16-19 year olds. Figures A3-A5 show the mapping audits we have completed for education.

We recognise however that when we think about access to education and training we need to move away from concentrating only on primary, secondary, and 16-19 education, which has been our traditional service focus, and instead consider the full range of 'lifelong learning'. We will also need to consider the strong link between the attainment of appropriate skills and employability.

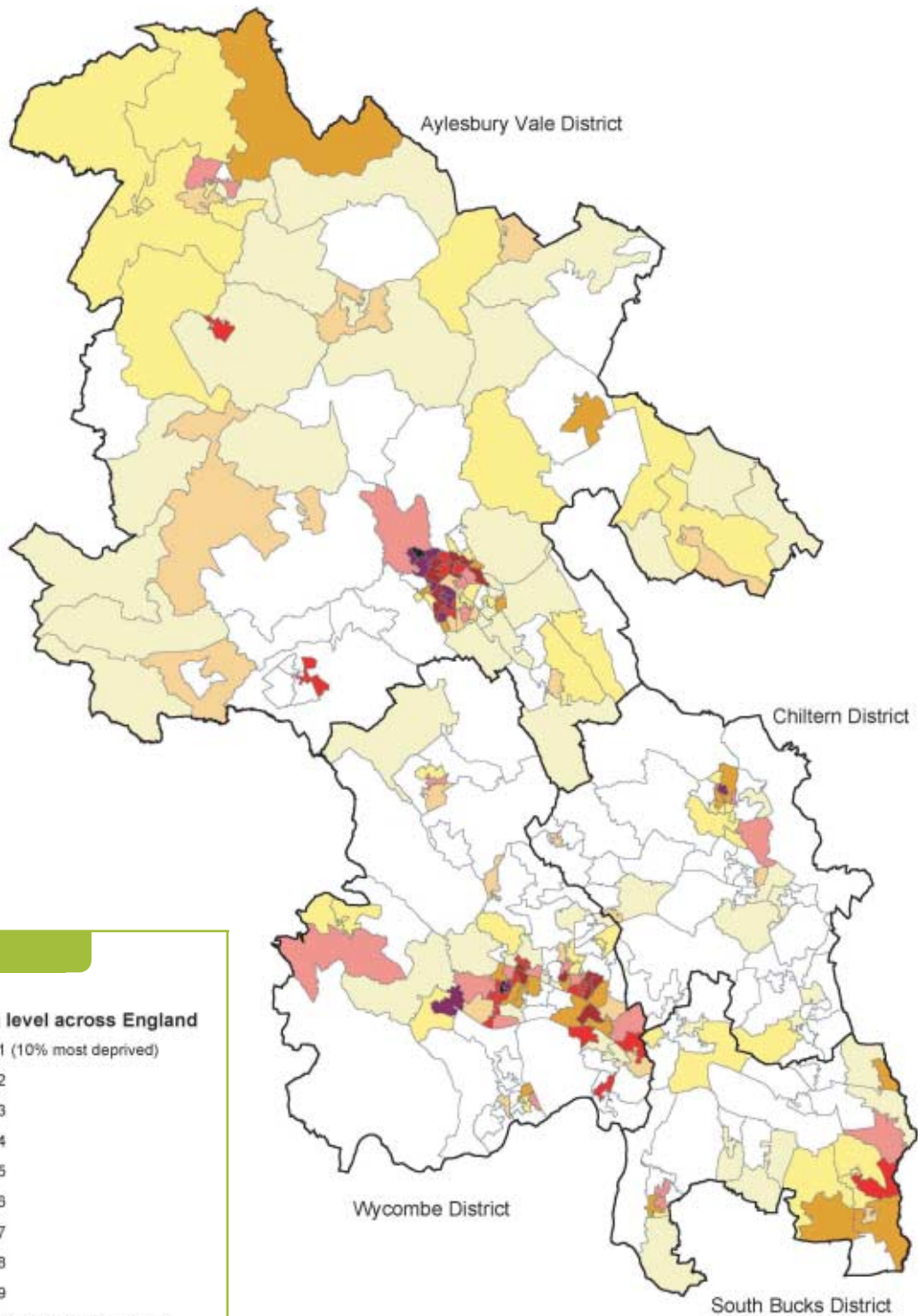
We therefore need to consider four broad stages of education and training:

- pre-school learning
- compulsory age primary and secondary education
- post-compulsory education, particularly for 16-19 year olds
- adult (especially vocational) education

Access to the following types of facility therefore needs to be specifically considered within the accessibility planning process

- Formal pre-school education and care e.g. nursery schools and classes
- Primary and secondary schools (including specialist schools)
- Schools and colleges providing sixth form education
- Further education colleges
- Adult education centres

Figure A2 - Areas of worst educational deprivation in Buckinghamshire



Map Key

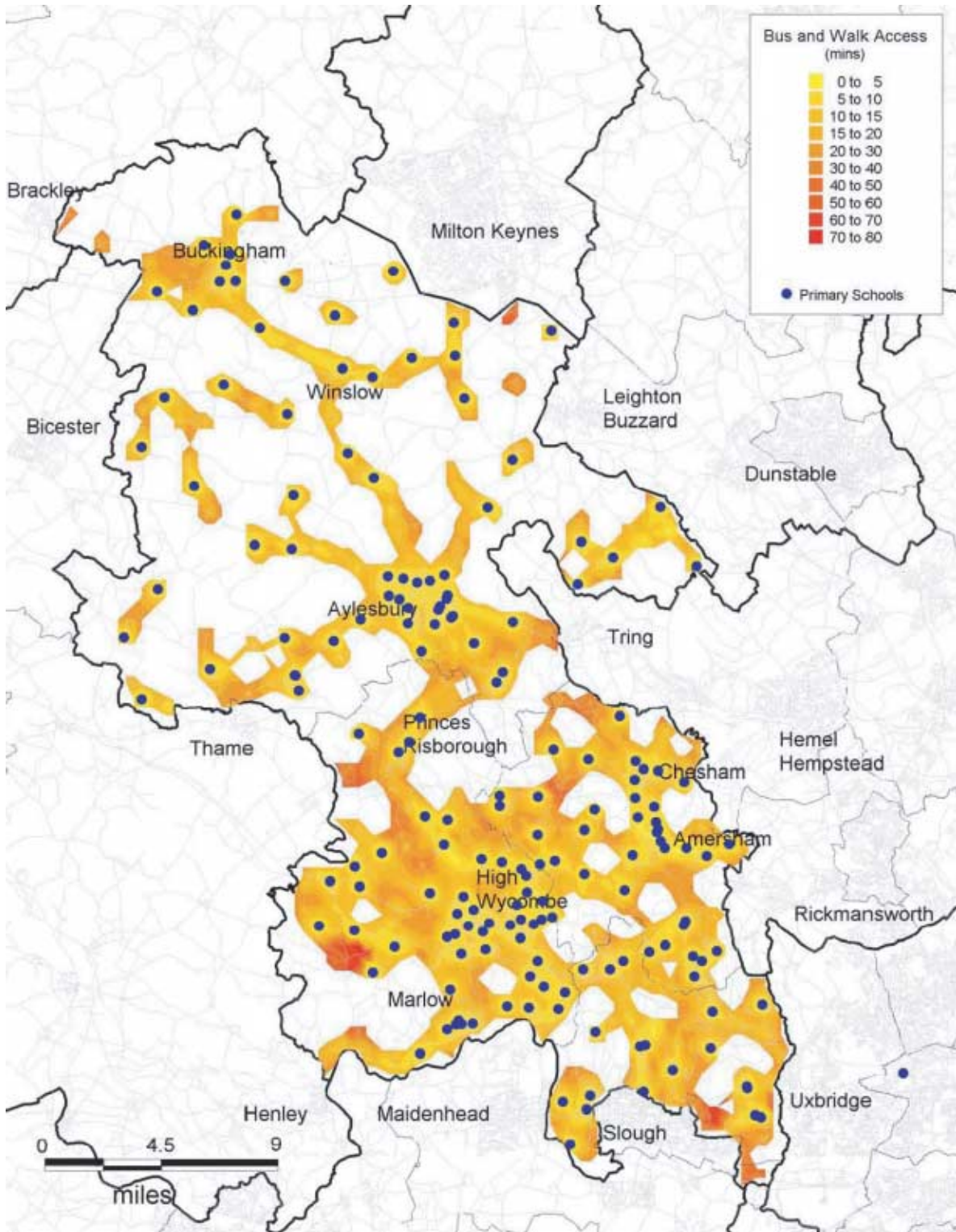
Deprivation level across England

- Decile 1 (10% most deprived)
- Decile 2
- Decile 3
- Decile 4
- Decile 5
- Decile 6
- Decile 7
- Decile 8
- Decile 9
- Decile 10 (10% least deprived)
- Districts in Buckinghamshire



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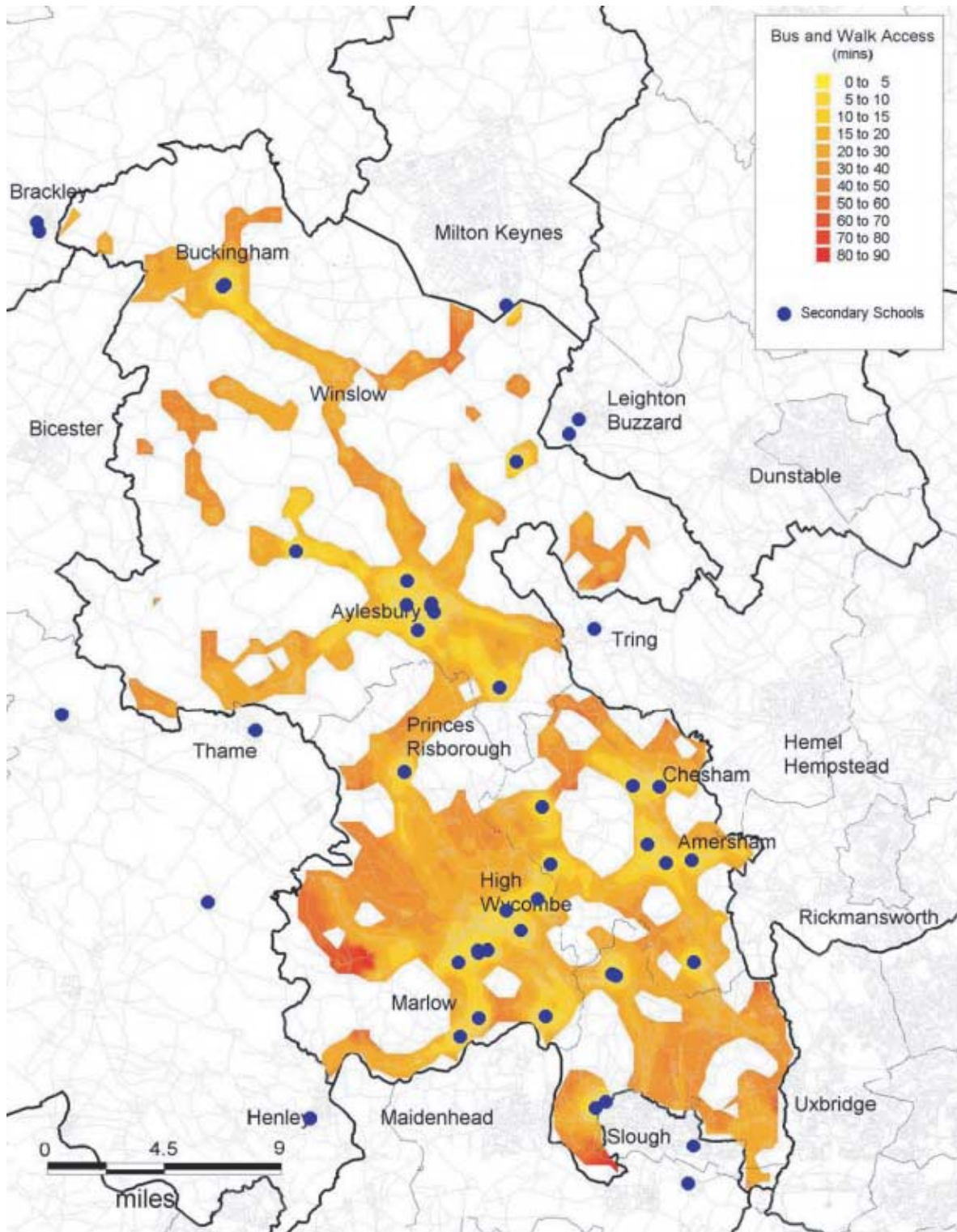
Figure A3 - Bus and walk access to primary schools



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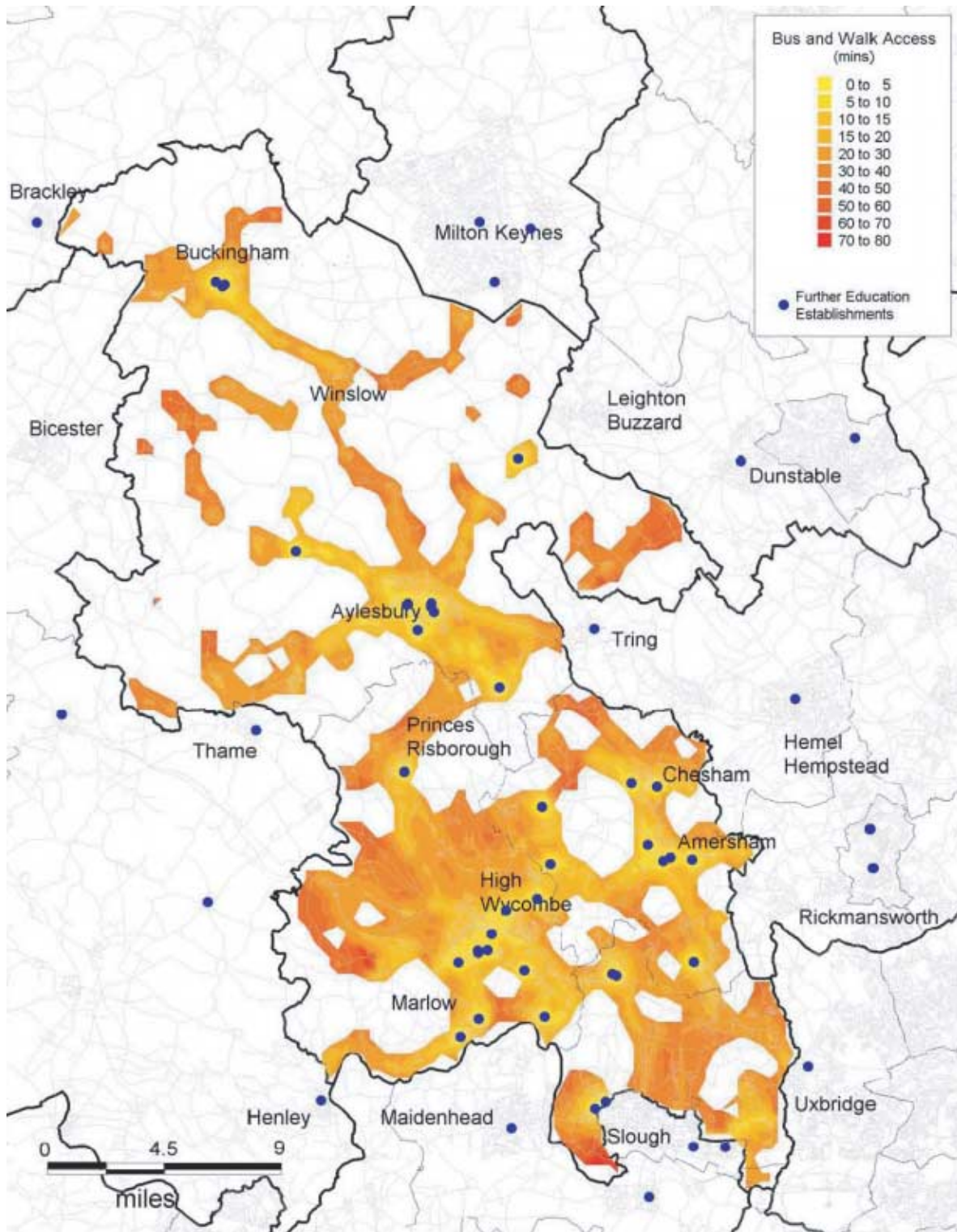
Figure A4 - Bus and walk access to secondary schools



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Figure A5 - Bus and walk access to further education



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Early years education and childcare

High quality pre-school education is now seen as crucial to raising overall educational attainment in later life. Furthermore, pre-school education and out-of-school childcare are strongly associated with the participation of women in formal employment. These related types of service therefore need to be considered as part of educational and employment-related strategies in our accessibility strategies.

The Buckinghamshire Early Years Development & Childcare Services Strategic Plan seeks to improve opportunities for children in 'clusters of disadvantage' where children are particularly prone to under achieve for a variety of reasons. The Plan sets out objectives to achieve this by linking health, education, and social care services.

The Plan focuses on the need to ensure that the geographical distribution of childcare services enables childcare to be readily accessed, especially from more disadvantaged areas. Sure Start Children Centres (for children under 5) will be the centrepiece of this strategy and an extensive network of these facilities are to be established across the County during the Second LTP period.

In general our towns are generally well provided for and parents may even have choice. It does appear however that disadvantaged households and communities, usually only access early education and care if it is within walking distance, as they tend not to have access to cars, and rarely use buses. We believe that this may be because early education sessions generally last for only 2.5 hours and there is insufficient time to use public transport, especially if the parent is caring for a younger sibling.

The number of breakfast and after-school clubs is increasing, but the latter especially are difficult to sustain at smaller primary schools, which are generally outside the larger towns. Breakfast and after-school clubs are only available to children attending the school where they are based as it is not economically viable to provide transport.

Holiday childcare clubs tend to be larger and much fewer, and are therefore relatively sparsely distributed throughout the county. This pattern assumes that most parents that work are able to transport a child to the most convenient facility, although it is recognised that this excludes or deters those without transport options. In this case the parents would either have to find alternative (local) care, or care near or on the way to their workplace, or decide not to work (at least during this period).

Compulsory age education

Across Buckinghamshire, the majority of pupils living outside the main towns have an entitlement to free home to school transport to their nearest appropriate primary and secondary school. Catchment areas, particularly those relating to the grammar schools, extend over wide rural areas and only about 20% of entitled pupils travel to and from school by public transport; the majority being provided with transport on contracted buses or coaches, which are not currently included in the core indicator.

Whilst the outputs from Accession show that there are significant areas in the county where journey times by bus and walking to primary school, secondary school and further education establishments are over than an hour, our current performance measured against the core national indicator for access to schools is good (see below). No more than 15% of pupils make longer

DfT Core indicator	Current performance
<p>Percentage of:</p> <p>a) pupils of compulsory school age; and</p> <p>b) pupils of compulsory school age in receipt of free school meals (*) ...</p> <p>within 15 and 30 minutes of a primary school and</p> <p>within 20 and 40 minutes of a secondary school by public transport</p>	<p>79% (94%*) of pupils live within 15 minutes of their nearest primary school</p> <p>88% (98%*) of pupils live within 30 minutes of their nearest primary school</p> <p>63% (89%*) of pupils live within 20 minutes of their nearest secondary school</p> <p>85% (97%*) of pupils live within 40 minutes of their nearest secondary school</p>



journeys than the maximum time periods suggested in the Government's core indicator. Figure A3 shows that primary schools are highly dispersed across the county and that it is possible for most pupils to walk or use the bus to travel to the nearest school in a reasonable time. This clearly reflects the fact that primary schools tend to serve the immediate area and closer study in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham & Amersham showed that almost all children are within 10 minutes journey time of a primary school.

Table A3, which shows the results of a survey conducted by the Council in 2004, reveals that some 75% of all primary school pupils using school transport travel less than 20 minutes to get to / from school.

Figure A4 shows that most secondary schools are found in the larger towns, and that access by walking and/or bus is reasonable, except in parts of northern Buckinghamshire. Research in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham & Amersham indicates that most areas of the towns are less than 15 minutes from a secondary school. Journey times are slightly longer in High Wycombe as many of the schools are sited nearer the edge of the town.

In Buckinghamshire, most pupils who live outside the main towns are entitled to free home to school transport to the nearest appropriate secondary school. Catchment areas, particularly for grammar schools, extend over wide rural areas and only about 20% of entitled pupils travel to school by public transport. Most travel on contracted buses or coaches that are not currently included in the core indicator.

Indeed the council's survey in 2004 (see table A3) confirmed that only 13% of secondary school pupils for whom transport is provided have a

journey time in excess of 40 minutes and only 1% have a journey of more than 60 minutes. The majority of pupils who travel for more than 40 minutes live outside the county (primarily in Milton Keynes) and have exercised their parental choice to attend grammar schools in Aylesbury or Buckingham.

There are a significant number of secondary school pupils in our three major towns (Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Amersham/Chesham) that live less than three miles from their nearest appropriate school and therefore do not qualify for free school transport. A proportion of these students will be driven to school, making journeys of less than three miles within the urban areas, where the impact of these car trips contributes to traffic congestion. Our current school travel planning activities (see Section B, 7.5.6) seek to reduce car use on the school journey.

The availability of good public transport in these main urban areas could play an important role in improving pupils access to grammar and upper schools - thereby extending choice for those not qualifying for free school transport, and whose parents are possibly unable to transport and fetch them by car. In addition this would help reduce the need for pupils to be taken to and from school by car, thereby reducing congestion on the roads at peak travel times and contributing to improved road safety around the schools.

The recent Schools White paper includes proposals to extend rights to home to school transport. Current arrangements provide a guarantee of home to school transport for only a small minority of pupils. The preference for schools is often hindered by concerns among parents about the cost and availability of transport, resulting in inequity. The Government therefore proposes to introduce legislation to

Table A3: Journey times to Primary and Secondary Schools by school transport

Journey time to school (March 2004)	Up to 10 minutes	11-20 minutes	21-30 minutes	31-40 minutes	41-50 minutes	51-60 minutes	> 60 minutes
Transport to primary schools	42%	33%	10%	5%	5%	5%	0%
Transport to secondary schools	12%	36%	24%	15%	9%	3%	1%



enable parents of disadvantageded pupils - those entitled to free school meals, or in receipt of their maximum level of Working tax Credit - to have free transport to any of the three suitable schools closest to their home, where these schools are more than two (and less than six) miles away. In addition to this, the development of 'Extended Services' at schools, will have significant impacts upon both accessibility and inclusion in the future, particularly where there are currently limited choices for the school journey. These new policy developments will require consideration as we further develop our accessibility strategy and review our school travel strategy.

Further Education for 16-19 year olds

Figure A5 shows that further education facilities in Buckinghamshire are located within our main towns (Amersham & Wycombe College and Aylesbury College). In some cases however students travel to educational facilities outside the county (see the Adult Education section below). As a result students in rural areas may have lengthy journeys, or no access at all in certain time periods. However it needs to be noted that outside the major towns, access to secondary education is assisted by extensive provision of home-to-school transport that offers free travel for entitled pupils to their nearest appropriate secondary school and subsidised transport for all 16-19 year olds living more than three miles from the nearest school or college offering their chosen course.

For those studying at schools, transport is normally provided on existing school buses, only available at the start and end of the school day, thereby reducing flexibility of travel times. A failure to provide travel opportunities that fit with the curriculum has been identified by young

people as a barrier to further education. A survey of Year 11 students in 2004 identified that many had limited knowledge of travel opportunities and financial support, whilst some reported that paying the costs of travel to further education would be difficult, and that journeys would be long and time consuming.

The current performance of the public transport system measured against the core national indicator for access to further education facilities is shown below.

The Bucks Lifelong Learning Partnership has informed us of other concerns with regard to 16-19 year olds and adult learners:

- For those living in rural areas access by public transport into colleges in Aylesbury and High Wycombe is difficult early in the morning, and for courses finishing in the evening, learners (or potential learners) are generally unable to get homes by public transport.
- Cross-county journeys to educational facilities are in some cases difficult and time consuming.
- Bus journeys across town to some training/education facilities are very time consuming.
- Buses, especially from deprived areas are not always well routed relative to learning centres.

DfT Core indicator	Current Performance
Percentage of 16-19 year olds within 30 and 60 minutes of a further education establishment by public transport	81% of 16-19 year olds live within 30 minutes of a Sixth Form or FE College by public transport. 87% of 16-19 year olds live within 60 minutes of a Sixth Form or FE College by public transport.



Adult Education

Adult education, takes place in many locations including specific adult education centres and temporary facilities, further education (FE) colleges, and some workplaces. No mapping has been carried out specifically for adult education establishments, though it was for FE facilities.

A Learning & Skills Council study in 2002-3 of travel-to-further education patterns showed that the main FE centres outside Buckinghamshire used by Buckinghamshire residents included: Milton Keynes College (MK), East Berkshire College (Slough), Barnfield College (Luton), Henley College (Henley-on-Thames), Oxford College (Oxford), North Oxfordshire College (Banbury), Dunstable College (Dunstable), Reading College and School of Arts & Design (Reading), and Berkshire College of Agriculture (Maidenhead).

There is also quite a large amount of travel into the County to FE colleges. The study showed that both Amersham & Wycombe and Aylesbury Colleges had above average inflows of learners from outside the sub-region:

- Amersham & Wycombe College: Herts, Berks, and London;
- ^a Aylesbury College: Beds & Luton and Herts.

The County Council's Adult Education Service is the main provider of part-time learning opportunities for adults in Buckinghamshire. The Service's Plan up to 2006 argues that continued prosperity in the area depends on increased productivity which is partly dependent on increased training and education of the workforce, and an improvement in skills across the whole population.

The Plan also recognises the need to concentrate on older people given the likelihood that more will continue working beyond the current retirement age, and should be enabled to actively participate in the community and economy.

Discussions are underway with local partners - including the District Councils - to ensure that the need for adult learning provision is incorporated into the appropriate local development documents, particularly in the growth area of Aylesbury Vale.

Three new learning centres have recently opened in Aylesbury and High Wycombe to provide

learning in areas where adults have low educational attainment levels and participation rates. There is an acknowledgement however that communication and transport problems pose significant barriers to widening participation in more rural parts of the County.

Adult Learning's inclusion / accessibility-related strategic objectives include:

- Attracting new learners, especially from 'hard to reach' groups such as the 25-45 age group (particularly men) and young people aged 16-18 not engaged in learning
- Establishing new Centres in "High Street" locations, giving priority to High Wycombe and Aylesbury
- Providing good quality accommodation to deliver programmes in rural areas

The main findings of relevance from the 'Strategic Area Review' (StAR), led by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) included:

- Some learners, particularly in rural areas, face accessibility/transport problems
- Gaps exist in learning provision for the expected growth areas in the local economy
- An increasing number of learners in South Bucks and Aylesbury Vale are travelling outside the County for education and training
- Evidence of a link between lower performance and areas of deprivation
- Significant numbers of people in Bucks have basic skills problems
- More integrated information, advice and guidance needs to be provided

Further work needs to be done to identify how accessibility planning could contribute to addressing the above mentioned problems.

5.2.2 Employment deprivation and access

Registered unemployment in Buckinghamshire is substantially lower than the UK average: only 1.3% (3,748 people) in January 2005 compared to 2.6% for the whole of the UK. The wider ILO definition of unemployment suggests however that the number of unemployed people in the County is much higher: the most recently available data for 2002/3 showed it to be 3.8% (about 9,500 people). Of these 40% lived in

Wycombe, 32% in Aylesbury Vale, 17% in Chiltern, and 11% in South Bucks.

The Index of Deprivation (2004), which uses a wider definition of employment deprivation, shows the worst concentrations of employment deprivation in the County (below ward level) as being in Aylesbury and High Wycombe, but there are also small clusters in Amersham, Chesham and some isolated rural communities (see figure A6).

The core national indicator for access to employment relates to access to employment centres (super output areas with over 500 jobs) for people of working age, and particularly for those in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance. Figure A7 show the mapping audit we have completed for access to employment.

Although we have measured this national core indicator, we have reservations and consider it to be of limited value in measuring access to employment since it is not a measure of access to employment opportunities. Also the focus of the indicator on those on job seekers allowance is probably not as appropriate for Buckinghamshire as it might be in other areas with higher registered unemployment.

The national indicator does not take account of the fact that, as the 2001 census showed, there was a substantial difference (i.e. 30,494 jobs) between the number of residents in Buckinghamshire that work (240,744) and number of jobs in Buckingham-shire (210,250), explaining why there is such a high level of out-commuting. This suggests that those with limited access to jobs may have fairly limited local job opportunities.

Accession (Figure A7) shows that there are significant parts of the County - off the main corridors in 'rural' areas - where journey times by public transport to major employment centres is poor and services are non-existent at peak-times, and indeed on many days. Our current performance measured against the core national indicator is shown in the table below.

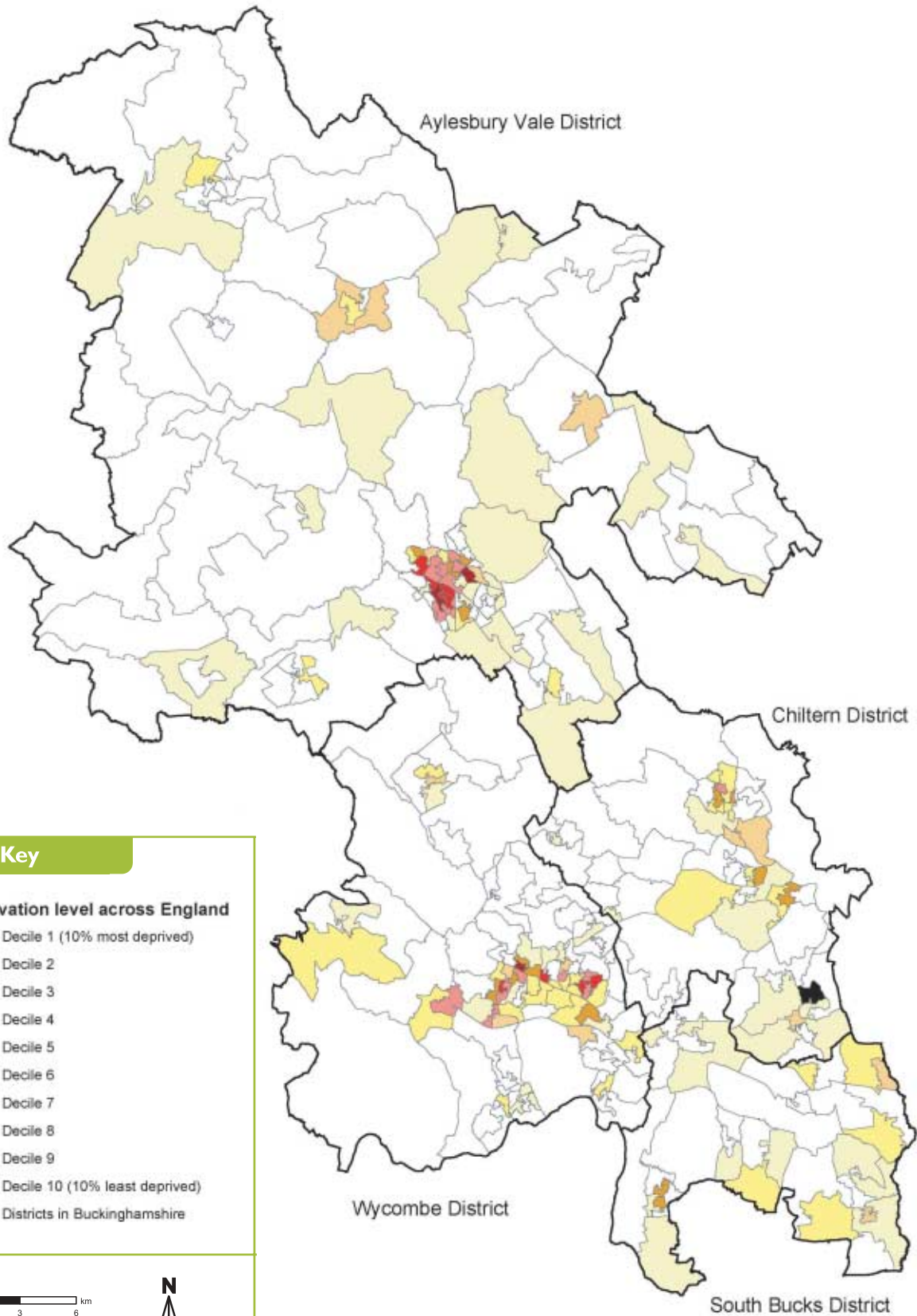
We acknowledge that our overall performance measured against the core indicator seems poor, but this should be balanced against the low number of people on Jobseeker's Allowance. In terms of absolute numbers there is little evidence at a strategic level that accessibility presents a significant barrier to employment in Buckinghamshire. It is recognised however that opportunities for those living in rural areas to access work by public transport is minimal, and that its cost and availability have been identified as barriers to employment by young people in particular.

We recognise however that improving access to employment is about more than just tackling unemployment. It is also about addressing the link between recruitment and retention difficulties and access, and generally improving people's access to employment opportunities because of the economic benefits.

DfT Core indicator	Current Performance
<p>Percentage of: a) <i>people of working age;</i> b) <i>people in receipt of Jobseekers' allowance ...</i></p> <p>within 20 and 40 minutes of work by public transport</p>	<p>55% of people of working age (47% in receipt of Jobseekers' allowance) live within 20 minutes of a major employment centre by public transport</p> <p>83% of people of working age (71% in receipt of Jobseekers' allowance) live within 40 minutes of a major employment centre by public transport</p>



Figure A6 - Areas of worst employment deprivation in Buckinghamshire



Map Key

Deprivation level across England

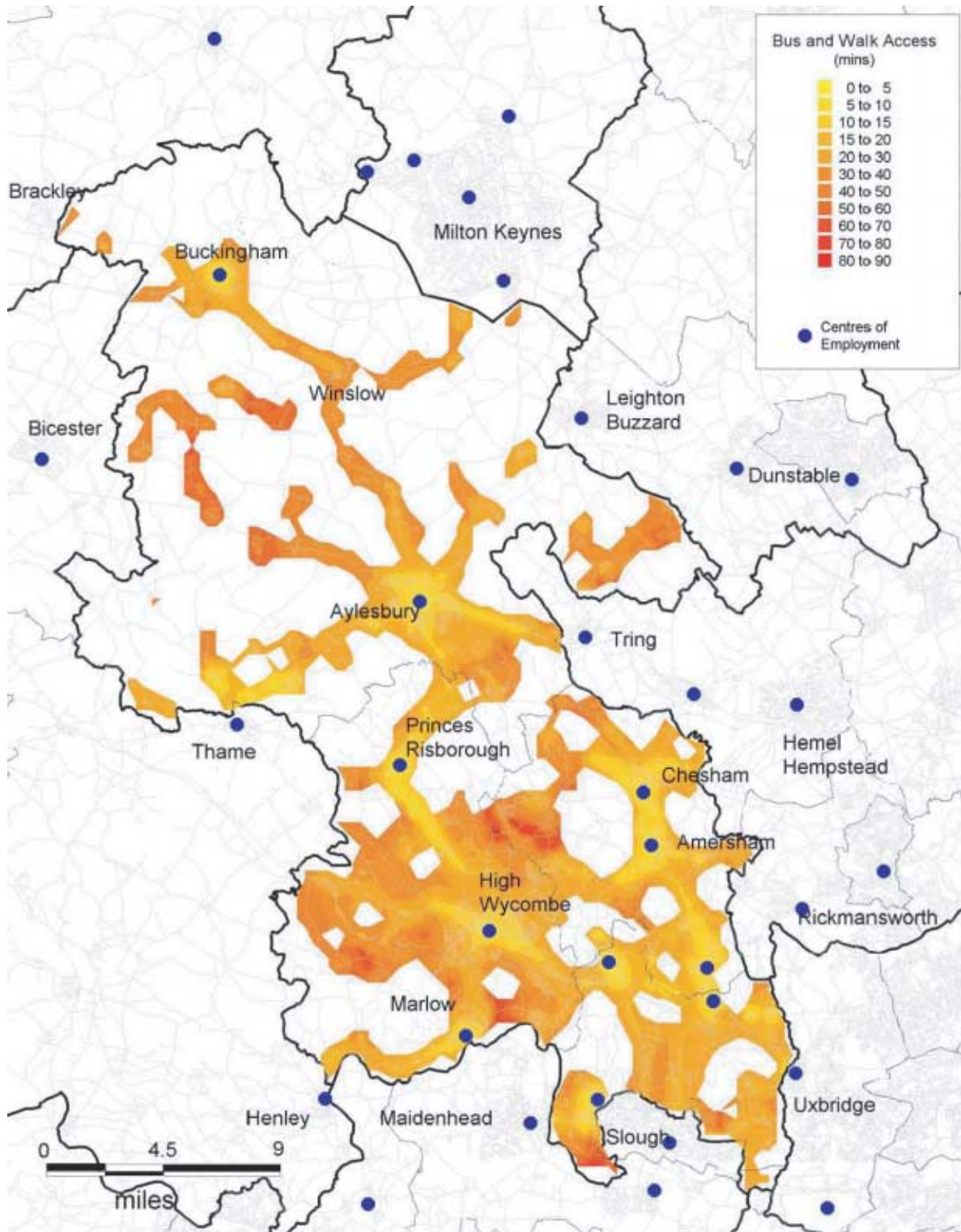
- Decile 1 (10% most deprived)
- Decile 2
- Decile 3
- Decile 4
- Decile 5
- Decile 6
- Decile 7
- Decile 8
- Decile 9
- Decile 10 (10% least deprived)
- Districts in Buckinghamshire

0 3 6 km



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Figure A7 - Bus and walk access to centres of employment



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While the labour force in Buckinghamshire is generally well qualified compared to other local authority areas, given the low unemployment rate and economic competition, there are significant issues around recruitment and retention and skills gaps at all levels. In a recent survey 38% of local employers reported difficulties in recruiting staff. Furthermore, the 'Strategic Area Review' found that action needs to be taken to prevent serious shortages in the major growth areas in the local economy in the foreseeable future.

Although economic activity in Buckinghamshire is relatively high compared to the national average, it is significantly lower than in Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire. An estimated 50,000 people in Buckinghamshire of normal working age are currently not economically active (see table A4 below), which can be an indication of 'hidden' or latent unemployment.

This picture accords with that of the Job Centre Plus agency for Buckinghamshire, which is aware that in addition to unemployment claimants there are approximately 30,000 other people in Buckinghamshire that they are tasked with encouraging into paid work. This target group consists of three main categories:

- people on disability or long-term sick benefits
- partners of people on disability and unemployment benefits
- lone parents

The Buckinghamshire Community Strategy emphasises the need to promote 'A Thriving Economy', to which end it sets a number of objectives including:

- the maintenance of economic growth - particularly in the north of the County
- the provision of major new business parks
- a significant increase in jobs in modern, high technology sectors
- a significant reduction in the rate of out-commuting
- the development of a major programme of local skills training
- recognition of the importance of jobs in rural areas

Our analysis has therefore identified the following issues to be considered further:

- Public transport access to centres of employment within and outside the county from rural areas
- The need to develop an appropriate indicator that enables us to measure how easy it is to access employment opportunities
- The number of non-employed people in Buckinghamshire that could be encouraged into paid work, to support sustained economic growth

Table A4: Employment and economic inactivity rates for Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire- January 2005

	Employment Rate (%)	Economic inactivity	
		16-59/64 year olds (000's)	Rate - 16-59/64 year olds (%)
Bucks	78.3	50.0	17.2
Aylesbury Vale	78.1	17.0	16.6
Chiltern	79.3	10.0	19.2
South Bucks	76.7	6.0	17.8
Wycombe	78.7	16.0	16.5
Milton Keynes	82.2	18.0	13.2
Oxfordshire	84.0	51.0	13.5

5.2.3 Health deprivation and access

The 2004 Index of Deprivation shows the worst concentrations of health deprivation in the County lie almost exclusively within Aylesbury and High Wycombe (see figure A8). However, we are acutely aware of significant healthcare-related access needs in both urban and rural areas of Buckinghamshire.

The DfT's core accessibility indicators for healthcare, relate to general hospitals and GP surgeries. Figures A9 -10 show the mapping audits we have completed for healthcare.

In this section we examine the evidence of accessibility disadvantage in relation to acute i.e. hospital-based healthcare, and primary healthcare (which is generally delivered outside hospitals and includes general practitioners, primary health clinics, opticians, dentists, home-based services and others).

Acute healthcare services

Access to hospital services is generally perceived to be one of the most serious accessibility problems facing people living in rural areas and smaller settlements. This applies to the whole of Buckinghamshire, but certain parts of the county are significantly worse off than others.

This view is supported by the findings of our accessibility modelling (figure A9) which illustrates that access to a general hospital is reasonable from settlements in the south (with Princes Risborough a key exception) with lengthy journey times from the north, and particularly the northwest. Rural areas off the main transport corridors have limited access. Bus services to hospitals in the south are similar across the day, with slightly better frequencies and journey times

in the morning than the afternoon or evening. Areas around Winslow have poor links, with no bus services during the mid morning period and in the evening peak.

Table A5 suggests that our performance against the core indicator is reasonable with at least 80% of the population able to access a general hospital within 60 minutes. The proportion is significantly lower for journeys less than 30 minutes, although households with no car and low-income groups appear to have significantly better access than the wider population. However, this relatively healthy picture masks the reality of the situation in Buckinghamshire.

There are three general hospitals in Buckinghamshire, located in Stoke Mandeville, High Wycombe, and Amersham, managed by one NHS Hospital Trust. Over the years, mainly driven by clinical and financial considerations, there has been a gradual process, accelerating recently, of increased specialisation across the hospital sector.

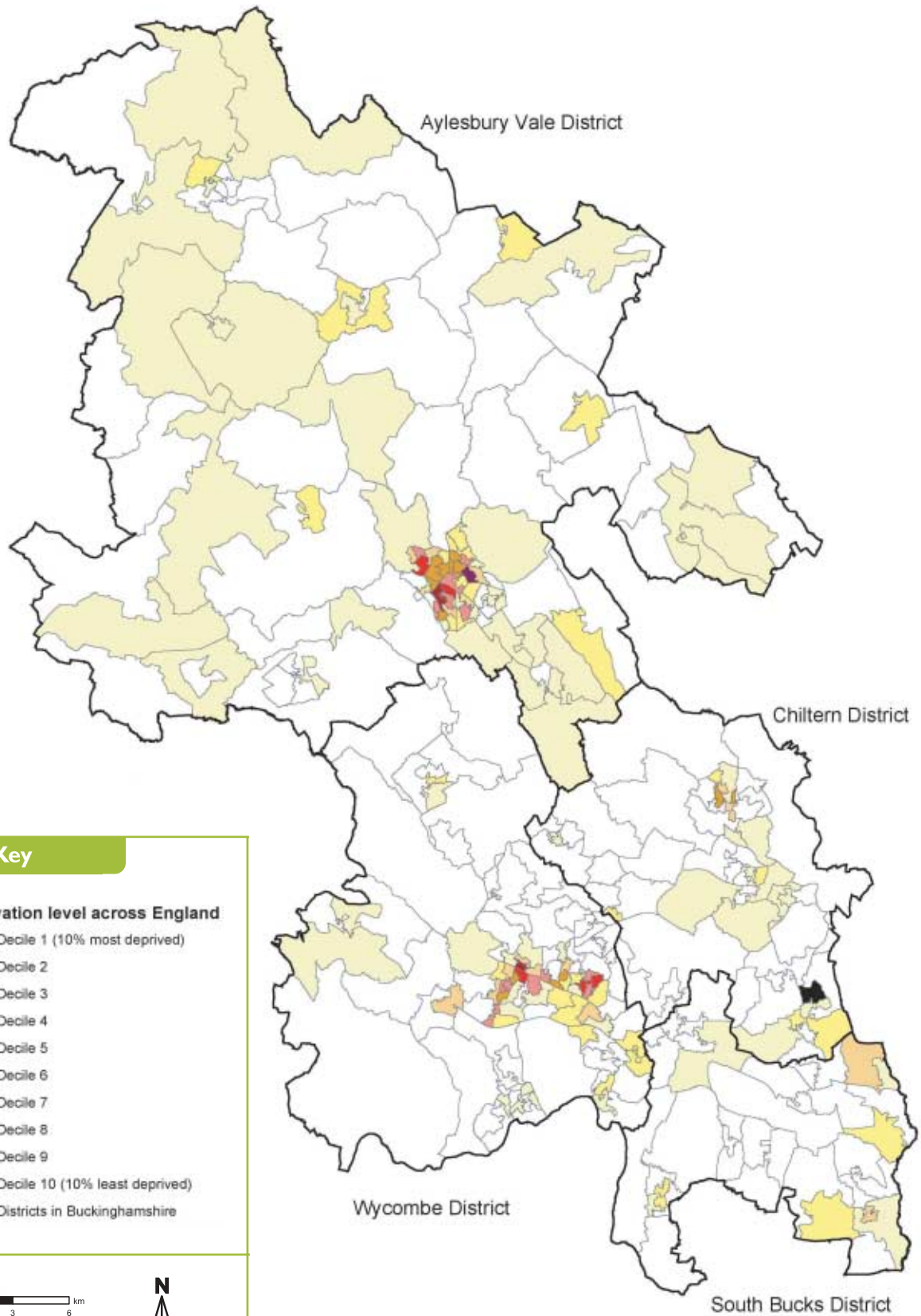
Increased specialisation of hospital services in Buckinghamshire has imposed additional accessibility problems for those without access to a car needing to attend out-patient clinics, or wishing to visit friends or relatives in hospital.

The national core indicator for access to general hospitals is therefore considered to be of limited value in measuring Buckinghamshire residents' access to hospital services since it does not take account of the dispersal of services across a number of general hospitals over a wide area, which constitutes the greatest accessibility problem in this area.

Table A5: Accessibility audit for healthcare (2004 data)

HEALTHCARE	General hospital <30 mins	General hospital <60 mins	GP surgery <15 mins	GP surgery <30 mins
All households	53%	80%	64%	85%
Households no car	65%	88%	77%	91%
All people	53%	80%	63%	85%
Young	54%	80%	64%	85%
Elderly	51%	80%	64%	85%
Low income	59%	85%	71%	89%

Figure A8 - Areas of worst health deprivation in Buckinghamshire



Map Key

Deprivation level across England

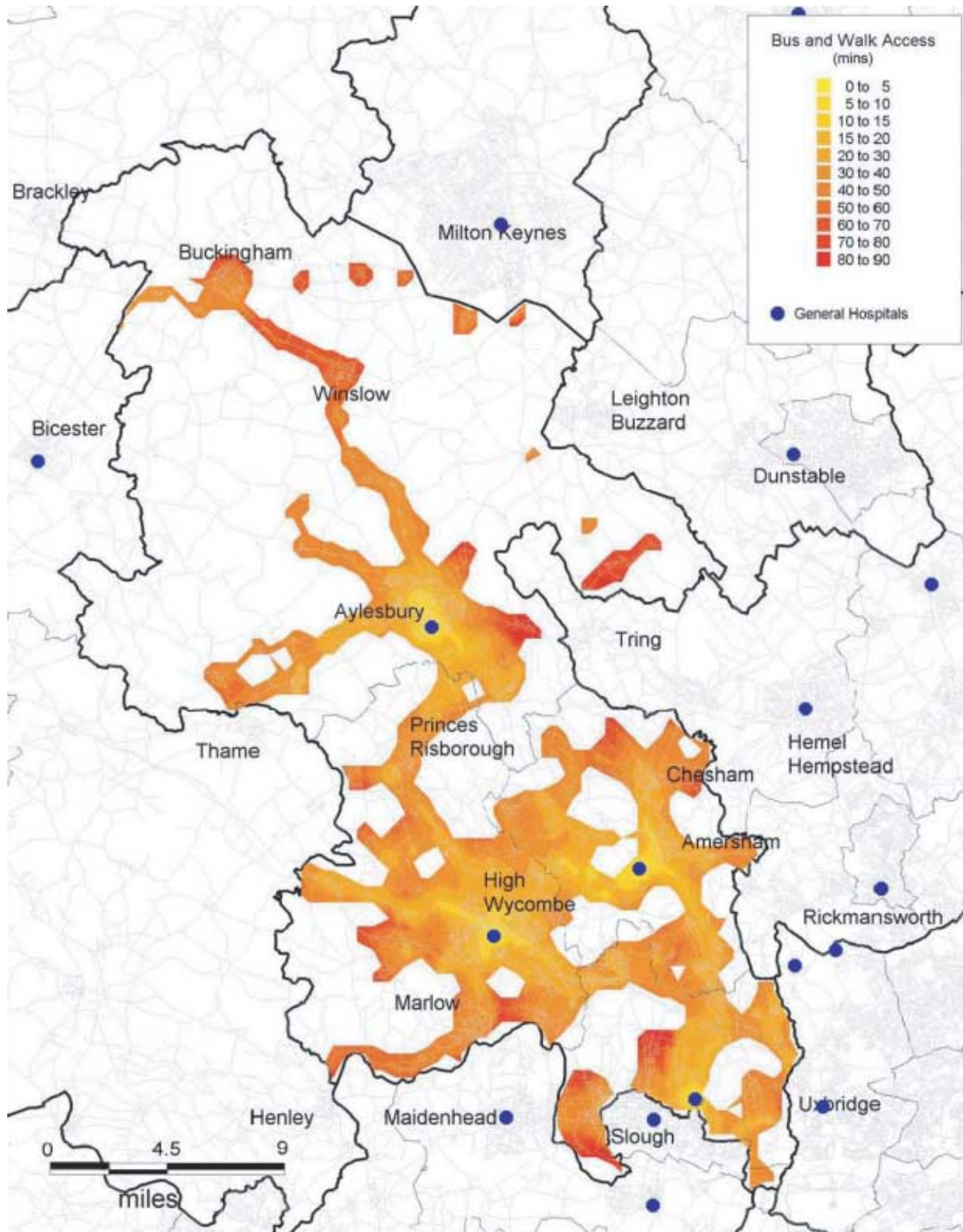
- Decile 1 (10% most deprived)
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- Decile 3
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- Districts in Buckinghamshire

0 3 6 km



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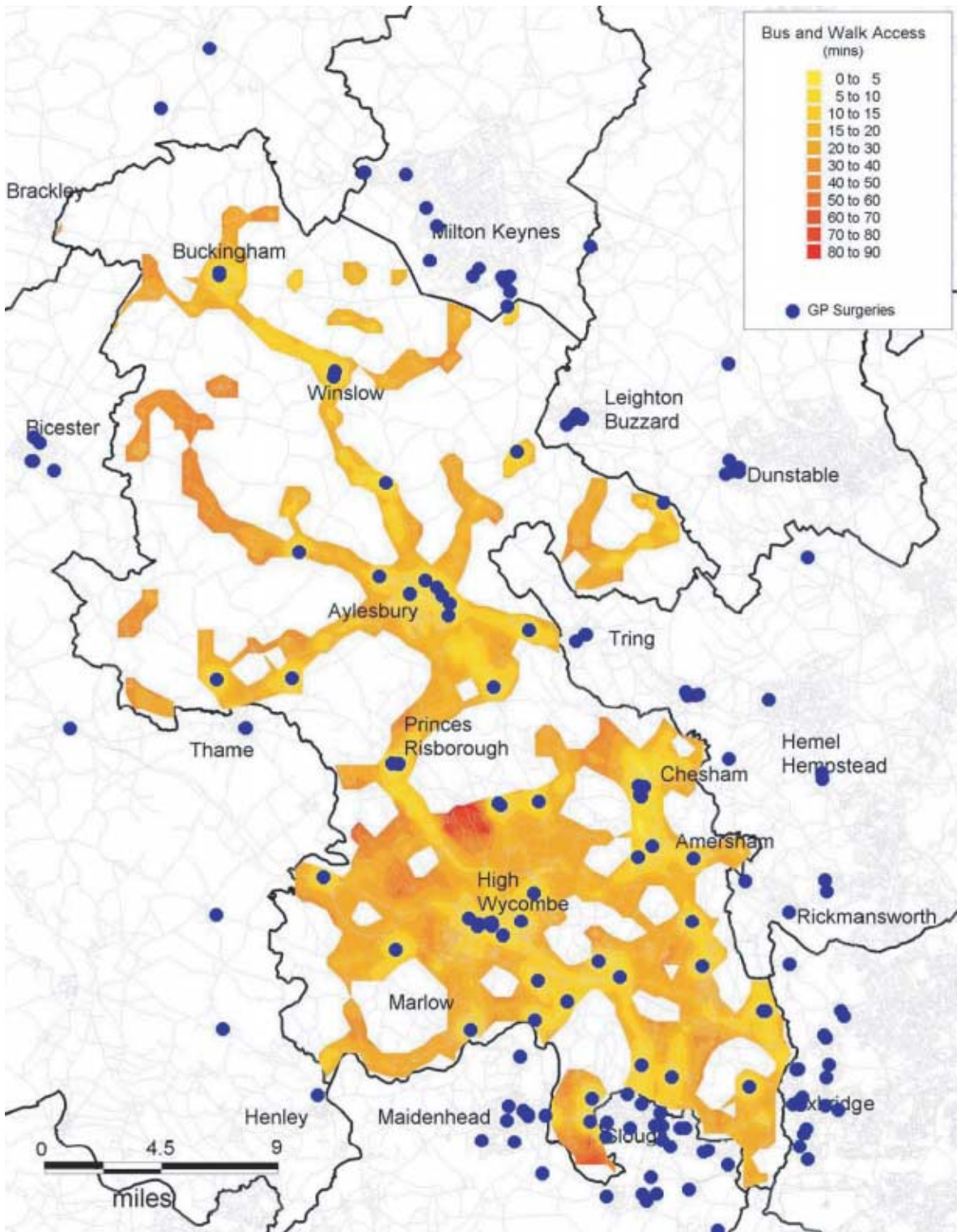
Figure A9 - Bus and walk access to hospitals



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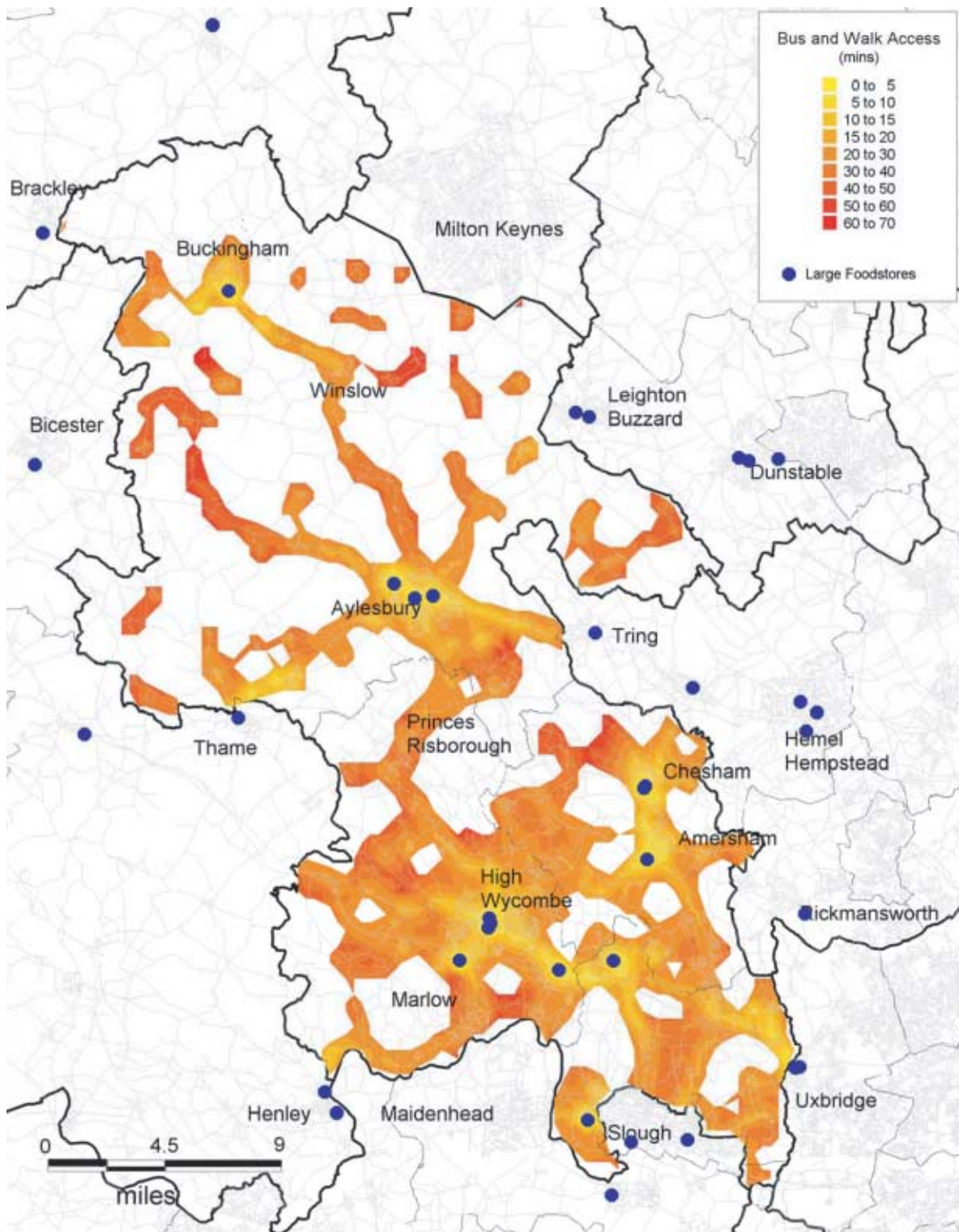
Figure A10 - Bus and walk access to GP surgeries



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Figure A11 - Bus and walk access to large food stores



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An increasing number of Buckinghamshire residents will, at some time or other, be required to travel to general or specialist hospitals in or outside Buckinghamshire which are not their closest and most commonly used hospital. The general hospitals outside Buckinghamshire most frequently used (or visited) by Bucks residents include:

- Wexham Park Hospital (Slough)
- John Radcliffe Hospitals (Oxford)
- Milton Keynes General Hospital
- Luton & Dunstable Hospital (Luton)
- Mount Vernon (Northwood)

For longer inter-county or out of county journeys public transport access for out-patients and visitors is often very difficult, extremely burdensome in terms of travel time, and costly. The problem is a county wide one, but is arguably most serious in the far northern and north-western parts of Buckinghamshire.

The other main areas of concern identified include:

- All the general hospitals are outside the town centres with few direct bus routes necessitating the use of more than one bus from most areas
- Car parking at our general hospitals, and hospitals used by Buckinghamshire residents outside the County, is considered a major problem
- Visiting hours policies are not necessarily well co-ordinated with public transport service times, or vice versa
- For many rural areas, especially in the north of the county, accessing hospital services at times when they are needed demands access to a car. Conventional rural bus services are unlikely to offer the flexibility necessary
- Voluntary car schemes play an important role in providing access to hospitals and GP surgeries, particularly from more rural parts, but are generally on the decline
- Transport and accessibility does not appear to be systematically considered when making locational and service planning decisions

Primary healthcare services

The national core indicator for access to a GP surgery is a useful measure of access to GP services in Buckinghamshire, but is not a good proxy for access to other primary healthcare services, such as opticians and dentists which are much more variably located. Figure A10 shows that GP surgeries are clustered in the main towns but are also found in many of the smaller market towns.

Levels of access in terms of travel time to GP surgeries by bus and / or walking are therefore far better than for general hospitals as would be expected. Once again rural areas off the main corridors have limited or no access on a frequent basis, although once again these contain a relatively small proportion of the population. There is also a gap in bus service provision in the afternoon in rural areas south of Buckingham and west of Aylesbury.

Table A5 illustrates that between 63% and 77% of Buckinghamshire residents are able to reach a GP surgery within 15 minutes, and between 85% and 91% within 30 minutes, suggesting that access is generally good. Again, households with no car and low-income groups appear to have significantly better access than the wider population.

Conventional rural bus services do not offer flexibility for a relatively short visit to a surgery, meaning an extended stay until the bus service returns (for people in many rural areas, accessing GP services at times when they are needed therefore requires access to a car, or a home visit). This is seen to be one of the biggest problems facing people in rural areas, especially in more remote parts of Aylesbury Vale.

Consultation and research has revealed further problems in accessing primary healthcare services:

- The trend for GP practices to consolidate into fewer, larger health centres, and associated closure of smaller surgeries, causes difficulties for some patients, especially those without access to a car
- Some of the most deprived estates have inadequate local access to primary care services e.g. Castlefield, Micklefield and Southcourt

- Problems with accessing GP services is leading to increasing pressure on Primary Care Trusts to arrange home visits. It has been estimated that about 70% of home visit patients could safely attend the surgery if they could access convenient and affordable transport with both health and efficiency gains
- New GP out-of-hours services are likely to be further centralised, making them even less accessible, particularly in rural areas
- The distribution of other primary care services such as pharmacies, opticians, and dentists (particularly those open to NHS patients) in the rural areas and smaller towns, and sometimes in more deprived parts of the parts of the larger towns, is perceived by those without access to cars, to be inadequate

Our performance, measured against the national access to healthcare indicators, is reasonable and demonstrates better access for households with no cars and low-income groups. However, it is clear that there are significant issues we need to address, including:

- Access to general hospitals in and beyond the county in the light of increasing specialisation and relocation of services
- Access to GP surgeries and other primary care services, especially from outlying and remote rural areas.

5.2.4 Resources for healthy living

We believe that healthy living is about more than just access to food shops and so have defined four important elements:



- Food shopping
- General shopping and other services
- Physical activities
- Leisure and social activities

Food shopping

One of the national core indicators has been revised to focus specifically on access to major food stores. The mapping audit (see figure A11) shows that access to large foodstores by public transport and on foot is reasonable across the county, reflecting the distribution of stores. However, as with other destinations considered, rural areas have little or no access away from the main corridors. The measurement of this indicator is shown in the table below.

Although we consider this to be a fairly useful indicator it has its limitations: there are a wide range of means of access to healthy and affordable food, not reflected in this indicator. For instance in Buckinghamshire this mapping audit does not take account of:

- The subsidised bus services we provide to secure access from rural areas to local towns (often on market days)
- The ‘shopper buses’ provided by large supermarkets
- The importance of local food stores and markets, especially to less advantaged groups

DfT Core indicator	Current Performance
Percentage of: a) households; b) households without access to a car ... within 15 and 30 minutes of a major supermarket by public transport	34% of households (47% of non-car owning households) are within 15 minutes of a major supermarket by public transport 78% of households (86% of non-car owning households) are within 30 minutes of a major supermarket by public transport

We also recognise the importance of the intermediate medium-sized foodstores, usually located in our few larger town centres, and intend to include these in future modelling. Some sections of the population at risk of poor food access also rely on home delivered meals or meals eaten at day centres.

The evidence therefore suggests that although public transport and walking access to major food stores in Buckinghamshire is not very high, access to healthy and affordable food generally is not as great a problem as it might otherwise appear. This is not to say there is no problem, or room for improvement, but more detailed research is necessary. A study was recently completed for the adult social care service and Older People's Partnership which we will consider.

General shopping, leisure & social activities, and basic services

Although we recognise their importance, at this stage we have not considered access to important ancillary services such as post offices and banks/ATMs, which are often needed on a local scale. They will be considered in local accessibility assessments. However we have begun to consider access to general goods shopping and other basic services such as council and public service offices, which are generally only found in a small number of larger centres in and near Buckinghamshire. Because of Buckinghamshire's population geography there are limited opportunities for leisure activities locally for many people, depending on their preferences.

Originally the DfT proposed a national indicator for access to major centres, which could have been an effective proxy measure of access to these types of services and general shopping (as well as centres with an extensive range of leisure and recreational activities, employment, primary healthcare etc). However this proposal was dropped.

For our own strategic assessment however we have considered it useful to model access to regional or major centres and significant local centres (defined as 'Areas of retail activity' by the ODPM) at various times of the day and night. The

result is shown in figure A12. Once again southern Buckinghamshire enjoys better access than northern areas, because of the concentration of facilities in the south. Generally, rural areas are characterised by lengthy journeys or no access at all. Access in the morning and afternoon periods is similar, although some areas around Buckingham have no afternoon access. Late night access is generally poor, with most areas (apart from Uxbridge, Aylesbury and High Wycombe) having no access at all.

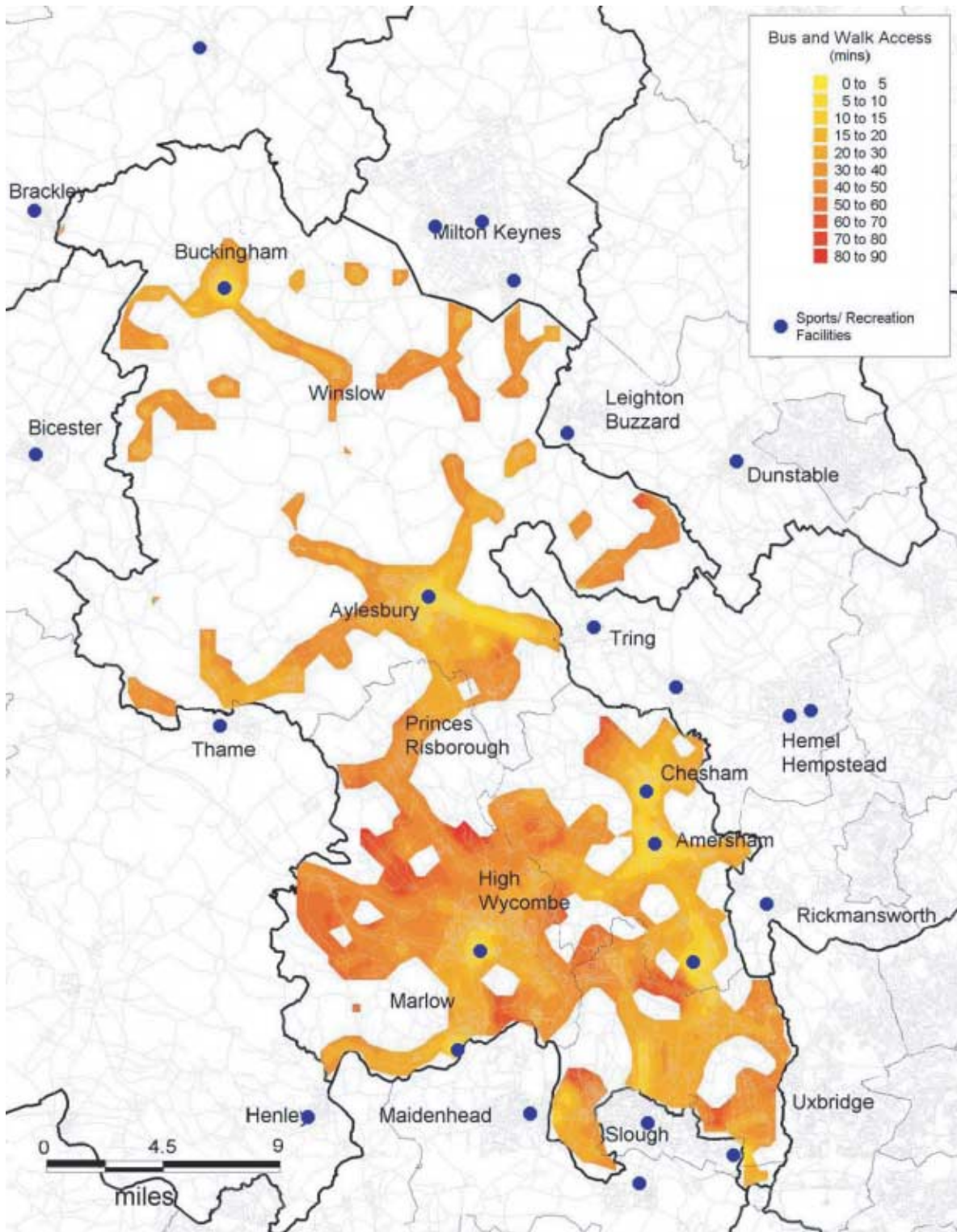
Physical activities

Two aspects of physical activity have been considered - access to public recreational centres and the countryside. Access to good walking and cycling opportunities for utilitarian purposes could be another good measure, though this has not yet been considered.

There are no national core indicators for any of the above activities, however we have specifically undertaken modelling of access to the few public recreational centres in the area (see figure A13). Access to these is reasonable in the south of the county because most facilities are in the main urban areas, but rural areas have limited or no access. This is especially true for areas between Buckingham and Aylesbury. Access across the day is similar for all time periods, although rural areas have no access in the afternoon. Apart from the main towns evening access is very limited, and non-existent in rural areas to the north of the county (with the exception of the area close to Buckingham).

Modelling public transport access to the countryside is the reverse of access to urban centres, and shows the limitations faced by those wishing to access remote rural areas for recreation/leisure (and employment). The available evidence suggests that certain segments of the population are currently under-represented in both these types of physical activity, and that poor non-car access is perceived to be an important barrier. Although the availability of public transport, and the duration of travel may be a problem to some, travel cost, lack of knowledge, inadequate information, and other accessibility barriers are undoubtedly also factors.

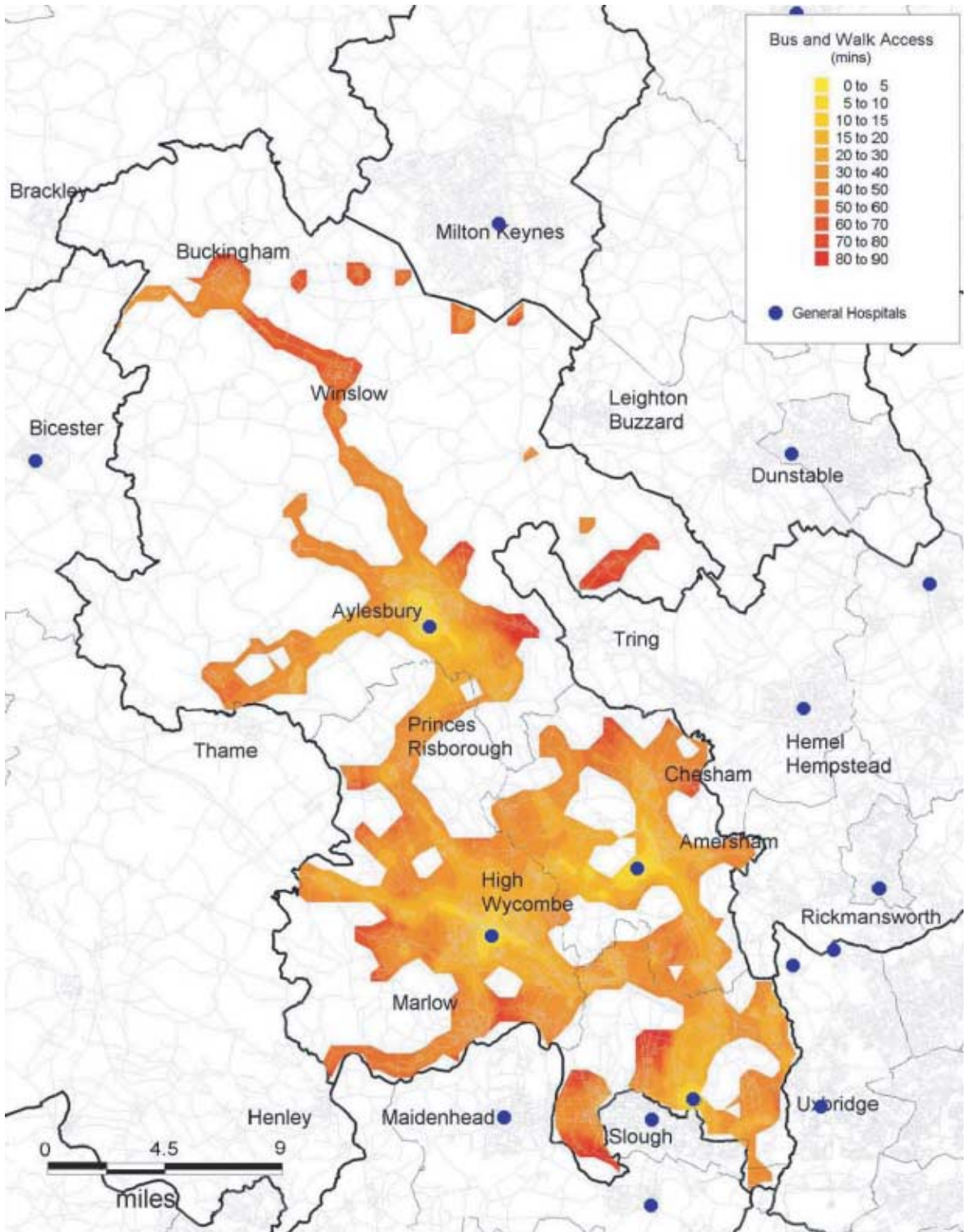
Figure A12 - Bus and walk access to sports/recreation



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Figure A13 - Bus and walk access to centres of leisure



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5.3. Geographical analysis of local accessibility

In the previous sections we have looked at accessibility from the perspective of specific social groups and key services and activities. The purpose of this section is to analyse the 'Buckinghamshire accessibility problem' in terms of its various inter-related components, in order to begin constructing a comprehensive and systematic accessibility strategy. To this end we have divided the 'accessibility problem' into an 'inter-urban problem', a 'rural problem', and an 'urban problem'.

5.3.1 The inter-urban accessibility problem

Buckinghamshire has a very distinctive geography with significant implications for accessibility, travel, and economic development. Like many parts of the South East, large parts of southern, central, and eastern Buckinghamshire lies within a rectangle formed by four major development and movement corridors consisting of:

- the 'Western Corridor' stretching between London and South Wales
- the main north-south corridor linking the southern ports with the major industrial regions of the West Midlands and north-west England
- the 'Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge arc' identified as a corridor for economic growth
- the main north-south corridor from London to the Midlands and the North

Within this rectangle of major economic development, Buckinghamshire is predominantly a semi-rural and sparsely populated county: just over one-third of the population live in medium-sized towns with populations between 40,000 and about 70,000 (Aylesbury, High Wycombe, and the adjoining towns of Amersham and Chesham), while the rest (i.e. slightly over 300,000) live in small towns, villages, and isolated rural households.

The fact that there is no sufficiently large town in Buckinghamshire capable of supporting a full range of key services and large numbers of jobs, and therefore acting as the main focal point for most activities and inter-urban public transport, results in a highly dispersed pattern of activity and travel for many needs (e.g. healthcare, retail, employment, and post-secondary education).

An important consequence of this geography is that there are unusually high levels of out-commuting from Buckinghamshire to London and the surrounding more economically developed

areas. Strategic road and rail corridors running north - south and northwest - south-east are generally more well-developed than those running east-west. Associated with this, with the exception of London, public transport connectivity to most major employment and urban centres and public transport nodes outside Buckinghamshire is relatively limited.

5.3.2 The rural accessibility problem

Social exclusion is a growing concern in rural areas, one of the main underlying reasons being fundamental change associated with high levels of migration and other forces.

In many areas wealthier people are moving in while poorer people are moving out. Although this is primarily because of the rising cost of housing/lack of sufficient affordable housing, public transport accessibility to jobs and services, and high transport costs have also been found to be a major cause of exclusion difficulties, with wide-ranging adverse implications for the economy and society in rural areas.

Accessibility in rural areas has been in decline for a long time. There has been a continuing loss of local shops and other services and changes in the local job market that, together with rising social expectations, has fuelled an increased need to travel. At the same time there has generally been a contraction in the availability of public transport in these areas - and reduced access on foot or by bicycle.

The result, in parts of 'rural' Buckinghamshire, is a sparse and infrequent pattern of bus services - often running nearly empty along similar routes, and in the same way, as they have done for many years. These bus services generally cater solely for a captive market. Although the community transport sector is growing steadily, it is still not on a sufficient scale to meet all expressed demand, and even less so all 'needs', and faces difficult barriers to substantial growth.

Most of these services (off the core routes) are almost wholly dependent on the Council's financial support to provide a 'safety net' that meets people's basic 'social needs' - usually interpreted as access to food shopping.

The cost of maintaining this 'safety net' has escalated well above the rate of inflation in recent years (see figure A14), while at the same time passenger numbers in the rural areas are continuing to fall on most routes - leading to the continued loss of some services. The current system is clearly unsustainable both in purely transport terms, and arguably also in terms of its



social and economic impacts.

We recognise that there are many important needs not being catered for adequately by the present public transport system, and that it is becoming harder for people in the rural areas to take up jobs and get to key services and activities. This contributes to out-migration as already mentioned, but also to an important less visible feature, i.e. many households in rural areas spending a higher proportion of their incomes on car ownership and operating costs than urban households.

Regarding cycling and walking, it is probably true to say that the full potential of these modes in providing links from villages to key destinations in neighbouring towns and villages has not been exploited sufficiently in Buckinghamshire. We also recognise that more attention needs to be paid to pedestrian access to bus stops and addressing personal security concerns in rural areas.

5.3.3 The urban accessibility problem

Although the problem of accessibility in Buckinghamshire is often thought to be mainly a 'rural' one, it is not confined to such areas. Although large parts of our main towns are well-served by bus services operating mainly on radial routes to and from the town centre, during the

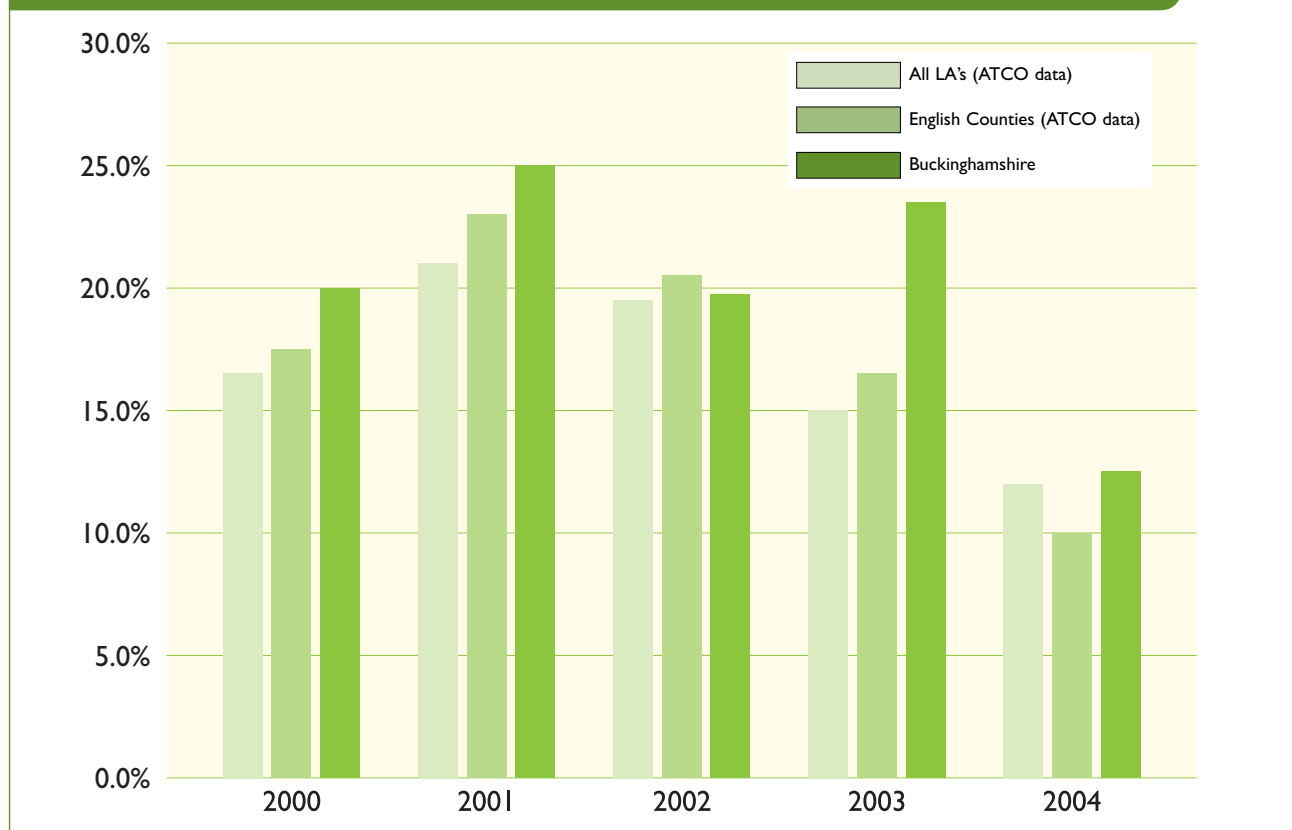
day, evenings and weekends, and many core bus services have been significantly improved with County Council funding and support in recent years, it appears that many residents do not feel that current services are adequately meeting their transport needs. This was confirmed by a survey undertaken by MORI in 2003 in four relatively deprived wards in High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Chesham:

- Residents without access to a car reported difficulty in accessing health services, council offices, recreational and leisure activities, supermarkets, pharmacies, and cash points
- The lack of access to private transport seems to seriously curtail residents' ability to be involved in any kind of community activity

Our own "Activity and Travel Needs Survey" in 2004 found that for those with limited car access in relatively deprived neighbourhoods in Buckinghamshire:

- journeys to hospitals and clinics were considered to be the most difficult and expensive
- activity patterns were much more limited than those with full or partial access to the car
- use of childcare, education, recreational and

Figure A14: Increases in bus contract prices 2000-2004



leisure services, and participation in work, was more limited than could be explained by demographic factors

- those that did try to engage in these types of activities experienced above average difficulty and cost in doing so, which may explain their low activity rates

The reasons for this situation are complex and often the result of a combination of accessibility and other barriers including:

- not all residential parts of these towns are equally well served
- many cross-town services are difficult because of the quality of interchange
- there is limited provision for orbital journey patterns
- relatively poor provision for late night-early morning work shift patterns - when many less-skilled workers may need to travel
- the taxi alternative is considered to be prohibitively expensive by many
- the loss of local neighbourhood facilities e.g. local food shops, pharmacies, and even GP surgeries, is often more pronounced in deprived areas where they are most needed
- the shift of many large retail outlets, and employers, to edge of town locations, which, for many people without cars, are difficult to reach
- even our larger towns do not necessarily have a full range of services or employment opportunities, often requiring that people make journeys outside the immediate urban area, or that activities are suppressed
- concerns about personal security on and around public transport

Although the main focus of many people's accessibility concerns is understandably public transport services, the local access groups and voluntary organisations representing disabled people and the elderly in Buckinghamshire, remind us that we still have some way to go to ensure physically accessible whole journey chains.

Programmes to promote walking and cycling, and address pedestrian road safety problems, have sometimes made significant contributions to local level accessibility, particularly to town centres, schools, and train stations. However, many of these measures have up to now not concentrated sufficiently on access to local bus stops, local neighbourhood facilities and other key facilities,

or dealing with small impediments and community safety deterrents.

Transport programmes have also arguably concentrated more on specific measures rather than on developing comprehensive walking and cycling networks that enhance connectivity and therefore overall accessibility by non-car means.

5.3.4 Consequences of the current local accessibility situation

Accessibility in Buckinghamshire is currently such that getting to many places by means other than the car is, for many, at best very difficult and sometimes costly. Unsurprisingly many households consider car ownership, and even multiple car ownership, as not just a luxury or status symbol but as an absolute necessity. In 2001 only 13% of Buckinghamshire households had no access to their own car or van, compared to 19% in the South East and almost 27% in England. Even in the three largest urban areas in Buckinghamshire, only just over 18% of households had no access to a car, while in the rest of the county the rate was under 11%.

The high levels of car ownership that many households in this area feel necessary contributes to the high local cost of living, and there is anecdotal evidence that it may lead to cuts in other important areas of household expenditure.

The relatively low level of access to job opportunities within Buckinghamshire contributes to comparatively high average journey to work distances by residents: for instance, the (median) average journey is 8.6 km - the highest in the South East, and 34% higher than the South East average (UK Census, 2001). This has important implications for traffic congestion and the environment.

Accessibility planning in Buckinghamshire is therefore not just about catering for those individuals and households without access to a car, but about creating genuine travel choices for most households, and encouraging a better distribution of land use activities.

Our emerging accessibility strategy attempts to grapple with the accessibility problem on all three of the geographical levels discussed above, and not only deal with the symptoms of the problem but also try to address the underlying causes.



6 DEFINING OUR ACCESSIBILITY VISION, OBJECTIVES, INDICATORS AND TARGETS

6.1 National policy objectives

The primary purpose of accessibility planning is to promote social inclusion, and this objective is embedded in the shared priority for transport. National priorities are to improve access to, and outcomes in relation to:

- education & training (learning)
- employment
- healthcare
- healthy lifestyle resources

To provide a common basis for measuring success, the DfT has established six core national accessibility indicators for measuring public transport (and pedestrian) access (using journey time) to the following types of facility:

- primary and secondary schools
- further education establishments
- employment centres
- general hospitals
- General Practitioner surgeries
- large supermarkets

The DfT has however stated that it will not be narrowly prescriptive in determining the focus of local accessibility planning, as it wants to encourage local authorities and their partners to determine priorities reflecting local needs and circumstances. Although we are not obliged to set targets relating to the above indicators we are expected to report against them.

6.2 Our local accessibility vision and objectives

Our accessibility vision for Buckinghamshire in 2011 flows from national objectives and the strategic objectives and vision in the Buckinghamshire Community Strategy and other local plans. It expresses the County Council's aspirations for what it is able to achieve through its planning, service delivery, and community leadership roles, with regard to improving the relationship between transport, accessibility and social inclusion, and thereby provides a guiding principle for internal and external partnership working.

We welcome the fact that the DfT has not been prescriptive in setting mandatory accessibility indicators and targets, and instead has encouraged authorities to identify supplementary

local accessibility indicators, ideally outcome-based, in support of the wider vision and objectives for the area, and based on our prioritisation of accessibility and social exclusion-related problems.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ACCESSIBILITY VISION

“an integrated transport and land use system, and joined-up service delivery, that provides improved participation in work, education, and a range of leisure activities, as well as providing easier access to healthcare services, healthy and affordable food shopping, other basic services and activities, helping meet the essential needs of those who live, work, shop and make use of services in Buckinghamshire.”

We recognise the danger of focusing only on improving access to a limited number of facilities or activities and paying insufficient attention to others because of the systemic, inter-related nature of social exclusion (and multi-purpose nature of much transport provision). We are conscious of the difficulties experienced by people, especially those living outside the main towns, in accessing other services besides those targeted in the national indicators.

The list of facilities in table A6 encapsulates our understanding, based on consultation and experience, of the types of services and other facilities that are most essential to social inclusion. Clearly we cannot address access to all these services and activities in detail in the strategic assessment. The ease of access to them will vary significantly around the county, and we will be examining access needs in relation to them in more detail through a series of local action plans that will be developed over the LTP period.

Although we might not be able to immediately provide or ensure adequate access to all services or activities, we recognise the need to develop a strategy that aspires to improve access to these within the resources available to us and our partners, and when opportunities present, depending on identified priorities.

Some services and activities might easily sit under different themes. For example, childcare has been placed under the employment theme, not education, to indicate its importance to women and lone parents participation in employment.

Table A6: Key services and activities that promote social inclusion

<p>HEALTHCARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Hospitals • GP surgeries & primary health clinics • Dentists (NHS) • Pharmacies • Opticians • Community Hospitals • Mental Health Hospitals <p>HEALTHY LIVING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foodstores and food markets • Mobile food delivery • Recreational/sports centres • Leisure centres • Country parks • Main walking & cycling leisure routes • Childrens centres <p>EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-school education • Primary schools • Secondary schools • Establishments with sixth forms • Further education colleges • Adult education centres 	<p>EMPLOYMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of jobs • Larger town.city centres • Large workplaces, business parks, industrial estates • Job centres • Pre-school childcare • Out-of-school childcare <p>RETAIL & LEISURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town/city centres with range of general shopping • Town/city centres with day and night time leisure activities • Youth centres <p>OTHER SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries • Public internet access facilities • Banks/ATMS • Post offices • Social security/benefit offices • Council offices • Social care & other community centre services
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6.3 Emerging priorities and strategic indicators

Our analysis of current accessibility problems and needs (section 5) has begun to shape our views about the strategic priorities to be addressed, and our general approach. We have identified a number of strategic issues that appear to be important under each theme, and identified a number of local strategic indicators that we propose to adopt. Most of these we will not set targets against, but will be used for local

performance management and evaluation of the impact of our policies. At this stage we propose to adopt only one indicator against which we will set a target.

Through consultation with partners and other stakeholders we have identified those issues that are currently seen as the most important (in bold). Some further work has taken place with our partners and target groups to determine which of these should be taken forward, and on what time scale.

Healthcare

Access to Healthcare priorities

- access to **GP surgeries, especially from deprived urban areas and rural areas**
- access to **general hospitals both inside the County and in adjoining areas**
- access to **NHS mental healthcare facilities used by Bucks residents**
- access to other primary healthcare services e.g. dentists, opticians, pharmacists, particularly for those living in rural areas

We propose to routinely monitor accessibility to each of the three main hospital sites in the county and, with our partners in the Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust and Mental Health Trust, will be addressing the need to ensure that access to specialist hospital services is considered as a key element in the review of hospital services in the County. We therefore propose to adopt a local accessibility indicator (i.e. ALI 1/1a) to each of the three general hospital sites in Buckinghamshire, and to work closely with health agencies to develop improved accessibility to each of the sites.

Local indicators 1/1a

% of households within 60 minutes of each of the three general hospitals in Buckinghamshire by a public transport service operating at least once an hour

% of other households able to access a flexible transport service to a general hospital

We propose to adopt a similar local indicator (i.e. ALI 2/2a) to enable us to monitor accessibility to primary healthcare facilities. We believe that, in areas not served by the core public transport network, access to a hospital or GP surgery by public transport requires the availability of a flexibly-timed and possibly door-to-door service - either a demand responsive bus service or voluntary car scheme. We therefore propose to consider a further local indicator to measure the availability of flexible transport services for journeys not possible using conventional public transport services.

Local indicators 2/2a

% of households within 30 minutes of a GP surgery by a core public transport service operating at least once an hour

% of other households able to access a flexible transport service to a GP surgery

Contribution to wider local objectives

Action to address the accessibility priorities mentioned above would make positive contributions to the community strategy, particularly the 'Healthy Communities' objectives, and would similarly contribute to achieving the NHS's main objectives and targets.

Healthy lifestyle resources

Access to healthy living priorities

- access to **large and medium-sized foodstores, or alternatively healthy and affordable food, particularly for the elderly and those without private transport**
- public transport access to public sports/recreational centres
- public transport access to major attractions in the countryside
- public transport access to major centres (with an extensive range of shopping and leisure activities)

We consider that a strategic local indicator that reflects accessibility to centres containing a wide range of services and activities should be adopted for this theme. We therefore propose to adopt the ODPM's definition of 'Areas of Town Centre Activity' to define those town centres in and around Buckinghamshire (see Appendix 1) that offer a set minimum level of retail and commercial activity, and also other types of opportunity. This indicator is discussed in the employment section below.

Contribution to wider local objectives

Action to address the accessibility priorities mentioned above would make positive contributions to the Community Strategy, particularly the 'Healthy Communities' objectives, and would similarly contribute to achieving the NHS's main objectives and targets.

Employment

Access to employment priorities

- public transport access to **Aylesbury and High Wycombe town centres**
- public transport access to major urban centres within commuting distance of **Buckinghamshire**

- public transport access to large workplaces, business parks and industrial estates
- access to employment for people living in rural areas without private transport
- access to employment during the transition from education or unemployment to work
- access to out-of-school childcare, particularly in rural areas and smaller towns

Following consultation with stakeholders, we propose to direct our focus on access to employment around the ease of accessing regional and local strategic town centres (see Appendix 1) within which a range of employment opportunities exists. The local indicator (ALI 3) is described below.

Local Indicator 3

Percentage of households within 30 minutes of a regional or local strategic town centre by a public transport service operating at least hourly

It is against this multi-purpose indicator that we have decided to set our Accessibility Targets for the next LTP period

Currently 80% of households in the County are able to access a town centre by public transport within 30 minutes, on at least an hourly basis weekdays.

We recognise, however, that this indicator does not provide that meaningful a measure of accessibility to employment and we will work with partners to identify a better and more useful type of measure.

Contribution to wider local objectives

Action to address the accessibility priorities mentioned above would make positive contributions to the Community Strategy, particularly the economic objectives, and would similarly contribute to the achievement of Job Centre Plus's main objectives and targets.

Learning

Access to learning priorities

- access to good pre-school education, particularly in the rural areas
- **public transport, walking and cycling access to primary and secondary schools in the larger towns**

public transport access to further education colleges, particularly from rural areas and in the evenings

- public transport access to adult education, particularly in the rural areas
- physically and learning disabled people's access to post-compulsory education
- Public transport, walking and cycling access to Sure Start Children's Centres
- Public transport, walking and cycling access to schools that are implementing an Extended Services Programme

In section 5.2.1 we mentioned that the availability of good public transport in the three main urban areas could play an important role in improving pupils access to secondary schools - extending choice for those not qualifying for free school transport, many of whom are presently transported to and from school by car. This would also help reduce congestion at peak travel times and contribute to improved road safety around schools.

We therefore propose to introduce a local indicator (ALI 4) to help monitor progress towards reducing the need for car use to schools in the main urban areas.

Local indicator 4

Percentage of pupils of compulsory school age living in the main urban areas within 15 minutes of:

- a primary school,
- a grammar school and
- an upper school

... by public transport

Lack of flexibility has been identified as a significant accessibility barrier to post-compulsory study for 16-19 year olds. We will therefore introduce a local indicator (ALI 5) to monitor the proportion of students aged 16-19 who have access to more flexible public transport services to their school or college.

Local indicator 5

Percentage of students aged 16-19 in receipt of subsidised transport whose transport offers flexibility of travel times

Contribution to wider local objectives

Action to address the accessibility priorities mentioned above would make positive contributions to the Community Strategy, and would similarly contribute to the objectives of the Learning & Skills Council, Bucks Lifelong Learning Partnership, and the Adult Education Services.

Physical accessibility

Physical accessibility is a general theme and priority to which we are required to give full consideration.

Physical accessibility priorities

- to ensure that the actions of the County Council, and others in the transport field, conform to the requirements of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act
- to ensure the development of a physically accessible whole transport system

Contribution to wider local objectives

Action to address the accessibility priorities mentioned above would make positive contributions to the Community Strategy, particularly objectives for older people and the environment.

Community safety

Community safety is a general theme and priority to which we are required to give full consideration.

Community safety and access priorities

- to ensure that the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour does not act as a barrier to travel, particularly by public transport and on foot.

Contribution to wider local objectives

Action to address the accessibility priority mentioned above would make positive contributions to the Community Strategy.

Next steps

In terms of the priorities to be addressed, we recognise that journey time may not always be the most appropriate or useful accessibility indicator for some of the journey types mentioned above. The local objectives and indicators we choose in the future may need to

take account of other types of accessibility barriers that are locally relevant, for example:

- the physical accessibility of the transport system
- public transport availability and reliability
- personal security while travelling
- the cost of travel
- travel information and awareness

Furthermore, we are aware that accessibility is not a true outcome and end in itself - social inclusion and its associated wider objectives are. Although we can only directly influence accessibility, and accessibility is only one of the determinants of these types of outcome, we believe that monitoring and evaluation of accessibility planning should go beyond purely measuring changes in accessibility opportunities. This will to an extent involve integrating accessibility monitoring with that of our partners, and attempting to measure the 'added value' gained by co-operation. Further work still needs to be done to try establish a meaningful framework.

Further attention needs to be given, in consultation with our partners, to identifying shared local objectives and local accessibility indicators that measure and reflect the contribution that improved accessibility can make to wider objectives.

Our analysis leads us to conclude that to fundamentally improve accessibility and promote greater social inclusion in rural and urban areas, our main accessibility priority in the next LTP period should be to review the structure of the local public transport system and mainstream accessibility planning.

The focus on a range of strategic priorities will help complement and inform the development and implementation of our bus strategy, and local action plans in communities across the county. We believe that such an approach will provide a sound framework for overcoming many accessibility barriers and addressing most accessibility needs.

7 DEFINING OUR GENERAL APPROACH

7.1 Introduction

Our strategy for improving accessibility consists of a three-pronged approach:

- **MAINSTREAMING**
 - external bodies
 - corporately
 - within Transportation Service
- **THEMATIC ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLANNING**
 - Learning, healthcare, healthy living, employment, and town centres
- **LOCAL COMMUNITY ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLANNING**

Engaging with partner organisations



Effective partnership-working is crucial to the success of all the above mentioned approaches for three main reasons:

- Improving accessibility is not just about transport: the location, design and delivery of other services has a significant impact
- A variety of organisations are involved in providing transport for different sections of the community, or to different services, and these could generally be better planned and co-ordinated
- If it is well integrated, Accessibility Planning can 'add value' to specific initiatives in other policy areas, particularly those aimed at broadening participation

People's ability to get to jobs and services can be significantly improved by factoring accessibility into decisions taken in other policy areas such as land-use, health and education. Conversely, a failure to consider the likely accessibility consequences of decisions can have unintended, adverse implications for specific groups.

Research has shown that other organisations have an important role to play in all stages of accessibility planning:

- **identifying and prioritising** areas, groups and activities with particular accessibility problems
- **generating and appraising options**, and identifying available and appropriate resources for accessibility initiatives
- **developing action plans** consisting of co-ordinated and complementary initiatives, and including accessibility considerations in policy development and delivery
- **implementing and monitoring action plans**

For internal 'mainstreaming' a strategy group has been set up within Transportation to begin looking at the necessary changes to working practices, policies and strategies, and the results so far are described in section 7.2.

With regard to what we have called 'thematic' action planning, we have begun to work with strategic service-delivery partners and representatives of specific target groups to identify accessibility needs and priorities and develop cross-cutting 'thematic' action plans. This type of plan will be about accessibility to specific types of service or activities, and will consist mainly of countywide and/or group-targeted actions, though some actions may have a specific local focus where necessary. In section 7.3 we will briefly outline progress with this work.

For 'local community' action planning we propose to develop local area action plans with representatives of the local communities such as the proposed Community Transport Partnerships. The main focus of these partnerships and plans will be on local transport services and multi-modal accessibility in specific geographical communities.

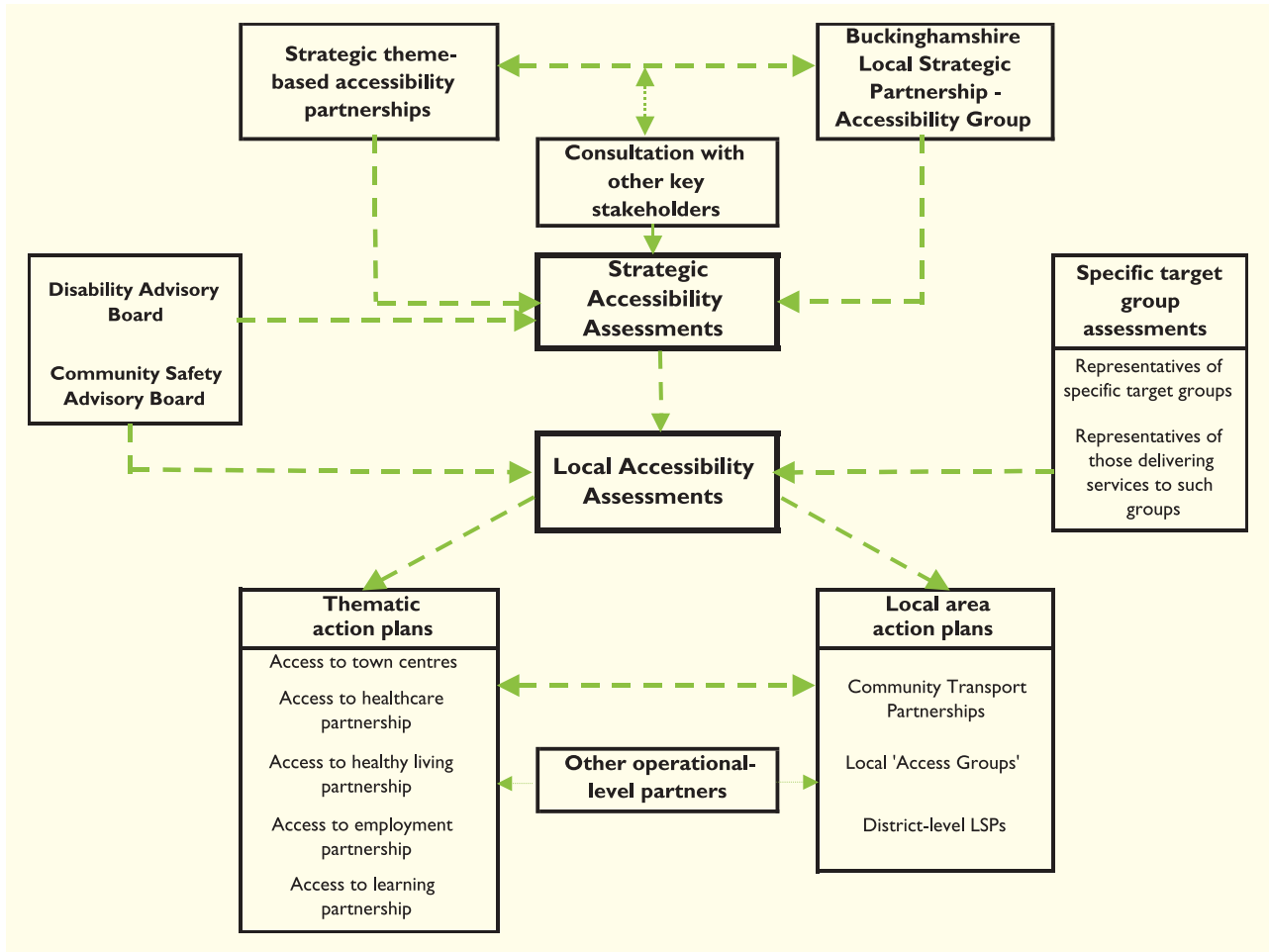
Relating to all three of the above streams of work, we have persuaded the county-level Community Safety Responsible Authorities Group to act as an expert advisory board for us in relation to community safety. We also propose to also establish a similar countywide expert disability advisory board. We intend to integrate these boards into our decision-making processes e.g. making them formal consultees on significant proposals.



In practice there must be high levels of integration, between all three streams of accessibility planning. Figure A15 attempts to

show schematically how the stages and parts of the process - and the partnerships associated with each stage fit together.

Figure A15: Map of accessibility planning partnerships



7.2 Mainstreaming Accessibility Planning

7.2.1 Introduction

To be effective accessibility planning needs to be 'mainstreamed' throughout the strategies, policies and programmes of the transport authority, and other Services across the Council. In addition, we will need to try to ensure that accessibility impacts are routinely taken into account by relevant external bodies when planning, locating, and delivering services and jobs.

Accessibility planning in Buckinghamshire has a strong corporate planning basis on which to build. In 2004 a corporate Best Value Review of Social Inclusion was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the Council's approach for dealing with social exclusion issues and groups at risk of exclusion, and to identify ways that this could be improved.

The importance of accessibility planning as a corporate initiative was recognised when it was included as a primary action in the Review's action plan. The final plan also emphasised the importance of a change in culture within the organisation, to which end a set of guiding principles for officers and members was created.

Our recent Best Value Review of Transportation (2005) reviewed how our services and activities are planned, managed and delivered, in the light of current and expected needs and obligations. One of its purposes was to ensure that accessibility and social inclusion objectives and principles are given due consideration in our internal decision-making processes, and operational arrangements.

Our general approach to mainstreaming accessibility within the Transportation Service includes the following elements:

- Routinely identifying opportunities to improve access to key locations, reduce risk from crime & disorder, and minimise or ameliorate negative accessibility impacts
- Incorporating accessibility objectives into service, business and other plans
- Developing processes to identify and, where practical, address individuals' accessibility needs
- Reviewing resource allocation to take greater account of accessibility and social inclusion objectives
- Developing assessment and evaluation processes that incorporate these issues and objectives
- Building these subjects into all public consultations, and ensuring that accessibility disadvantaged groups are encouraged to participate
- Including knowledge of these subjects in job descriptions and person specifications, and establishing training programmes to develop knowledge and skills in these areas
- Ensuring that clear responsibility is assigned for accessibility and that procedures are put in place to require all reports, where appropriate, to spell out the potential impacts on accessibility
- Developing clear and targeted communication, marketing, and awareness raising strategies to promote accessibility within Transportation, corporately, and externally

The following is the general approach that we propose to mainstream accessibility corporately and externally by:

- Ensuring that there is high-level political and managerial commitment
- Ensuring that accessibility (for those at risk of social exclusion) is adopted as a corporate objective

- Building accessibility planning objectives into corporate plans, including the Community Strategy
- Ensuring that plans are joined up and complementary
- Building accessibility objectives into corporate initiatives
- Identifying and agreeing shared or inter-related targets
- Making use of cross-cutting reviews to look at how accessibility is addressed across the Council
- Ensuring that policy and service developments consider and assess the implications of proposals through accessibility impact assessments, and public consultation takes account of accessibility and reaches accessibility-disadvantaged groups
- Developing information systems throughout the organisation to plan and manage all activity related to accessibility
- Identifying and overcoming barriers to effective joint-working between Services, between Transportation and with external agencies

In the following sub-sections, mainstreaming accessibility planning has been considered under the following themes:

- Physical accessibility for the less mobile (7.2.2)
- Community safety (7.2.3)
- Public transport accessibility (7.2.4)
- Highway planning (7.2.5)
- Pedestrian and cycling accessibility (7.2.6)
- Travel planning, information and marketing (7.2.7)
- Integrated land use and transport planning (7.2.8)
- Mobility substitutes (7.2.9)



7.2.2 Physical accessibility for the less mobile

The accessibility needs of all accessibility-disadvantaged people are our concern, however those of disabled people are especially important in light of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), and the recently acquired duty to actively promote disabled equality.

The Council's immediate aim is to ensure that - within the local transport environment - the actions of all relevant agencies, including the Council itself, conform to the requirements of the 1995 Act. Its longer-term aim is to ensure the development of an accessible transport system in which disabled people enjoy the same opportunities to travel as other members of society.

We recognise and will take account of the following issues when considering transport services and facilities for the disabled and attempting to meet the statutory requirements of the DDA:

- the need to identify the specific needs of disabled groups to ensure appropriate provision wherever possible
- the need to avoid, as far as is practicable and affordable, the adverse effects of disability on individual's transport needs
- the need to resolve conflicts arising from differing needs of disabled groups, and ensure a balance is struck between facilities provided for able and disabled people
- the need to consider disabled people across the whole journey chain, and working with public transport operators, land use planners, and property developers, ensure our actions are complementary.

The range of disabilities that affect personal mobility is large. In particular an accessible transport system needs to take account of:

- people who have difficulty walking or who use a wheelchair
- sight and hearing impaired people
- people with communication or learning disabilities

- a wider range of people, including the less physically able and those with luggage, heavy shopping or young children

For many disabled people the private car remains the most suitable mode of transport for their day-to-day mobility. We will therefore continue to ensure that their needs are not overlooked and that wherever possible, our policies and actions treat them in an equitable and fair manner.

We will, where possible, employ the following measures to overcome mobility-related obstacles and help satisfy the specific needs of disabled people:

- liaising with access and other disabled representative groups to help identify mobility/ accessibility problems and achieve solutions that will enable disabled people to play a fuller part in society. In particular we propose to establish a Disability Advisory Board consisting of experts from the voluntary sector
- adopting current recommended DfT or DPTAC standards when upgrading or developing new transport infrastructure
- making appropriate provision for the needs of severely disabled car users when developing our parking policies
- increasing the availability of fully accessible buses in two ways:
 - Specifying, subject to resources, vehicles that meet the current accessibility standards for any new contracted local bus services, especially for routes on which the elderly or disabled are likely to be heavily dependent
 - Continuing to work with commercial bus operators to upgrade services on the core bus network through the establishment of Quality Bus Partnerships, where we contribute to the cost of upgrading the quality of buses to meet full DDA standards as part of a wider package of quality and frequency enhancements

- working with Dial-a-Ride providers to broaden the availability of accessible community transport to the wider population
- assisting public transport operators implement staff disability awareness training

7.2.3 Community safety and accessibility

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires that local authorities work together with other partner organisations, to tackle crime and disorder. Section 17 of the Act lays down a “*duty on local authorities ... to exercise their various functions with due regard to their likely effect on, and do all they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in their area.*” This requirement needs to be considered more systematically in and through accessibility planning.

While some of our activities already impact on community safety they tend to do so in an ad hoc and unsystematic manner possibly because this has not been seen as an explicit transport policy aim.

We, and our partners, share three general objectives for incorporating community safety within accessibility planning:

- to improve personal security within and around the public transport system, and in the pedestrian environment more generally
- to improve road safety in the pedestrian and cycling environment, particularly where high traffic volumes and/or speeds lead to ‘community severance’
- to improve access, particularly by public transport, bicycle, or on foot, to social activities, key services, and jobs, particularly where it is perceived to be linked to anti-social behaviour and crime

The county-level Responsible Authorities Group has agreed to act as our expert advisory board. We intend to integrate this board into our decision-making processes, e.g. making them formal consultees on significant proposals.

7.2.4 Public transport and accessibility

While not downplaying the contribution that other modes of transport and wider solutions can potentially make to meeting people's access needs, or prejudging the outcomes of individual local accessibility assessments, public transport is undoubtedly the core element of our accessibility strategy.

Our analysis has led us to conclude that to fundamentally improve accessibility and promote social inclusion our main accessibility priority should be to review the structure of the local public transport system. Rural public transport in particular clearly needs to move beyond acting

only as a 'safety net' to meet basic needs, as this is becoming increasingly unsustainable.

Restructuring will be based on accessibility planning principles with the explicit aim of improving accessibility and inclusion, as well as tackling traffic congestion. The box below outlines how accessibility is being mainstreamed in our public transport service planning.

Our bus strategy builds on the strategic framework and policies contained in the Regional and Sub-Regional Plans outlined in Section 2.3. Our future strategy therefore aims to improve accessibility by focusing on the following main elements:

Mainstreaming accessibility planning case study: Public transport service planning

Accessibility planning has influenced the development of our bus strategy in several important ways:

- Underpinning the network planning model we have adopted of strategic urban centres ('hubs') and key public transport interchanges ('nodes') linked by high frequency, high demand public transport corridors ('spokes'), in turn linked to local area 'cells' where travel demand is dispersed and lower and non-conventional services predominate
- Informing the identification of a hierarchy of regional/major and local strategic centres providing a wide range of services, jobs and other activities, and acting as strong attractors (see appendix 1)
- The strategic centres in turn inform the identification of strategic core routes (linking regional/major centres) and local core routes (linking local strategic centres or a strategic centre and a local centre)
- Informing the development of a set of desired bus service Accessibility standards that set minimum standards related to common accessibility barriers (see appendix 4)

Given the importance of the core network to the success of our accessibility and bus strategy, we have decided to define access to strategic town centres as a separate thematic action plan. Using the set of service standards and definition of the key corridors we have begun to undertake 'gap analysis' to identify missing links and other service deficiencies in current services.

Strategic Hubs and Nodes

For purposes of accessibility planning for Buckinghamshire, urban centres and major interchanges identified as strategically important within Buckinghamshire and neighbouring areas, have been identified from a combination of official classifications. They have been separated into two categories: regional or major centres, and local strategic centres, and are shown in figure A16 (see also appendix 1).

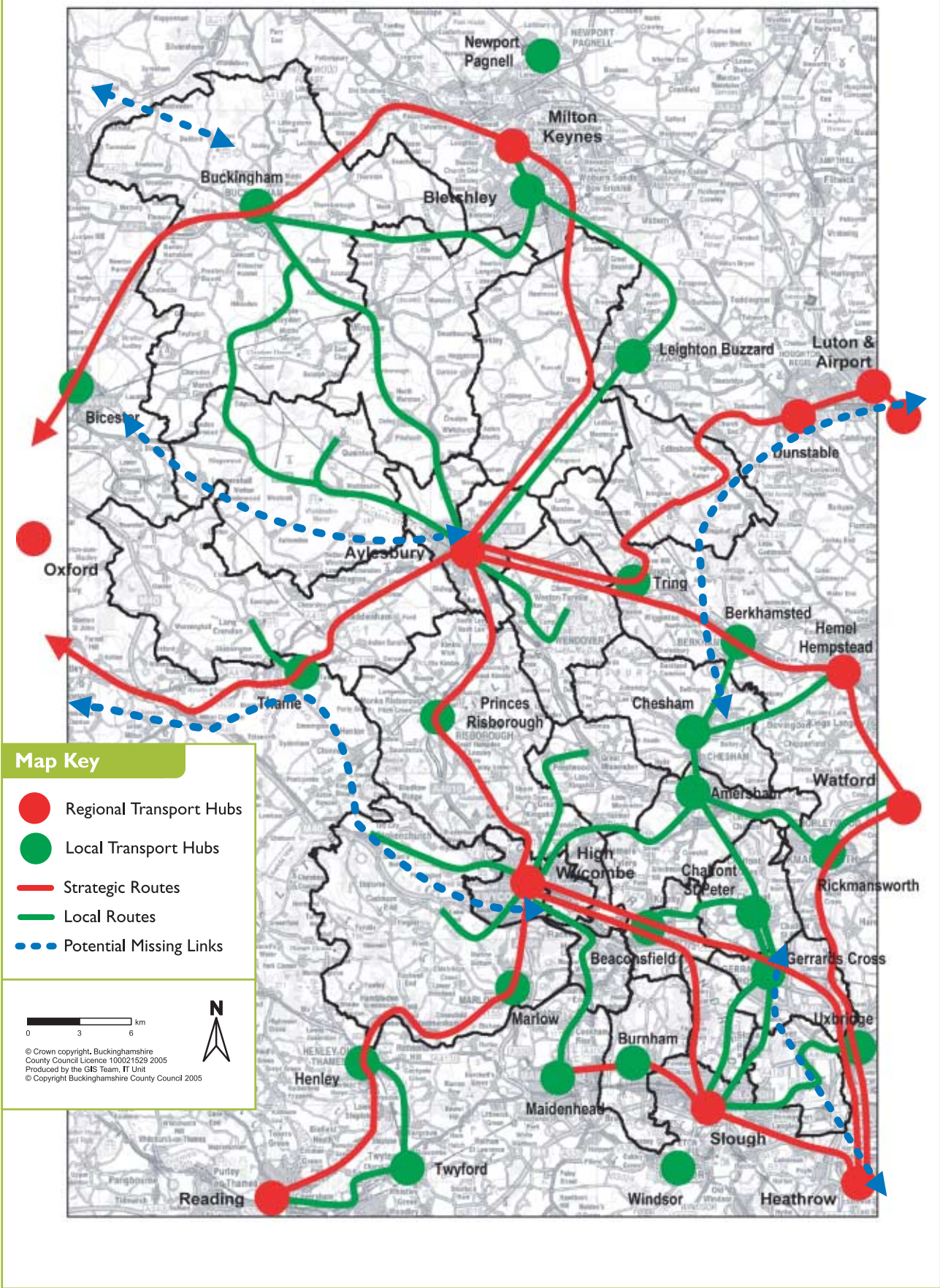
Many strategic local nodes such as bus interchanges and train stations lie within these hubs, but some also lie outside them, such as Haddenham & Thame Parkway, coachway interchanges, and other train

stations in or near smaller centres.

The network of strategic hubs offers access to a range of key facilities, a vast number of job opportunities, and the strategic nodes offer high frequency onward travel by bus, coach, train, and plane to wider destinations.

We aim to develop or promote high quality interchange facilities in the major centres within Buckinghamshire, and also in some local strategic centres where an important need is identified. A major example, is the 'Aylesbury Public Transport Hub' proposal. In February 2006 we learnt that funding has been secured through the Community Infrastructure Fund to develop this major transport hub in Aylesbury by 2008.

Figure A16 - Proposed core inter-urban bus network including strategic 'hubs' and 'spokes'



The Hub development will substantially enhance facilities for public transport users within the town centre, with the refurbishment of the bus station to provide a high quality passenger interchange with a direct pedestrian link to the rail station. Priority measures throughout the inner ring road will provide more effective bus access to all parts of the town centre, with 'superstops' serving each of the major retail and business areas in the central area. Each 'superstop' will be equipped with glazed passenger shelters, seating and real time passenger information displays.

Completion of the 'Hub' is a key element of the expansion of the town centre to accommodate planned population growth as well as further enhancing the environment within the Market Square and Kingsbury by redirecting bus services to the inner ring road.

We will also aim to develop or promote high quality interchange facilities in local strategic centres where an important need is identified. Through cross-border working, we will encourage our local authority neighbours to ensure that interchange facilities in the strategic centres outside Buckinghamshire are of a similarly high standard.

The core public transport network

From the perspective of public transport accessibility in Buckinghamshire the most significant 'spokes' are the rail and road links joining the major and local strategic hubs and nodes identified. The core public transport network for Buckinghamshire - and some potential 'missing links' are shown in figure A16. For policy purposes we have divided the core public transport network into four constituent elements:

- Strategic inter-urban routes (bus or rail)
- Local inter-urban routes (bus or rail)
- Urban Quality Bus Partnership routes on major corridors
- Other urban bus routes

Strategic inter-urban routes (bus or rail): routes linking two regional/major centres, serving many market towns and other centres of population en route. The aim is for all these routes to eventually have at least a half-hourly day-time service, with a less frequent service in the evenings and on Sundays, according to demand and need.

Local inter-urban routes (bus or rail): routes linking local strategic centres or between a strategic centre and local centre serving market towns and other centres of population en route; also includes 'outer-urban area routes' (i.e. those to villages and towns off the inter-urban network and close to the larger towns). The aim is for these routes to all eventually have at least an hourly day-time service, with a less frequent service in the evenings and on Sundays, according to demand and need.

Urban QBP routes: all principal urban corridors with high frequency, fully accessible bus services operating a daytime service at least every 15 minutes, and evening and Sunday services every 30-60 minutes according to demand, have been designated as existing or proposed QBP routes. These routes have the primary function of achieving modal shift by improving the speed of the bus relative to the car and thereby contributing to congestion reduction. They will however also have significant benefits for accessibility by improving the speed, reliability and frequency of all bus services making use of the core network.

Other urban bus routes: other urban routes where the high frequency services cannot be readily accessed; they are particularly likely to be provided in areas where a higher proportion of elderly people are resident, or where the topography makes access to the higher frequency services more difficult; we aim to maintain these services at (generally) two buses per hour, with the primary focus of better accessibility. These routes are inherently less robust in financial terms and will often already be financially supported.

Demand responsive transport services

In the main, the core public transport network focuses on providing access to town centre areas and major employment sites and other developments on the edge of towns; in other words, where the majority of retail, employment, business and recreational opportunities exist. Although, for those living relatively close to it and sufficiently able-bodied, the core network provides relatively good public transport access to these locations, it is clear that the core network cannot satisfactorily cater for all individuals and their key accessibility needs.



In rural areas off the core network for instance, a sparse 'safety net' bus service poses difficulties and limits the horizons of those without access to a private car when needed. For many people, whether in rural or urban areas, access to primary healthcare services - and sometimes leisure or recreational facilities - is often difficult. Conventional PT services are also often unable to provide for some important late evening/early morning journey needs.

Demand responsive services

We have to ensure that demand responsive services in urban and rural areas can be made sustainable.

DRT services in the UK have tended to require very high subsidy levels in terms of capital infrastructure and operational (revenue) costs, which have been enormous burdens for local authorities.

Demand responsive transport (DRT) services are very well-suited to meeting many accessibility needs in rural areas, but can also be appropriate in parts of towns, for specific social groups and journey purposes, and at times when conventional bus services are not commercially viable.

The most commonly used public transport alternatives are taxis and private hire vehicles. However our research has revealed that the use of these is often considered too expensive by disadvantaged groups; some users also associate them with poor customer care and concerns about personal security.

We therefore aim to work closely with taxi operators, Dial-a-Ride providers and other community transport organisations to provide better and more affordable demand responsive services.

We anticipate that the primary purpose of such schemes will be to provide access to GP surgeries and general hospitals, although flexibly routed services also offer the potential to be extended to support employment, education and leisure journeys where these can be made sustainable.

We are aware that there is risk in moving from (limited) subsidised conventional bus services to DRT and other forms of community and personal transport. Current experience suggests that a subsidy per passenger journey of between £10 and £15 on existing DRT services is not unusual, though the normally acceptable subsidy level is about £3 per trip. There is therefore a possibility that, if those new services require a higher level of subsidy than current services, their cost may lead to a diminution of available services.

In terms of improving accessibility and overcoming social exclusion, the success of a shift towards DRT/community transport will therefore ultimately depend on achieving levels of subsidy that are financially and politically acceptable. Our strategy for introducing DRT in rural and urban areas must therefore be informed by local and wider experience. To this end, we intend to carry out research into our existing DRT services and other relevant case studies in 2006/07.

Social inclusion concerns have played a major part in most DRT schemes in the UK, however experience shows that there is a danger in aiming at too narrow a market base, i.e. only 'captive users'. It is often forgotten that DRT services offer a higher quality of service than conventional bus services, and where this is the case the more appropriate market and fare comparison is with taxis. A solely social-inclusion-led service will inevitably require higher long-term subsidy than normal supported bus services unless, as we intend, a combination of the following strategies is adopted:



Strategies for making DRT services more financially sustainable:

- efficiency gains through integration with parallel public transport services
- realise contributions from other organisations experiencing benefits from the services
- broaden the market base to include and grow the 'choice' market
- actively encourage 'suppressed' demand by working with partners to increase participation in activities and take up of services, thereby increasing the need to travel
- set fares higher than conventional bus fares, meeting social inclusion objectives through concessionary fares for disadvantaged groups, or premium fares for non-disadvantaged groups

We expect that DRT services will in time come to form the backbone of a range of public and community transport services in rural areas, and a complement to conventional bus services in urban areas. We intend to establish community transport partnerships to help us identify and deliver the most appropriate combination of services for local communities.

Community Transport Partnerships

As explained previously, many rural communities in Buckinghamshire not served directly by the core bus network only have access to a bus, off-peak, on a limited number of days each week, making access to jobs and essential services (shopping, healthcare and non-statutory education in particular) difficult. Of necessity the few services provided operate to a rigid timetable that does not suit everyone, and will certainly not attract new users.

The cost to the County Council of maintaining this network in 2004/05 was more than £1 million. We believe that conventional bus services may no longer offer the most cost-effective means of providing access to essential services for these rural communities.

We have therefore decided to review existing subsidised services in rural areas, in conjunction with local communities. We have identified twelve local areas as potential **Community Transport Partnership Areas** (see Bus Strategy). Within these local communities, the Parish, District and County Councils, and a wide range of community and voluntary sector representatives will have the opportunity to jointly determine the pattern of public transport provision which most closely meets the needs of the community, within the resources available.

We recognise that every rural community will have different standards of local facilities and a wide range of transport needs. No single mode of public transport can meet all of these needs, but in many cases we believe that access to essential services could be made easier by moving away from fixed, conventional bus services towards a more flexible system of DRT services, such as being piloted in the Bledlow and Hambleton areas. We believe there is the potential for similar schemes to be provided elsewhere, providing the costs of operation can be contained at a sustainable level.

Options that might be considered by a Community Transport Partnership could include some or all of the following:

- Shared use of **school buses** - to provide services at peak times
- **Scheduled bus services** - where these offer the most cost-effective means of transporting larger numbers of passengers
- **Feeder services** - to connect with inter-urban bus routes (or train services) at local interchange points
- **Existing dial-a-ride services** - to cater for the wider community, and not just for those with physical mobility problems
- **Other types of demand-responsive service** - possibly operating on a pre-bookable basis
- **Community bus service** - using volunteer drivers from the local community
- **Shared taxis** - for regular journeys

- **Community car share schemes** or **voluntary car schemes** - for one-off journeys

In addition, Community Transport Partnerships, in conjunction with the Local Authorities and other relevant organisations, might also consider the possibility of meeting some people's needs through alternatives to transport such as mobile and home delivery and ICT services.

Experience elsewhere has shown that genuine community engagement in planning and delivering transport services in rural areas is an extremely important factor in their potential success. It will be important that all accessibility-disadvantaged groups are ensured an adequate 'voice' in the local decision-making process.

Policy guidelines and support will be provided to help communities identify and prioritise accessibility needs associated with meeting accessibility strategy and other County Council targets and objectives. Through the Rural Community Council for Buckinghamshire and Bucks & Milton Keynes Rural Transport Partnership we plan to promote the use of the Countryside Agency's 'Rural Accessibility Audit' tool within local communities as part of the local accessibility planning audit process.

Each Partnership would be able to draw on such funding that the County, District and Parish Councils would otherwise commit to the provision of transport services in that area - and on the expertise of the Local Transport Authority and Rural Transport Partnership to help secure transport provision most economically. Initially, funding, procurement and contract management, and budgetary control, would be administered centrally by the County Council - with the Local Area Committees and Community Transport Partnerships acting in an advisory capacity.

Budgets could be made up of the following:

- BCC Revenue support for public transport
- Rural Bus Subsidy Grant or Challenge funds
- County and District funding for Dial-a-Ride & Community Transport services
- District Council funding for concessionary travel for the elderly and disabled
- County Council (LEA) funding for the provision of home to school transport

- Parish or Town Council precepted funds
- Countryside Agency (Regional Development Agency) funding for rural initiatives

Who would operate the services?

We would offer advice on the most economic means of securing the services for each Community Transport Partnership. The likelihood is that there would be a range of providers in each area, possibly including:

- Existing commercial bus operators
- Licensed taxi (or private hire) operators
- Dial-a-Ride providers
- Other community transport providers
- The County Council's own minibus fleet
- Volunteer agencies

Other planned accessibility - related improvements

Besides the measures already mentioned, we plan to improve public transport accessibility by reviewing and implementing the following, usually as part of local area accessibility action planning:

- Improving the reliability and punctuality of bus services through the establishment of a Bus Punctuality Improvement Partnership with our major bus operators
- Improving the quality of bus stops and bus shelters in urban and rural areas
- Ensuring physical accessibility to bus stops
- Improving the proximity of bus stops to key services and workplaces
- Reducing interchange time penalties by building greater confidence into the reliability of the interchange
- Improving passenger safety and security on the bus network
- Securing a scheme of multi-operator tickets to ensure inter-availability of tickets where there is more than one operator
- Providing accessible public transport information at all stages of the journey
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that buses are comfortable, clean and well-maintained



- Ensuring, as far as possible, that buses are accessible for people who are mobility impaired
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that bus operators adhere to high customer care standards

7.2.5 Highway planning and Accessibility

Highway planning will support our accessibility strategy through the planning and development of new and upgraded strategic transport infrastructure. The Sub-Regional Plan has already defined the following strategically important highway infrastructure in Buckinghamshire to accompany the growth agenda in Aylesbury, the Vale, and neighbouring areas which will contribute to improved inter-urban accessibility to key centres inside and outside Buckinghamshire:

- A4146 Stoke Hammond - Linslade Western Bypass
- A418 Aylesbury to Wing
- A421 Tingewick to Milton Keynes

In addition to this, the emerging bus strategy has identified a number of other major routes that will be the focus of the core bus network. In the major towns some of these corridors will be developed further through Quality Bus Partnerships, however consideration will be given to where minor improvements or other priority measures on roads outside the larger towns carrying the inter-urban bus services, will help improve the speed or reliability of bus services, particularly at peak times.



Routine and planned highway works and maintenance represent a key opportunity to simultaneously make cost effective improvements for walking and cycling. As a matter of routine procedure in future we will consider whether the accessibility (and safety) benefits of such additional work are worthwhile.

7.2.6 Walking and cycling accessibility



Walking and cycling are inexpensive modes of travel that not only minimise environmental impacts and contribute to better public health, but are also highly adaptable to individuals needs providing choice as to time, route and speed.



Many different policies, programmes, and agencies have impacts on the quality and promotion of walking and cycling accessibility. These include:

walking and cycling programmes, Rights of Way, school and workplace travel planning, travel promotion, traffic and parking management, footway maintenance, road safety, street lighting, public transport planning, transport development control, and land use planning.

Although each of these programmes and agencies have helped improve local level accessibility in Buckinghamshire, a more co-ordinated approach, and a more explicit focus on access would be very beneficial. Consultation as part of the development of the LTP has shown that the public and stakeholders consider that relatively poor co-ordination and insufficient attention to detail on the ground is often the enemy of good pedestrian and cycling access.



Our walking and cycling programmes have particularly helped improve access to town centres, schools, and train stations, and in the countryside. However, in the larger urban areas more attention needs to be paid to developing cycling (and to a lesser extent walking) networks that increase connectivity between trip attractors and generators to improve overall connectivity. In addition, more focus needs to be given to improving access to existing local bus stops, local neighbourhood facilities and other key facilities, and dealing with small impediments and community safety deterrents.

To this end, we will ensure that **local community action plans** promote opportunities for walking and cycling, to maximise the ability to connect people to jobs, key services, and public transport interchange points, through networks which reduce delay, diversion and danger. Improved facilities for cycling within towns should mainly be on-road, but also where possible improved walking and cycling links should be achieved through making better use of the Rights of Way network, to be progressed largely through the ROWIP.

We will therefore consider the strategic benefits of improving existing routes and facilities, filling in the most important missing links, maintaining important routes in a good condition, improving Rights of Way that contribute to better accessibility in both urban and rural areas, and making routes safer, more secure, and more attractive. We will also consider whether current regulation of on-street parking is dealing adequately with barriers to pedestrian access. Improved information about, and promotion of,

walking and cycling for both utilitarian and leisure journey purposes will also be considered.

In addition to managing community transport services in their areas, it is likely that the proposed Community Transport Partnerships will also act as the main local fora for involving local communities in decisions about improving walking and cycling access and other transport issues. This would help rationalise consultation processes and support integration between different modes of transport.

7.2.7 Travel planning, information & marketing

Initiatives aimed at managing transport demand by effecting behavioural change are a very important component of accessibility planning. They may include programmes to encourage school, workplace and personalised travel planning, improving public transport information and marketing services; car share schemes and car clubs; and tele-working.

Their primary aim in Buckinghamshire so far, as in most other places, has been to reduce car use but because they give people a genuine alternative to using their car, such programmes can provide quick, comparatively inexpensive benefits in terms of social inclusion and accessibility. Site-based travel planning measures that might help improve accessibility for those most in need that will be considered on a case by case basis include:

- demand-responsive taxi/minibus services, or taxis or private hire vehicles, to serve remoter places or specific members of a community
- car clubs or car share schemes
- pedestrian and cycling routes from areas with relatively low car ownership
- reviewing the location and timing of conventional bus services near the site, concentrating on the needs of more disadvantaged groups

The focus of our travel planning service in the past has been primarily on school and workplace site-based travel planning. Although we will continue to support site-based travel planning, we have decided to extend our focus to include greater attention to personalised travel planning. Both types of travel planning can potentially help address accessibility and social inclusion problems, as long as accessibility/inclusion considerations are mainstreamed into the objectives and methods of these initiatives. For example, in the case study we describe how we intend to mainstream accessibility into the further development of our personalised travel planning initiative.

We also aim to become more aware of the importance of information and support for different groups. For example, for some disabled people, particularly those with learning disabilities or with mental health conditions, accessible public transport information, suitably trained, front line transport staff, or specific travel training are important in reducing the fear of using public transport. We also need to give greater consideration to how information and awareness can enable visually impaired people to make transport choices.

We also plan to review our current marketing strategy for public transport and non-motorised travel choices and travel awareness, which focuses mainly on environmental issues, congestion, and health benefits. We need to consider the implications of an accessibility perspective and objectives to our marketing approach.

Mainstreaming accessibility planning case study: Personalised travel planning

Personalised travel planning (PTP) is a powerful tool for improving accessibility and tackling congestion problems by encouraging modal shift. Our approach will integrate both these objectives, as well as promoting road safety and health benefits

Currently our PTP service is based on a web-based or postal questionnaire, promoted in new housing estates and to council staff. Information received is analysed and an information pack is sent to the individual, with targeted travel information.

In the future, the main ways that we will encourage people to use our PTP service and ensure it reaches accessibility-disadvantaged people, include:

- Ensuring that accessibility issues are included in the Social Care and NHS-led **Single Assessment Process** of vulnerable people's individual needs, and the relevant information shared with the Transportation Service
- Promoting its use through our local area **Community Transport Partnerships**; and using the information obtained to inform the development of local transport services
- Using **'Customer First'** - an initiative to improve communication and access to services. A 'Transport on Call' call centre, similar to the existing 'Highways on Call' brand will be developed to deal with public transport, school travel enquiries and our PTP service
- **Residential area targeting.** Initially new estates where travel habits are less fixed, and where significant new services or infrastructure is provided, will be targeted. However, established residential areas where there is particular accessibility disadvantage may also be targeted
- Encouraging **Travel Shops in schools** to promote sustainable travel habits to young people (identified in the Children & Young People Plan) to be extended countywide following a successful pilot at John Colet School
- Continuing to promote our **'Travel Choice'** package for Council staff
- **Promotion or joint working with other partners** (e.g. Job Centre Plus and recruitment agencies, estate agents, and tourist information providers) to encourage individual travel behaviour change at key points of change in life (e.g. starting a new job, moving house, learning to drive, etc)

In addition, we intend to increase the usefulness and cost effectiveness of PTP services through:

- developing a branded internet-based service that provides tailored information and links with national transport information services
- further customising the information that is available e.g. providing information about disabled access, mobility substitutes
- extending the opportunity for individuals to become their own 'Personal Travel Planner'

7.2.8 Integrated land use-transport planning & parking policies

Accessibility planning is not just about improving transport but also about ensuring that jobs and services are delivered where they are most needed, and that alternative modes of communication are optimally used to reduce the need to travel.

The integration of transport and spatial planning is central to the development and delivery of effective local development frameworks. At a local level, the Local Development Documents (LDDs) produced by the District Council Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) will play a key role in highlighting where there are gaps in local service provision, identifying sites that are highly accessible by public transport, and seeking to direct development to these areas and locations. Where appropriate we will specifically seek to influence improvements in the range and balance of services within towns identified as strategically important hubs or possessing strategically important public transport interchanges to improve accessibility by public transport.

As the local transport authority we will build upon effective joint-working arrangements with the LPAs, as well as neighbouring authorities, through sub-regional fora and informal bilateral discussions, to achieve the integration of land use and transport proposals. Our input to the planning process will also pay more explicit attention to accessibility and inclusion.

Applications for large-scale developments are accompanied by Transport Assessments that can be used to identify necessary transport improvements to address problematic potential impacts. Generally these have in the past concentrated insufficiently on non-car modes of travel, but good practice advice to be issued by the ODPM should clarify matters and further strengthen the aims of PPG 13 and accessibility planning.

As the local transport authority we are a statutory consultee in the planning process, and advise LPAs on the transport implications of new development proposals. We intend to systematise and strengthen our consideration of accessibility and inclusion factors in the planning process through five main means:

- using accessibility modelling - such as Accession - to assist consideration of accessibility at proposed development sites
- creating and applying a process to consider other accessibility factors not integral to the modelling process
- using information from both the above sources, where necessary, to inform and justify recommended accessibility improvements
- investigating the feasibility of creating a guidance framework of different minimum accessibility standards for specific types of land use, and working with the LPAs with the view to this being included in the emerging Local Development Documents
- investigating the feasibility of introducing a guidance framework for advising the LPAs when travel plans should be required, and including inclusive accessibility as a necessary consideration in the development of travel plans.

We will also strive to develop a more proactive approach to influencing the location of key facilities, outside the LDD and development control processes. We aim to improve our relationships with the rest of the County Council and external partners to influence the location or relocation of services, using our combined knowledge of local accessibility and where necessary basing this advice on rigorous accessibility assessments.

Policies and measures relating to on-street parking, will need to be reviewed for their impact on, and contribution to accessibility and inclusion. In particular it is necessary to determine whether:

- these policies and measures are promoting public transport and cycling accessibility by contributing to bus operations in urban areas
- parking for vehicles used by people with disabilities is meeting need
- current regulation and enforcement of illegal parking is dealing adequately with barriers to pedestrian and bus passenger access

We will continue to work with, and advise the District Councils on non-residential public and private parking policy through the Local





Development Framework process. The recently completed High Wycombe Town Centre Parking and Access Strategy and its Aylesbury equivalent, which we helped to develop, aim to meet the challenge of ensuring that the town centres remain attractive and accessible destinations offering a good range of travel choices for everybody. Accessibility improvements for users of non-car travel modes have been proposed alongside new and improved car parking facilities. In future accessibility planning techniques will be used to inform and support our contributions to this type of strategic process.

7.2.9 Mobility substitutes

We, along with a number of other public, private and voluntary sector organisations, are involved in delivering services through substitutes for personal mobility. Besides home care, we currently provide mobile library and trading standards services, home-delivered meals for certain social care clients, and also ICT outlets and some ICT-based services.

Our 'Customer First' and 'Getting Closer to Communities' Programmes aim to bring together a number of initiatives using electronic and local access to enable all sections of the community to obtain local government services more easily. We will continue to work with others to ensure that accessibility planning and these programmes are well integrated. Where appropriate we will also work with individual services to provide expert accessibility advice.

7.3 Accessibility action planning



We believe that this accessibility strategy has created a strong foundation for developing more detailed strategies and action plans with our partners over the coming years, as we respond to constantly changing circumstances. Our current strategic accessibility priorities over the next 5 years, based on current analyses (see section 5), have been described in section 6.3. The objective of action planning is to address these local strategic priorities and, where necessary, adapt to changing circumstances and opportunities.

As mentioned we have identified the need to

improve accessibility using a three-pronged approach. In the previous section we explained our strategies for mainstreaming accessibility and in section 7.1 we outlined our approach to accessibility action planning, which we see as happening on two distinct, but inter-related levels.

In this section we describe the progress that has been made in developing partnerships and outline the action plans that have already been developed, often in conjunction with partners:

- **Strategic** - accessibility action planning around the primary accessibility themes
- **Local** - local community accessibility action planning

7.3.1 Strategic or 'thematic' accessibility action planning

A new group has recently been established as part of the Bucks Strategic Partnership (BSP), called the '**Accessible Communities and Transport Task Group**'. We intend to undertake accessibility partnership working through the BSP but also, where appropriate, through separate partnerships.

We hope that over time these different strands will come together, but feel that the experience of the accessibility planning pilot projects clearly demonstrated the need to work with strategic partners through separate partnerships based on the key themes, and not in a multi-purpose partnership spanning many agencies. The BSP Group will however make an important contribution to the process, acting as a forum and voice for other interest groups and agencies.

Supporting statements from some of our strategic partners are included in appendix 3.

Access to strategic centres action planning

Given the important contribution that access to strategic centres via the core public transport network makes to the success of our access to healthcare, learning, employment and healthy lifestyle resources strategies, it was decided that it merited specific consideration as a strategic theme in its own right

An internal partnership steering group was established bringing together those involved in public transport planning, pedestrian and cycling planning, transport marketing, and accessibility planning, to develop a comprehensive strategy, programme and outline action plan for 2006/7. Discussions have been taking place to involve the major public transport operators in our planning process, and particularly to try to persuade them of the benefits of supporting our core network strategy.

The access to strategic centres strategy was outlined in some detail in section 7.2.4.

Essentially it consists of improving public transport accessibility along primary inter-urban corridors between strategic centres of importance, both within and in adjoining local authority areas, and also along primary urban corridors in the larger towns. The strategy also recognises the importance of the standard of interchange with feeder bus/taxi services, and pedestrian and cycling access to and at stops.

A number of sets of accessibility-related public transport minimum service standards have been developed for different types of route (see appendix 4). Although not all of the actions are directly under our control, and our resources are limited, our objective is to achieve these standards by 2010/11.

'Missing links' have been identified in the existing network, and gap analysis has begun to reveal the deficiencies that will need to be addressed over the next five years. Table A7 shows our outline action plan for 2006/7.

Table A7: Improving access to strategic centres - Action Plan 2006/07

Issue	Action	Lead	Partners
'Missing links'	Introduce new , direct bus service between Aylesbury & Milton Keynes	BCC	Bus Operators
	Review feasibility of new services between: Aylesbury - Bicester, High Wycombe - Stokenchurch - Oxford, High Wycombe - Thames Valley , Luton - Chesham / Amersham - Heathrow Airport	BCC	Bus Operators
Frequency	Increase bus frequency on: Aylesbury - Milton Keynes route Review service frequencies following introduction of free off-peak concessionary travel	BCC	Bus operators District Councils
Operating times	Review feasibility of reallocating resources to address identified deficiencies in operating times on the core network	BCC	Bus Operators
Punctuality & journey time reliability	Audit reliability on core bus network	BCC	Bus Operators
	Analyse causes of unreliability on worst performing routes, and develop action plans	BCC	Bus Operators
Urban congestion	QBP action plans for following routes: (Aylesbury: Watermead - centre; Weedon Hill - centre); (High Wycombe: Micklefield - London Road - centre - A4010 - Booker; Totteridge - centre - Castlefield)	BCC	Bus Operators



Table A7: Improving access to strategic centres - Action Plan 2006/07

Issue	Action	Lead	Partners
Highway bus accessibility outside main urban areas	Highway improvements on: A4146 Stoke-Hammond - Linslade Western bypass Cressex Link Road	BCC	
Main urban centre bus accessibility	Development of the : Aylesbury public transport 'Hub'; High Wycombe Bus Interchange; High Wycombe Rail Station	BCC	Bus Operators District Councils, Chiltern Railways
Road-side physical accessibility	Conduct accessibility audits at all bus and rail station interchanges and develop action plans	BCC	Community Transport Partnerships; Access Groups Rural Transport Partnership
	Audit accessibility at/to bus stops as part of local accessibility action plan programme, and develop action plans	BCC	
	Implement physical accessibility measures at stops as part of routine maintenance	BCC	
On-board physical accessibility	Actively encourage operators to increase proportion of buses meeting current DDA standards	BCC	Bus operators
Road-side PT information	Ensure all boarding points have up-to-date (and maintained) printed timetables	BCC	Bus operators
Quality of rural bus interchanges	Assess need for new and/or improved bus stations in local centres	BCC	Bus Operators Community Transport Partnerships BCC; Community Transport Partnerships
	Audit & consult as part of local accessibility action plan programme, develop action plans	Rural Transport Partnership	
Personal security at and to boarding points	Audit bus stops and stations for community safety, consult, and develop action plans - prioritise high-risk locations	BCC; Rural Transport Partnership	Community Safety Advisory Board
On-board personal security	Encourage operators to increase use of on-board CCTV cameras, particularly on buses used for late evening services	BCC	Bus Operators
Inter-operator ticketing	Promote adoption of inter-availability of ticketing across County	BCC	Bus Operators
Bus-cycle interchange facilities	Audit /consult on feasibility and potential demand, as part of local accessibility action plan programme	BCC; Rural Transport Partnership	Cycling interest groups, Community Transport Partnerships
Customer care	Promote appropriate customer care training for front-line PT staff	BCC	Bus Operators
	Establish a customer care monitoring system and performance indicator	BCC	Bus Operators
Marketing	Promote the core network, and particular services where significant improvements have taken place	BCC	Bus Operators

Access to healthcare action planning

In the healthcare sector our strategic partners will need to include: the Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority; the new Primary Care Trust covering the whole County being set up in 2006; the Buckinghamshire Hospitals Trust; Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust, and Two Shires Ambulance Trust.

We also intend to involve the local 'Patient, Public Involvement Forums' associated with each NHS Trust in order to increase public 'voice' in the decision-making process.

Although we have continued to engage with the NHS over health sector restructuring, we have only made slow progress in setting up a strategic partnership body with local NHS organisations. The impending reorganisation of the primary care sector, and changes that are taking place in the Mental Health Trust, have undoubtedly not helped.

Progress is now being made with the first formal high-level meeting scheduled for March 2006. Prior informal meetings have however shown a high-degree of agreement with our strategic accessibility assessment and provisional prioritisation of issues. Given LTP deadlines, it has not been possible to include the outcomes of these discussions.

Besides the contributions that we intend to make to improving access to healthcare via our access to strategic centres strategy and action plan (see above), and local community accessibility action planning process (see section 7.3.2), we believe that the NHS is able to make significant contributions towards achieving better health and accessibility outcomes, which may include some of the following elements:

- providing evidence and defining key objectives
- making better use of non-emergency patient transport resources
- providing mobile healthcare services for access disadvantaged communities
- making use of accessibility audits in locational decisions
- contributing to healthy food initiatives (see below)
- preparing travel plans for patients, visitors and staff
- aligning visiting times with public transport

services (where practical)

- aligning appointment times with public transport services (where practical)
- streamlining and promoting the Hospital Travel Costs scheme
- providing better travel information to service users, possibly including an integrated travel-health appointment booking system

Access to learning action planning



In the education and training sector our strategic partners include: the Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Learning & Skills Council (LSC), and the Buckinghamshire Lifelong Learning Partnership. The Lifelong Learning Partnership includes the LSC, Buckinghamshire Local Education Authority, Adult Education, Early Years and other relevant bodies, and is the educational arm of the BSP. It also happens to be the parent body for the existing education-transport partnership.

We have engaged in a discussion with the Lifelong Learning Partnership over the framework accessibility strategy and the possibility of employing the Partnership Steering Group as our access to learning strategic partnership. It seems that progress is slowly being made to persuade the educational sector of the benefits of closer partnership working using accessibility planning.

Despite relatively limited contributions from most the above-mentioned agencies up to now, and the continuing uncertainty about the CEA's future statutory transport obligations, we have developed an action plan for 2006/07 (see table A8).



Table A8: Access to Learning Action Plan 2006/07

Issue	Action	Lead	Partners
Public transport, cycling and pedestrian access to schools in larger urban areas	1. Support development of existing and new school travel plans in large urban areas 2. Upgrade quality of bus stops near schools where need is identified 3. Support establishment of 'Travel Shops' in schools for Personalised Travel Planning 4. Provision of cycling infrastructure in Aylesbury linked to schools 5. Increase availability of cycle training for school age children 6. Increased cycling promotion 7. Establish new (web-based) car share scheme for pupils 8. Develop travel information pack for parents of prospective secondary school pupils	BCC	Schools
Public transport access to FE colleges, and other main adult education establishments, particularly from rural areas and in evenings	Update, and continue use of 6th form and FE college travel information pack Actions to improve PT access from: Aylesbury - Milton Keynes, Aylesbury - High Wycombe (see Access to Strategic Centres Action Plan) Actions to improve PT access from rural areas to strategic centres in Stewkley, Wing & Ivinghoe, Stokenchurch & Marlow as part of local community action planning programme	BCC BCC BCC	16-19 year education - transport partnership Bus operators Rural transport partnership FE colleges
Public transport, cycling and pedestrian access to schools with Extended Services and Children's Centres	Assess existing public transport, walking and cycling access to the first tranche of planned Children's Centres and Extended services Schools, and develop action plans Undertake accessibility assessments to help inform locations of next tranches of Children's Centres and Extended Services schools	BCC	Lifelong Learning Partnership Early Years development & Childcare Services

We believe that the education sector is able to make significant contributions towards achieving better accessibility outcomes, which may include some of the following elements:

- providing evidence and defining key objectives
- making better use of resources for commissioning transport to education
- making use of accessibility audits in locational decisions about sites
- collaborating in providing better, integrated travel information to service users, e.g. through personalised travel planning
- streamlining and promoting travel costs schemes better
- supporting travel plan development for pupils, students and staff
- aligning class (and extended school times) with public transport services (where practical)

Economic development and access to employment action planning

In this sector our strategic partners include: the Milton Keynes, Bucks & Oxfordshire Job Centre Plus agency, the Learning & Skills Council, and the Buckinghamshire Economic Partnership (BEP), including the Council's own economic development group. Unfortunately we have had no success engaging the Job centre Plus Agency or LSC directly. We have obtained a statement of support from BEP, but have so far not been able to follow this up any further.

Besides the contributions that we intend to make to improving access to employment via our access to strategic centres strategy and action plan (see above), and local community accessibility action planning process (see section 7.3.2), we believe that the partners are able to make significant contributions towards achieving better accessibility outcomes, which may include some of the following elements:

- providing evidence and defining key objectives
- making better use of resources allocated for

supporting welfare to work (e.g. Travel to Interview scheme, Adviser Discretion Fund, Travel Information and Journey Planning Fund)

- collaborating in providing better, integrated travel information to job seekers and adult learners e.g. through personalised travel planning
- streamlining and promoting travel costs schemes better
- promoting the adoption of travel plans that take account of accessibility/inclusion

Despite the limited contribution of most agencies to date we have developed an action plan for 2006/7 (see table A9 below). Part of this comprises of actions necessary to develop a better understanding of the issues and potential links between access and employment and economic development in Buckinghamshire. We feel that there is currently insufficient knowledge about the nature and scope of the potential problem to determine further specific action.

Table A9: Access to employment action plan 2006/07

Issue	Action	Lead	Partners
Access to major and local employment centres	Improve access to strategic centres (see access to strategic centres action plan)	BCC	Bus & train operators
Access to employment locations	Support development of workplace travel plans with inclusive accessibility dimension	BCC	Employers
	Planning & provision of walking & cycling infrastructure (see 'urban areas accessibility action plan)	BCC	Cycling interest groups
	Personalised Travel Planning (see case study in section 7.2.7)	BCC	To be agreed
Access to employment for disadvantaged groups living away from core public transport network	Review findings and implications of Buckinghamshire Community Action (BCA) -commissioned rural 'Wheel-to-Work' research project	BCC	BCA
	Undertake further employment-focused research in first 2 rural local community areas	BCC	To be agreed

Access to healthy lifestyle resources

This theme embraces a wide range of issues - access to food, physical activity, leisure and social activities, and basic services. The Primary Care Trusts and the Council's Social Care Service both have a keen interest in food access and physical and social activity, and we are concerned about access to council services. The District Councils also have an interest because of their leisure and cultural services function. Buckinghamshire Community Action, the Rural Community Council in Buckinghamshire, has an interest too

because of its role in rural transport, economic development, and other issues such as local amenities.

There is a risk that in comparison to access to healthcare this theme will be given lower priority, because of its preventative nature. We therefore propose that this theme be dealt with through the existing Rural Transport Partnership, with representation from the PCT, Social Care, and district council leisure services. It is proposed that the partnership will be named the Access to Healthy Living Partnership (AHLP).

Table A10: Access to healthy living resources action plan 2006/07

Issue	Action	Lead	Partners
Access to healthy and affordable food esp. for people aged 50 +	Consider implications of social care-commissioned study and Transportation's strategic assessment & develop action plan if necessary	AHLP	BCC - Transportation, Social Care; PCT; BCA
Access to increased physical activity amongst people aged 50 + Access to public recreational centres	Improve access to public recreational centres via access to strategic centres action plan	BCC	Bus & train operators
	Needs assessment to ascertain whether access is significant barrier to participation esp. at leisure centres & main countryside attractions in Bucks	AHLP	BCC - Transportation, Countryside services; PCT; DC Leisure Services; BCA
	Promote walking (& cycling) targeted at people over 50	AHLP	PCT, BCA, Transportation, Rights of Way
Access to travel information & support	Personalised travel planning (see case study in section 7.2.7)	BCC	To be agreed
Access to major leisure centres during day and at night-time	Improve access to strategic centres (see access to strategic centres action Plan)	BCC	Bus & train operators





Contact has been made with the Buckinghamshire Strategic Partnership's Older People's Partnership Board to identify the contribution that accessibility planning can make to the quality of older people's lives. The result was that a number of accessibility-related actions were included within the annual strategic plan. These form the basis of the action plan below (see table A11).

Besides the contributions that we intend to make to improving access to healthy lifestyle resources via our access to strategic centres strategy and action, and local community accessibility action planning process (see section 7.3.2), we believe that the agencies are able to make significant contributions towards achieving better *accessibility outcomes, which may include some of the following elements:*

- providing evidence and defining key objectives
- making better use of resources used to provide access to food to disadvantaged groups
- collaborating in providing better, integrated travel information to marginalised target groups e.g. through personalised travel planning
- promoting the adoption of travel plans for major leisure and recreational centres that take account of accessibility/inclusion
- promoting and supporting key local facilities, particularly in rural areas

7.3.2 Local community accessibility action planning

Local community accessibility action planning and the restructuring of local public transport services will go hand in hand in Buckinghamshire. We believe that combining local community accessibility action planning and the restructuring of local public transport services will help develop integrated multi-modal local action plans. Our strategy for public transport outside the core network was explained in section 7.2.4. Essentially it involves reviewing the current configuration of (subsidised) local services, together with other transport services and resources, that presently exist within the 12 'Community Transport Partnership Areas', that have been identified and consulted on as part of the development of the LTP.

The success of local accessibility action planning will depend on the involvement of a wide range of community interests, but it is particularly important that accessibility disadvantaged groups are represented. We are therefore interested in the idea of working with agencies experienced in the 'community development' approach, such as Wycombe District Council.

It is not feasible to undertake local accessibility action planning in a short period because, given the way that we conceive it, it will clearly be a complex and time-consuming process. We have therefore established an indicative 4 year programme to cover all 12 areas. We will try and adhere to the following programme, but the order may change at any time due to unforeseen circumstances. This is not to say that actions with significant accessibility benefits will not be implemented in some areas before the formal accessibility action planning process takes place.

Table A11: Local community Accessibility action planning programme

2006/07	Stewkley, Wing & Ivinghoe	Stokenchurch & Marlow		
2007/08	Buckingham	Chesham & Amersham		
2008/09	Waddesdon & Haddenham	Burnham	Beaconsfield	Gerrards Cross & Iver
2009/10	Winslow	Aylesbury & Wendover	Princes Risborough	High Wycombe



Table 12: Access to Local Communities Action Plan 2006/07

Issue	Action	Lead	Partners
Poor non-car based and disabled access to town centre (Aylesbury) from area of deprivation	Replace current pedestrian bridge in Southcourt, Aylesbury with a DDA compliant structure suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and people using wheel chairs	BCC	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Severance problems with A413 Gyratory in Aylesbury with limited pedestrian and cyclist access in addition to congestion problems	Capacity assessment of junction taking into account pedestrian and cyclists movements	BCC	Cycling Liaison Group (CLG) and Sustrans
Incomplete cycle network in Aylesbury and barriers to safe cycling particularly by young people and non-car owners	Improvements to cycle infrastructure as part of the Aylesbury Cycle Demonstration town. This will improve travel choice particularly for those from deprived areas.	BCC	Cycling England Sustrans & CLG
Incomplete cycle network in High Wycombe, Chesham & Amersham; also barriers to safe cycling particularly by young people and non-car owners	Feasibility studies to develop potential for cycling in High Wycombe, Chesham & Amersham	BCC	Sustrans, CLG, Amersham Action Group, District Councils
Disabled parking facilities in High Wycombe and Aylesbury	Parking and Access studies already completed. Various actions to be taken to improve parking facilities	BCC	District Councils
Poor condition of footways in high pedestrian flow areas	Increased funding for resurfacing footways in Prestige Walking Zones, Primary Walking Routes and Secondary Walking Routes	BCC	
Taxi Rank notices either non-existent or in need of improved legibility. Increased access to taxis identified	Pilot of introduction of hailing points in each District when public transport is not operating, particularly to address personal security concerns. Improved notices and other infrastructure to be identified	Taxi Quality Partnership (including BCC and all District Councils)	
High Wycombe, Buckingham, Aylesbury and Beaconsfield urban rights of way not fully utilised for local journeys on foot	Signing to be improved within urban areas to identify trip attractors, and likely estimated time needed to walk to destination. Signs to be developed with local disability groups to ensure adequate visibility	BCC	Local Access Forums
Subways across urban areas with problems of vandalism and personal security perceptions	Review of subways to look at ways of improving perceptions of safety and question whether at-grade crossings may be the best solution	BCC	Local Access Forums

Local community accessibility action planning, which will begin in 2006/7, will follow the general process described below:

Stage 1 - Partnership development:

- Identify local stakeholder groups to form a Community Transport Partnership

Stage 2 - Local accessibility assessments:

- Undertake a detailed multi-modal Local Accessibility Audit in the area using the Rural Accessibility Audit tool and GIS mapping and modelling
- Undertake further detailed research into social inclusion issues e.g. employment and learning
- Consider possible links to strategic/thematic accessibility priorities and strategies
- Identify and clearly define specific accessibility and inclusion needs
- Prioritise needs on basis of importance and feasibility of action

Stage 3 - Option appraisal:

- Identify resources currently being spent on supporting public transport in the area, and resources available for non-public transport

solutions.

- Where necessary engage with other service delivery agencies
- Consider possible links to strategic/thematic action planning processes
- Consider full range of solutions and identify most feasible and effective options

Stage 4 - Accessibility planning:

- Develop detailed local accessibility action plans
- Establish performance indicators and targets
- Community Transport Partnership will recommend changes to meet identified local needs
- Local Committee will be asked to consider and endorse those changes
- BCC will determine how those services should be provided to ensure value for money is obtained
- Implementation of action plans

Stage 5 - Performance monitoring & evaluation:

- Monitor implementation of plan
- Monitor outcomes in terms of accessibility and inclusion



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Classification of strategic centres in and near Buckinghamshire

Appendix 2: Accessibility audits derived from Accession mapping (2004 data)

Appendix 3: Partners Supporting Statement

Appendix 4: Buckinghamshire Bus Service Standards



Appendix I: Classification of strategic centres in and near Buckinghamshire

Regional/major strategic centres

Local strategic centres

County/unitary	District	Centre	International Gateways	SE Regional Hubs	EE RICS ¹	FUR core s ²	SE Strategic Town Centres	Areas of town centre activity ³	MKSM Growth Areas
Bedfordshire	Bedford	Bedford			✓	✓		✓	
Bedfordshire	South Beds	Leighton Buzzard						✓	✓
Bedfordshire	South Beds	Dunstable			✓			✓	✓
Bracknell Forest		Bracknell				✓		✓	
Buckinghamshire	Aylesbury Vale	Aylesbury		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Buckinghamshire	Aylesbury Vale	Buckingham						✓	
Buckinghamshire	Wycombe	High Wycombe				✓	✓	✓	
Buckinghamshire	Wycombe	Marlow						✓	
Buckinghamshire	Wycombe	Princes Risborough						✓	
Buckinghamshire	Chiltern	Amersham						✓	
Buckinghamshire	Chiltern	Chesham						✓	
Buckinghamshire	Chiltern	Chalfont St. Peter						✓	
Buckinghamshire	South Bucks	Beaconsfield						✓	
Buckinghamshire	South Bucks	Burnham						✓	
Buckinghamshire	South Bucks	Gerrards Cross						✓	
Greater London	Hillingdon	Heathrow Airport	✓						
Greater London	Hillingdon	Uxbridge						✓	
Greater London		London	✓			✓		✓	
Hertfordshire	Dacorum	Berkhamstead						✓	
Hertfordshire	Dacorum	Hemel Hempstead				✓		✓	
Hertfordshire	Dacorum	Tring						✓	
Luton		Luton airport	✓		✓				
Luton		Luton town			✓	✓		✓	✓





County/unitary	District	Centre	International Gateways	SE Regional Hubs	EE RICS ¹	FUR core s ²	SE Strategic Town Centres	Areas of town centre activity ³	MKSM Growth Areas
Milton Keynes		Milton Keynes		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Milton Keynes		Bletchley						✓	
Milton Keynes		Stony Stratford						✓	
Milton Keynes		Wolverton/Greenleys						✓	
Northamptonshire	Northampton	Northampton				✓		✓	✓
Northamptonshire	S. Northants	Towcester						✓	✓
Oxfordshire	Oxford	Oxford		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Oxfordshire	Cherwell	Banbury					✓	✓	
Oxfordshire	Cherwell	Bicester						✓	
Oxfordshire	South Oxon	Henley-on-Thames						✓	
Oxfordshire	South Oxon	Thame						✓	
Reading		Reading		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Slough		Slough		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Three Rivers		Rickmansworth						✓	
Watford		Watford			✓	✓		✓	
Windsor & Maidenhead		Windsor					✓	✓	
Windsor & Maidenhead		Maidenhead					✓	✓	
Wokingham		Wokingham				✓		✓	
Wokingham		Twyford						✓	

Notes

1. East of England Regional Interchange Centres
2. Functional urban region core - urban centres with 7 or more jobs/hectare and 20,000 or more jobs
3. ODPM classification.

Appendix 2: Accessibility audits – 2004 data

Access to shopping, services, leisure and employment	Access to major centres within 15 minutes	Access to major centres within 30 minutes	Access to a large foodstore within 15 minutes	Access to a large foodstore within 30 minutes	Access to an employment centre within 20 minutes	Access to an employment centre within 40 minutes
All households	40%	80%	34%	78%		
Households no car	54%	88%	47%	86%	68%	91%
All People	40%	79%	35%	78%	55%	83%
Young	40%	80%	35%	78%	56%	84%
Elderly	40%	80%	32%	77%	54%	83%
Low Income	47%	85%	42%	83%	63%	88%
Working age					55%	83%
Jobseekers allowance					47%	71%

Access to health services	Access to a GP surgery within 15 minutes	Access to a GP surgery within 30 minutes	Access to a general hospital within 30 minutes	Access to a general hospital within 60 minutes
All households	64%	85%	53%	80%
Households no car	77%	91%	65%	88%
All People	63%	85%	53%	80%
Young	64%	85%	54%	80%
Elderly	64%	85%	51%	80%
Low Income	71%	89%	59%	85%

Access to education and learning	Access to a Primary school within 15 minutes	Access to a Primary school within 30 minutes	Access to a Secondary school within 20 minutes	Access to a Secondary school within 40 minutes	Access to an Further Education within 30 minutes	Access to an Further Education within 60 minutes
Compulsory School age	79%	88%	63%	85%		
Free School Meals	94%	98%	89%	97%		
16 - 19 year olds					81%	87%
Households no car	88%	93%	76%	91%	88%	92%
All People	79%	88%	63%	85%	80%	87%
Young	80%	88%	64%	86%	81%	87%
Elderly	79%	88%	62%	85%	80%	87%
Low Income	84%	91%	70%	89%	85%	91%



Appendix 3: Partners' Supporting Statement

Buckinghamshire Economic Partnership statement of support

Thank you for your letter dated 5th July, inviting Bucks Economic Partnership (BEP) to comment on the Accessibility Strategy for Buckinghamshire.



BEP exists to promote partnership working between the public, private and voluntary sectors in Buckinghamshire. We work closely with the County Council through our Transport and Environment Issue Group, which seeks to identify strategic opportunities for better collaboration in transport and environmental matters.

The BEP Transport and Environment Group sees the provision of enhanced public transport as a key goal for the County, both in order to improve accessibility and to reduce congestion and pollution. We have sought to promote initiatives such as Car-Free days and supported improvements to the provision of enhanced bus routes and the Aylesbury Transport Hub.

In particular, we support the need for improved accessibility planning for hard-to-reach groups such as long-term unemployed people and those with physical disabilities. In a generally affluent County such as Bucks, such groups are often more marginalised than usual, and need greater support. We are working closely with JobCentre Plus and other agencies in the Local Skills for Productivity Alliance to ensure that Government policies such as reducing those reliant on long-term Disability Benefit are implemented in a way which enables them to gain access to good quality employment opportunities. Given the low-levels of unemployment generally in the County, such approaches should be “win-win” situation, enabling those who want work to be able to get access to it, whilst helping employers tackle sometimes chronic issues of labour shortage.

We look forward to working with the County Council as it develops its Local Transport Plan to improve accessibility and increase the range of transport options available to all in Buckinghamshire.

Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust supporting statement

Thank you for the opportunity you have given the Trust to feed into local accessibility planning. I would like to endorse the comments made by the Primary Care Trusts and confirm Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust's support for the development of the Accessibility Strategy for Buckinghamshire.

In particular I would like to draw attention to the joint working on accessibility, associated with the Shaping Health Services consultation, which has been very valuable and we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with your team.

Thank you for the opportunities you have given our organisations to feed into local accessibility planning. It is very encouraging that the Local Accessibility Plan identifies the need to consider out-of-county flows and access to healthy food and physical activity opportunities, as well as access to health services within the County.

As you are aware, the health services provided to the population of Buckinghamshire are undergoing considerable re-design. Whilst there is an increasing emphasis on providing services closer to where people live, some patients will need to travel further for specialist services. We think the joint working on accessibility, associated with the Shaping Health Services consultation, has been very valuable and we look forward to continuing this work with your team.

One area of concern is with regard to Learning priorities and indicators (p35). There is a need to look at flexible transport provision for school age children so that they can access after school clubs and activities and facilities which will be provided through extended schools. This is not an emerging issue but one identified in previous needs assessment work.

There are three specific areas where we feel the synergy of joint working will bring particular benefits to the population of Buckinghamshire:

1. Using the knowledge and skills of your team to inform further health system re-design, including the Buckinghamshire Mental Health Services consultation and PCT Strategic Services Development Plans
2. Similarly supporting the development of the Chesham Healthzone, as a major improvement to health services for a relatively needy and deprived part of our population which will help to reduce health inequalities
3. Working with your team to ensure we, as large employers in Buckinghamshire, have policies and information for staff and patients that support the aims of accessibility for all and sustainability.

Wycombe 
Primary Care Trust

Chiltern and South Bucks
Primary Care Trust

Vale of Aylesbury 
Primary Care Trust

