

S.E. Dorset Local Transport Plan
VOLUME 3

ACCESSIBILITY
STRATEGY

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

1 VISION & OBJECTIVES FOR ACCESSIBILITY

S.E. Dorset Vision for Accessibility

S.E. Dorset Accessibility Objectives

Support of Key Partners

2 LINK TO WIDER VISION & OBJECTIVES

National Objectives

Regional Objectives

Local Objectives

Linking Into Wider Policies & Objectives

3 DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

Accessibility Planning Process

Stage 1: Identify Key Accessibility Groups, Areas and Partners

Stage 2: Problems: Strategic & Local Accessibility Assessments

Stage 3: Opportunities: Option Appraisal

Stage 4: Accessibility Plan Preparation

Stage 5: Monitoring Delivery

Appendix A. Accessibility Issues & Potential Solutions

Appendix B. Accessibility Actions - Prioritised Ranking List

Appendix C. 5-Year Accessibility Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been growing recognition of the need to improve access to jobs and key services, particularly for those from disadvantaged groups. The Social Exclusion Unit's Report 'Making the Connections' highlighted the difficulties faced by many who are unable to get to, or who have difficulty in getting to, work, healthcare, education, post offices, shops, leisure and other services.

As part of this accessibility planning process the three Local Transport Authorities have particularly focused upon face-to-face engagement with people, user representative groups and service providers to understand and appreciate the day-to-day difficulties that individuals face when accessing or trying to access services.

Having met with various user groups representing people with disabilities, older people, young people, and local communities it has become clear that many are already fully aware of the issues. Some groups, such as Help & Care, have commissioned their own local reports on the subject of accessibility, whilst other groups have seized the initiative to develop their own solutions to some of the problems. Typical of this has been the 'West Howe Network', which has been working on 'easy-to-read' personalised bus timetables for people with learning disabilities that can also be used by other sectors of the community. This organisation is also currently working on an initiative to provide volunteer escorts on buses. Similarly, the Poole Community Transport Forum has drawn up detailed proposals aimed at improving the quality of life for people with mobility difficulties and their carers.

There is therefore a great local drive to see real improvement in accessibility and the approach that has been taken, in directly engaging with groups to try to understand the depth of the issues and potential solutions, has been enthusiastically welcomed. There is now an increased expectancy within communities to see a fundamental improvement in accessibility. The challenge for the Local Transport Authorities of Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset is to capture the enthusiasm that exists and to work alongside community partners to ensure that potential accessibility improvements become a reality, delivering meaningful, measurable benefits to local people to help improve the quality of their lives.

Ultimately, the success of this Accessibility Strategy will be dependent upon all partners owning and delivering against the accompanying Accessibility Action Plan over the five-year period 2006 - 2011.

1 VISION & OBJECTIVES FOR ACCESSIBILITY

South East Dorset Vision for Accessibility

1.1 The following 'Accessibility Vision' has been agreed for the South East Dorset conurbation:-

The Councils of Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset, along with their community partners, have the shared vision of ensuring that people in South East Dorset enjoy an improved quality of life by having easy access to the jobs or services that they need

S.E. Dorset Accessibility Objectives

1.2 The report from the Social Exclusion Unit *Making the Connections* highlighted the importance of people being able to access jobs, education, healthcare, leisure and other opportunities in order to improve their quality of life and their chances in life.

1.3 The report recognises that accessibility is not solely about transport issues but also about the location of services and the way they are delivered. For this reason accessibility solutions cannot be delivered by transport authorities working in isolation, but require the active involvement of community partners, including the private sector, voluntary sector and other public bodies.

1.4 In recognition of the above, the following strategic objectives have been set: -

- **Develop a S.E. Dorset conurbation Accessibility Strategy which will deliver real measurable benefits to help local people access services and tackle social exclusion;**
- **Help deliver wider national and regional objectives;**
- **Ensure community input into, and ownership of, the Accessibility Strategy to assist partners to identify the issues and help deliver the solutions;**
- **Ensure corporate ownership of the Accessibility Strategy to ensure other council departments are committed to delivering accessibility objectives.**

1.5 In addition, the following specific accessibility objectives have been set: -

- ◆ **Improve access to job opportunities for unemployed people;**
- ◆ **Improve access to health care;**
- ◆ **Improve stakeholders' policies relating to the location of services;**
- ◆ **Improve land-use planning to address and avoid accessibility problems;**

- ◆ Seek to make public transport more affordable, particularly for those on low incomes or without access to a car;
- ◆ Improve public transport information, including timetables, maps, real time information etc.;
- ◆ Improve the availability of buses by reviewing routes;
- ◆ Improve the reliability of buses, including reviewing the duration of journeys;
- ◆ Improve the physical access to bus stops and on board buses;
- ◆ Improve the ease of use of buses and taxis particularly for people with learning disabilities and older people;
- ◆ Provide support/training for people with disabilities to use public transport;
- ◆ Provide driver training in disability awareness;
- ◆ Improve the physical accessibility of footways and Rights of Way, including providing safe crossing places;
- ◆ Enhance and expand existing community transport services to meet the needs of those unable to access ordinary public transport;
- ◆ Provide more parking spaces for people with disabilities;
- ◆ Reduce the fear of crime associated with walking and public transport;
- ◆ Help those in the 16 to 19 age range to access and remain in further education;
- ◆ Improve bus routes to school and make it easier for young people to use buses;
- ◆ Provide safer routes to school.
- ◆ Improve the cycle network, cycleways and cycle facilities, and improve safety for cyclists;

Support of Key Partners

1.6 Key partners have been heavily involved in the accessibility assessment process. Statements demonstrating their engagement and their commitment to help deliver solutions are given below.



Chief Executive

I can confirm that the Accessibility Strategy (including the Vision, Strategic Objectives and specific objectives) has my full support from a corporate point of view. Many of the deeper social issues in the town revolve around poverty and benefit dependency, health, social cohesion and inclusion, leading to poor quality of life. All of these can be assisted in part by a strong accessibility policy, backed by meaningful action. This is also vital given that a quarter of households in the Borough do not own a car. As the strategy makes clear, accessibility goes beyond the narrow transport provider issues, and includes actions such as land use that is amenable to economic public transport provision, and the location of Council and other services in a way that is readily accessible – including the use of the internet and telephones to reduce the need to travel in the first place. The Corporate Management Team will therefore seek to ensure that its decisions in the future have regard to, and support, the Accessibility Strategy.

Pam Donnellan, Chief Executive Bournemouth Borough Council



Chief Executive

For the majority of people, Poole and the surrounding area is a lovely place to live. But those who do not have access to a private car are seriously disadvantaged in terms of social and economic well-being. Equality and inclusiveness are at the heart of Poole’s vision and values and I welcome the development of this Accessibility Strategy. In my opinion, work on this Shared Priority is likely to be transformational for people who find travel difficult or those who live in areas which are more isolated from public transport links.

John McBride, Chief Executive Borough of Poole



Chief Executive

Dorset County Council’s mission is to improve the quality of life for people in Dorset, now and for the future. We value the different needs of individuals and communities in the county and work together with others to provide access to the range of services and facilities that people need. Access to jobs, education, health services and other facilities impact enormously on quality of life and there are many communities, families and individuals across the county; in urban as well as rural locations, that would benefit from better access to destinations that are important to them. This Accessibility Strategy provides an excellent basis for us to address, corporately and together with a wide range of partners, many of the objectives that will contribute to a better quality of life in Dorset.

David Jenkins, Chief Executive Dorset County Council



All measures that make public transport accessible to a greater number of people in our society are to be welcomed and embraced. The work undertaken by our Council partners on this important aspect of the Local Transport Plan is to be commended, and Wilts & Dorset is fully committed to playing its role in helping to effect the identified needs.

Alex Carter, Managing Director, Wilts & Dorset



We welcome working with a council that has a proactive and innovative public transport policy and who will work with us on bus priorities to improve service reliability and the provision of real time information to assist our customers.

Derek Lott, Chief Operating Officer, Bournemouth Transport Ltd.



Thanks for the copy of the Accessibility report. I can confirm that we have worked closely to identify the barriers and potential solutions to accessibility as it relates to work and access to vacancies. As you know I chair the DART partnership (the Dorset Local Strategic Partnership Accessibility Group) within the Dorset CC area. This is likely to expand and we will wish to invite Bournemouth and Poole to be partners to discuss access across LA boundaries.

Rob Sly, Jobcentre Plus



Having been involved with the consultation on the accessibility plan and seen how this will impact on communities I work with, I completely endorse the new accessible travel plan and the way it is has been put together.

Bev Hepting, West Howe Investing in People (Neighbourhood Group)



The forum is a self-advocacy group run for and by people with learning disabilities; we have a number of focus groups one of which is on transport. The forum was very pleased to have been involved in the new Local Transport Plan. Our transport focus group was visited and people were able to talk about their concerns and ideas for better, more accessible transport in the conurbation.

Amanda Parsons, Bournemouth Forum – Independent Speaking Up Group



Neighbourhood Management, as one of Government's Regeneration initiatives for deprived areas, has welcomed the opportunity to engage the local community in the consultation that is shaping the Local Transport Plan proposals. The Council has taken time and effort to ensure that people are consulted about accessibility to services and are sharing this information with partners in both the voluntary and community sectors. By using a variety of existing engagement opportunities as well as establishing some imaginative and responsive initiatives, I am reassured that a representative and appropriate plan will be produced.

Sue Warr, Neighbourhood Management – Springbourne & Boscombe West



It is a priority for the PCT to improve access to services. Good transport is obviously key to this and we have welcomed this opportunity to be involved in the development of this multi-agency accessibility plan.

Joy Reynolds, Bournemouth NHS Teaching Primary Care Trust



Thank you for giving Poole PCT an opportunity to contribute to the S.E. Dorset Framework Accessibility Strategy. This is to confirm that Poole PCT endorses the partnership work you are proposing to improve access to healthcare, in particular in regard to commissioning patient transport service for access to GPs and dentists and working closely with the voluntary sector to identify scope for improving the sharing of vehicles.

Janice Beavan, Poole NHS Primary Care Trust



As a member of the local strategic partnership, the Royal Bournemouth & Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust completely endorses the broad strategy and detailed aspirations within this plan. Having recently updated our own Green Travel Plan, we feel the work accords with the Trust's objective to make our hospitals truly accessible to all patients, staff and visitors, and we will continue to work with local authority and other partners to provide choice and improved access wherever possible.

Jim Masters, Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Trust



Poole Hospital NHS Trust welcomes the opportunity of the joint partnership approach in providing good local transport services for patients and visitors to access healthcare services within the community and this will support the Trust's own Travel Plan.

Derek Morgan, Poole Hospital NHS Trust



Dorset Ambulance NHS Trust Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services are dedicated in providing a quality transport service to the population of Dorset. Dorset Ambulance Trust welcome the chance to work in partnership with the Council to achieve better access to healthcare in conjunction with their five-year strategic transport plan, to improve accessibility to healthcare services and hospital visiting.

Michelle Hawkins, Dorset Ambulance NHS Trust



Bournemouth University has worked closely with the Council to look into improving accessibility to our sites for staff, students and visitors. The Council's approach has been pro-active and inclusive. As a major institution and employer within the conurbation, transportation is a major factor for us and the accessibility of our services to our users is of vital importance to the role of the university.

Stuart Laird, Bournemouth University



Your presentation of the Delivering Accessibility part of the Transport Plan was well received by the Bournemouth Older Peoples Strategy Group and they were impressed to find that, in the preliminary plan, certain of the suggestions raised at the meeting had been included. To them it was a step forward to find that their contribution was acknowledged.

Terry Purnell, Help & Care



The partnership supports the current consultation arrangements as set out in the Accessibility sections of the LTP. The partnership recognises that the Transport Authorities will have to create or utilise an existing multi-agency accessibility group in order to progress any action plan arising from the consultation.

Andy Matthews, Transport to Learning Partnership



I was approached by the Council to enable them to obtain feedback on the transport views, needs and usage of those associated with the churches of the town as they recognised that they comprised a significant cross-section of the population. Questionnaires were supplied with covering letters and I have been informed that there was a good response to this initiative.

Adrian Thomas, Churches Together in Bournemouth



People's quality of life depends on full and easy access to all services. Disability Wessex has actively engaged with the Council to ensure that the LTP has been developed through consultation with local disabled people. Members of Disability Wessex's "People Voices Panel" contributed their views on what should go into the Framework Accessibility Strategy via a questionnaire. In addition members attended a transport forum and contributed to the discussion. As an organisation committed to the empowerment of disabled people, we are happy to support the vision for accessibility laid out in the S.E. Dorset Local Transport Plan

Nikki Haswell, Disability Wessex



BSVI is delighted to have been actively involved in the consultation process to support the Local Transport Plan – Framework Accessibility Strategy. With regular meetings and all information being produced in an accessible format, visually impaired people have been supportive at looking at local issues and offering potential solutions. We look forward to supporting the delivery of inclusive and accessible transport over the coming years.

Angela Ross, Bournemouth Society for the Visually Impaired



Age Concern Bournemouth actively promotes independence for all older people. It is recognised that older people are often unable to access public transport for many reasons, and this can often lead to social isolation. The Local Transport Plan looks to address these issues and Age Concern Bournemouth has welcomed the opportunity to be a partner agency.

Hazel Walker, Age Concern Bournemouth



The Forum is satisfied that the draft LTP has incorporated our proposals in principle. We are pleased to see that you have listened to our concerns and acted upon them constructively.

Anne Sieve, Poole Community Transport Forum



Local Planning Authority

The Local Transport Plan will be a key document when formulating the future policies of the Regional Spatial Strategy, South East Dorset sub-regional study and subsequently the Bournemouth Development Framework. The S.E. Dorset Accessibility objectives will provide a useful tool in helping to deliver a more sustainable community in the future.

Mike Holmes, Local Planning Authority, Bournemouth Borough Council



Local Planning Authority

The accessibility vision and objectives will help to deliver sustainable communities within the sub-region. Access to jobs, shops and services serves to underpin planning policies in Poole and the Vision will strengthen this complementary relationship. It will help to set the stage for the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Poole's Local Development Framework.

David Ralph, Strategic Planning Services, Borough of Poole



Local Education Authority

I am happy to endorse the plan as identifying the key access issues for children, young people and their families, particularly in relation to access to learning. The plan is appropriately cross-referenced to the 14-19 area wide inspection findings.

Carolyn Godfrey, Local Education Authority, Bournemouth Borough Council



Local Education Authority

The organisation in Poole enables Pupil, Parent and Youth Services to commission Transportation Services to arrange and organise Home to School transport which ensures that best value is maintained and there is co-ordination with mainstream public transport. It is important that every child arrives at school safely, whether on foot, cycle or by vehicle and fit to enjoy and achieve in their learning environment. This Accessibility Strategy will help us to achieve this objective.

Vicky Wales, Pupil, Parent & Youth Services, Borough of Poole



Social Care

The Community Care Service Management Team of Bournemouth Borough Council fully endorses the Accessibility Strategy outlined in the South East Dorset Local Transport Plan. The strategy has a real sense of engagement and clear objectives that, when implemented, will assist in promoting the welfare of the wider community and support a number of key priorities highlighted in the Community Care Services' Service Plan. In particular the strategy helps to promote the social inclusion agenda, contributes to the attainment of welfare to work targets and supports the objective of protecting vulnerable adults.

A lot of work has gone into this. I am happy to support the plan and I see reflected in the action plan issues relating to children and young people. One issue for the top-level plan is the issue of making transport safe for children and young people, both as users and non-users.

Judith Geddes / Kevin Jones, Social Care, Bournemouth Borough Council



Social Care

Adult Social Services welcome this Framework Accessibility Strategy as a key element in our progression towards promoting Independence, Well Being and Choice for service users. In particular we look forward to the opportunities that will be given through this plan to enhance our work in involving our voluntary sector partners, service users and carers in promoting accessibility and inclusion.

Charlie Sheldrick, Adult Social Services, Borough of Poole



We are very happy to endorse the vision for accessibility for South-East Dorset of an improved quality of life through easy access to jobs and services. Leisure Services is an important provider of accessible opportunities for physical activity. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to improve the transport options to enhance access.

Roger Brown, Leisure Services, Bournemouth Borough Council



Leisure Services

Access to recreational open space is an important factor in supporting community health and wellbeing, quality of life and the local economy. Making public open space more "accessible to all" is an important policy objective of the adopted Open Space Strategy for Poole, and I welcome strategic initiatives that support this vision.

Mike Childs, Leisure Services, Borough of Poole



Community transport is sometimes the only viable solution for individuals trying to access key services. I am therefore pleased to see the confirmed support of community transport within this S.E. Dorset Accessibility Strategy.

Jane Colvin, Dorset Accessible Responsive Transport (DART)



As an organisation supporting local communities we look forward to working in partnership to achieve positive outcomes towards this accessibility strategy. As part of our Fair Share Trust programme in West Howe, we are particularly looking to address the identified priority issues of Community Safety, Communication and Quality of Life - all of which can be impacted by accessibility issues especially accessible transport.

Lorraine Dabner, The Community Foundation for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole



2 LINK TO WIDER VISION & OBJECTIVES

National Objectives

- 2.1 Improving accessibility to jobs and services not only addresses social exclusion, but also supports other national objectives by helping to:
- Support economic regeneration.
 - Facilitate the transition from welfare to work.
 - Reduce health inequalities.
 - Improve participation and attendance in education.
- 2.2 The SEU report, *Making the Connections* set out the relationship between transport, social exclusion and the location of jobs and key services. Government has since formed a cross-department strategy for reducing social exclusion by improving access to jobs and services.
- 2.3 The *Making the Connections* report introduced the concept of accessibility planning. This aims to ensure that there is a clearer and more systematic approach for establishing and tackling barriers that people, particularly those from disadvantaged groups and areas, face in accessing jobs and key services (healthcare, education, leisure and food shops). It is not just about improving transport but also about ensuring that jobs and services are delivered where and when they are needed.
- 2.4 Accordingly, Government has not only issued 'Accessibility' guidance to Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), but also to Local Planning Authorities, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), NHS Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), Jobcentre Plus and local leisure and culture providers.
- 2.5 The guidance issued to these non-transport agencies confirms the role LTAs have in working with these agencies to develop an accessibility strategy that will improve access to jobs and services.

Regional Objectives

- 2.6 Government has overhauled the planning system with Regional Planning Guidance, Structure Plans and Local Plans - now being replaced by a new two-tier system of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West is to be supplemented by the Developing Regional Transport Strategy (DRTS) that emphasises the need to address accessibility issues through transport solutions.
- 2.7 The Developing Regional Transport Strategy (DRTS) has identified accessibility and social exclusion as key transport issues for the South West region and sets the following regional objectives for accessibility: -
- To secure improved accessibility to work, education, healthcare, shopping, leisure and services by public transport, walking and cycling.
 - Locating development at accessible locations with the potential to develop sustainable transport linkages.
 - Considering the impact of transport decisions on social inclusion.

Local Objectives

- 2.8 As well as addressing national and regional priorities it is essential to tackle issues at the local level. In particular it is important to contribute towards delivering sustainable local communities and to meet objectives in Community Plans.
- 2.9 The Borough of Poole and its community partners have identified the following key local priorities:
- Supporting young people
 - Vibrant economy
 - Clean; green and safe
 - Strong sense of community
 - Health and well-being
- 2.10 Bournemouth Borough Council and its community partners have identified the following key local priorities:
- Strengthening our economy
 - Education and lifelong learning
 - Developing communities and tackling crime
 - Sustaining our environment
 - Caring for people
- 2.11 Dorset County Council and its community partners have identified the following key local priorities:
- Sustainability – a principle for future well-being
 - Cross-cutting issues – affordable housing, access and rural issues
 - People – supporting active and inclusive communities
 - Learning and knowledge – improving opportunities for learning and culture
 - Safety and health – improving health, community safety and well-being
 - Economy – sustaining a prosperous and productive local economy
 - Environment – safeguarding Dorset's unique environment
- 2.12 The work on 'delivering accessibility' will directly contribute towards meeting these local priorities.
- 2.13 At an authority level, council departments, such as planning, education, social care and leisure are seeking to implement national, regional and local priorities. It is important that the Accessibility Strategy contributes towards meeting these objectives as well as other transport objectives within the wider Local Transport Plan. In addition, authorities will have objectives for delivering quality services and providing value for money as set out in the authorities' Corporate Plans.

Linking into Wider Policies and Objectives

2.14 In recognition of national, regional and local objectives the Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) of Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset are addressing the LTP shared priority of 'Delivering Accessibility', by: -

- working closely and continuously with the private, public and voluntary sectors, to identify accessibility issues, particularly those of disadvantaged groups and areas;
- working closely and continuously with private, public and voluntary sectors as well as neighbouring authorities, to jointly develop and implement accessibility solutions;
- helping key stakeholders and community partners to integrate accessibility considerations (e.g. through accessibility planning) into their decision making processes, and to reflect this requirement in Community Plans and stakeholders' strategies;
- integrating and mainstreaming accessibility objectives within each of the authorities' wider policy areas, such as planning (Local Development Framework), education, social care, leisure etc. and to highlight this within each authority's Corporate Plan;
- ensuring that accessibility issues are considered in wider transport strategies, policies, programmes and schemes;
- implementing specific accessibility-related transport schemes, such as improving the public transport network, community transport, real-time information, footways, highways, cycleways and Rights of Way;
- ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively to achieve optimum accessibility benefits for people as well as delivering best value;
- setting targets and monitoring progress to ensure national and local objectives are met;
- delivering real outcomes for the people who need them most.

2.15 Figure 1 overleaf shows how the new S.E. Dorset Local Transport Plan, which includes the shared priority 'Delivering Accessibility' links into to wider policy areas.

Figure 1 Links to Wider Policy Areas and National, Regional & Local Objectives

