

## 2. TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ROADS

### 2.1 Transport

Transport is a key issue for Cornwall given both its peripheral location and dispersed settlement pattern. Accessibility to services, reducing the need to travel, reducing congestion and supporting economic regeneration and sustained levels of growth are all key challenges. Cornwall's aspirations for strategic investment in transportation are set out in "Connecting Cornwall"<sup>5</sup>.

The Local Transport Capital Settlement 2007-2008 was announced in December 2006, together with the feedback from the Department for Transport on the classification of the Second Local Transport Plan (LTP) and on the delivery of the First LTP.

The County Council was classified as 'excellent' for both the second LTP and for delivery of the first LTP – one of only twelve LTP authorities that achieved this status. This demonstrates the high standards of delivery for transport schemes on the ground that has been achieved over the last five years, and also the forward looking transport policy development work that is set out in the new plan for the period up to 2011.

<sup>5</sup>"Connecting Cornwall" Published by Cornwall County Council (August 2004)



A unified local government system will enable the County Council's wider transport strategy to embrace fully and incorporate a countywide approach to public off-street car parking, which would be policy, not budget, driven. This will be a very important tool in encouraging and supporting the use of public transport, rather than the private motor car, through the use of the car parking revenues to support directly the provision of public transport services and also park-and-ride facilities.

This opportunity to bring a clear and single focus has been demonstrated in recent years by the development of Newquay Cornwall Airport. The County Council took over overall control for the airport in April 2004. Since that time, significant progress has been made in terms of the ongoing development of the airport and its future planning. A number of external organisations have committed to investment in the airport, confident in the ability of the County Council to deliver complex and challenging projects successfully.

## 2.2 Maintenance and Street Services

### Introduction and background.

Under the present system the County Council is the Highway Authority and has a statutory duty to maintain the highway. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006 -2011 sets out the County Council's proposals for investment under 5 key aims:

- Improve access to key services and facilities
- Improve local safety for all who travel in Cornwall
- Reduce the growth of traffic congestion and transport related air pollution and improve public transport in Cornwall

- Provide and maintain an integrated transport network that contributes to the development of the economy and regeneration
- Reduce the adverse impact of transport on the environment

The LTP is supported by a range of documents including the Transport Asset Management Plan, casualty reduction strategy and various codes of practice. In addition the county council has duties under the Traffic Management Act to secure the expeditious movement of traffic.

The district councils provide a range of on street services including:

- Cleansing and litter collection
- Design services
- Grounds maintenance
- Regeneration schemes
- Street trading and various licensing issues

All of these services contribute to the LTP aims and can have a direct impact on the County Council's network management duty.

The county council has a series of agency agreements with districts, towns and parish councils for grass cutting and weed treatment which can bring better coordination of some streetscape activities. Much of the county council's highway activities are delivered locally, with discretion to prioritise works at a local level within a countywide policy framework.

In addition the county council maintains an out-of-hours emergency service, responds to highway flooding and provides design services through in-house resources and a strategic design partner. A key service is to respond to fluvial and tidal flooding often in partnership with the district councils and the

Environment Agency. The district councils also provide an out-of-hours service.

The current two tier model of delivery relies upon collaboration between councils at both a formal and informal level. Examples exist where district councils have been successful in securing funding for schemes, but due to capacity problems, seek the county council to lead the design and implementation of works (e.g. Barncoose link road). Each of these tends to require a bespoke legal agreement.

The public's perception of the quality of the road network is often informed by amenity issues, which are currently delivered by a combination of the county and district councils. To achieve the maximum outputs from these services requires coordination, optimising the use of physical resources. The current two tier structure can achieve this; however it tends to rely upon informal agreements between officers with different priorities.

The provision of multi agency responses to incidents also demonstrates difficulties in the current arrangements. Whilst major incidents, such as Boscastle are well managed, with a good command and control structure in place, many other incidents can present problems. During recent tidal flooding the Environment Agency, the six district councils and the county council all provided a response to the incident, all operating to varying policies and plans, with different management and contracting arrangements. In some cases there is a significant difference in the service levels provided by adjoining district councils.

Many activities on the street are controlled by a variety of legislations, with powers shared between the county and district councils. For example a county council can close a street for works or safety, but a district can close a street for an event. Some licensing issues rest with the County Council (scaffolds) and

others with the district council (street trading). This provides a disjointed approach to street management.

### **Opportunities for improvement**

Under a single authority structure there would be an opportunity to provide a better coordination of all street scene activities including highway maintenance, improvement and management, to include services currently delivered by both county and district councils. We propose that policy development and standards would be set at a strategic level. This would enable improved planning of complementary activities, better utilisation of plant and other resources and opportunities for innovation.

Bringing together the district and county powers will provide an improved framework for the management of street scene for all users. There would also be better clarity in bidding for and delivering externally funded streetscape improvements. A single authority will be able to procure services more effectively, and through the development of partnership contracts, with design partners, build a capacity to project manage a wide range of schemes. A single authority will also enable a more robust 24 hour service to be developed and respond to incidents in a more coordinated manner.

## **2.3 Parking**

### **Introduction and background**

At present in Cornwall, the County Council is responsible for making the regulations governing on street parking, the Police are responsible for the enforcement of these regulations, and the district councils are largely responsible for all aspects of



the publicly owned off-street parking. (Some town and parish Councils operate off street car parks, particularly in North Cornwall.)

The Police have recently stated their intention to withdraw from enforcement of on street parking and so a new system of enforcement is required.

Parking is increasingly important in several key areas of public activity. It is a fundamental traffic management tool, as the availability and position of parking spaces is a key factor in an individual's trip-making decision. The location and method of operation of short and long stay car parks are crucial. On-street parking control is central to minimising congestion, optimising the operation of public transport and addressing the associated dangers of road safety and air quality.

Parking policy is central to the commercial success of town centres, to economic regeneration, the quality

of public realm and the protection of some residential areas from intrusion from commuters. This therefore is a significant factor in the quality of life of Cornish residents and visitors.

Out of town park and ride sites are being developed primarily for commuter traffic. In order for these schemes to be successful, it is imperative that town centre parking policies are developed in a complementary way. This will involve pricing policies, to discourage the use of car parks by long stay users and cross subsidy from these car parks reducing the park and ride costs. In this way the overall pricing policy can be developed to ensure that the most attractive option for the driver, in financial terms, is the one we would prefer the drivers to use.

Recent announcements concerning national policy suggest congestion charging as a means of regulating traffic congestion. This suggestion comes from the underlying principle that charging could be used

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to influence travel choice. By far the easiest way of charging to influence travel choice is by charging for parking and a sensible and rational parking pricing strategy would be an appropriate solution for Cornwall.

At present there are eight agencies involved in parking management (excluding contractors). The County Council, the Police and six district councils have differing policies and objectives giving a lack of clarity to the public, inconsistent enforcement, conflicting charging systems, and contrasting methods of dealing with the disabled. Significantly different policies exist for Sunday and evening parking and changes in these can result in cars being displaced on to the highway without any real consideration of the consequences.

The districts operate car parks primarily for revenue generation, with transportation objectives very much secondary to the potential for increasing income. A failure to consider the obvious traffic management consequences of the car park operation often generates cost for the County Council as we are asked to address the side effects of a purely financial decision.

At present, seven different enforcement strategies exist, one for each authority and one on-street. Each requires its own back office to address penalty charges and to deal with offenders. The on-street enforcement currently provided by the police will cease to be administered by them from 1st April, 2008. This means that the County Council is preparing a submission to the DfT to take on Civil Parking Enforcement Powers. We are discussing with the districts how this may be done.

It is the stated preference of the DfT that when such schemes are introduced, on and off street parking enforcement are co-ordinated through the same



agency. This could be each district acting individually and enforcing on and off street, but this is not a logical decision. The back office costs of processing penalty charges and hearing representation and preparing for appeals are significant and a single back office is the only logical and indeed affordable decision.

The County Council has asked districts whether or not they wish to have their car parks enforced through the Civil Parking processes, but as yet one district only has responded stating that they are mindful not to do so. Not doing so leads to the retention of seven back offices with associated costs and seven management structures for the various enforcement teams which must be inefficient. It also leads to different enforcement policies on and off street and a considerable lack of clarity for the public. It leads to a lack of flexibility with staff not being able to be deployed at critical locations to address live problems.

### **Opportunities for improvement**

A unified authority will enable a single policy framework within which local factors can still be considered, but in which on and off-street parking decisions could be co-ordinated and back office costs would be reduced. The implementation of the strategic policies will be at a local level.