

Introduction

Hampshire County Council is committed to overseeing and promoting an attractive passenger transport network that offers realistic options for people to make their journey. It is important that information covering all modes of passenger transport is delivered to a high standard.

Local transport authorities are required to produce a Bus Information Strategy. The Transport Act 2000 specifies that the following information should be provided for local bus services:

- Information about routes and timetables to, from and within the authority's area.
- Information about fares for local journeys.
- Other information about facilities for disabled people, travel concessions and connections with other public transport services.

The Act requires authorities to consult with organisations that represent users of the local services and with the relevant Traffic Commissioner. The County Council will also consult with transport operators, neighbouring local authorities, district and parish councils and other stakeholders as the strategy develops.

As well as specific information such as timetables and fares, there is a need to improve general awareness of the network of bus and other passenger transport services, including demand-responsive and community transport facilities. Potential users may be unaware of the existence of available services resulting in social exclusion. It is therefore important to make appropriate information available where and when it is needed.

This document includes details of how the County Council will work with its partners to improve the quality and availability of information about passenger transport services, including bus, ferry, rail, community transport, demand-responsive and taxi-share services. It therefore has a wider scope than the statutory requirement to produce a Bus Information Strategy.

The strategy also includes marketing initiatives and considers the scope for carefully devised branding to raise public awareness of the County Council's role in respect of passenger transport services.

Objectives

This strategy aims to address directly two of the overall objectives of the Local Transport Plan, namely:

- To increase accessibility to services.
- To widen travel choice.

Within the strategy, specific objectives can be identified as follows:

- Increase the availability and accessibility of information, thereby helping to maximise use of individual services.
- Provide comprehensive information about connecting services, and promote public transport as an integrated network.
- Develop and implement standards for the presentation of information, while recognising users with specific needs.
- Improve confidence in the public transport network and raise the level of satisfaction with public transport information amongst residents.
- Improve the delivery of available information, recognising that no one means of delivery will meet the needs of all users.
- Ensure effective promotion of the Traveline telephone enquiry and Internet journey-planning facilities.

Secondary objectives include:

- Clarify the roles of local authorities and transport operators in information provision.
- Ensure that targeted travel information is an integral part of other initiatives, including Quality Bus Partnerships, work place and school travel plans, and the promotion of leisure and tourism facilities.

The measures proposed, by encouraging use of public and community-based transport services will also help to reduce congestion and, ultimately, contribute towards improving air quality.

The strategy is designed to improve the County Council's Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) ratings for the provision of local transport information (BVPI 103) and satisfaction with local bus services (BVPI 104). It will also contribute towards the second round Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2) target for increased passenger numbers on Quality Bus Partnership routes and towards LTP2 targets for increasing public transport use across all modes.

The current information menu in Hampshire

To promote confidence in public transport, information must be available before, during and after the journey. This may take a variety of forms, from general route planning with network maps, to specific details such as which bus station stand that a particular service uses.

The following sources of information are currently available for passenger transport services in Hampshire:

By telephone

- Journey planning service (Traveline) – **0870 608 2 608**.
- Enquiry services provided by transport operators.

On the Internet

- Journey planning service (Traveline) – **www.traveline.org.uk**.
- Information services provided by bus and train operators.
- Passenger Transport Group website **ctweb.hants.gov.uk** and related County Council web pages, eg Workplace and School Travel Plans and ROMANSE online.

Other electronic information

- Expanding network of real-time bus information.
- On-street kiosks offering journey planning services.
- Electronic screens listing departures at bus stations.

Printed information

- Printed individual route timetables and local timetable booklets produced by transport operators.
- 500,000 printed Bus & Train Travel Guides and area network maps distributed by the County Council every year to households, libraries, Council offices, doctors' surgeries and other public places.
- Guide to Hampshire Rail Services & Stations produced annually.
- 'Travelling In Hampshire', a simple guide to using public transport.

A number of other publications offer valuable information to targeted members of the community, particularly those at risk of being socially excluded:

- 100,000 'Getting About Guides' to provide travel information for older and disabled people (produced annually).
- Community Transport Newsletter (produced twice a year).

- Publications supporting Community Transport initiatives, eg Dial-a-Ride, Car-share schemes, Call and Go.

Roadside information

- 8,500 bus stops, many with timetable display cases.
- Over 1,000 bus shelters with information display cases.

Marketing initiatives

- Direct marketing campaigns, eg InfoMotion.
- Branding and advertising on bus exteriors to promote particular services, particularly on Quality Bus Partnership routes.
- General advertising, including promotional material in County Council magazines, district council newsletters, and at town centre 'Information Points'.

Other forms of information

- Press releases throughout the year on relevant issues.
- Posters on buses and bus shelters.
- Destination and route number displays on buses.
- On-street signage to rail and bus stations.
- Face-to-face enquiry points at bus stations and travel shops.
- Verbal enquiries to bus drivers and other employees of public transport operators.

The County Council will work with its partners to provide relevant and up-to-date information for existing and potential users through the most appropriate media. This strategy balances the demand for information with the resources that the County Council and its partners can reasonably make available.

How the County Council will deliver the strategy

Work will focus on providing comprehensive travel information to all sections of the community through the methods described in the following sections of this strategy:

- Traveline.
- Printed publications.
- Electronic travel information.
- Roadside information.
- Promotion through branding.
- Marketing and other forms of promotion.

Traveline telephone and web-based journey planning service

It is considered that a strong public transport information service is a key part of delivering the objectives of the Local Transport Plan.

For rail users the National Rail Enquiry Service (NRES) telephone line provides train information on a single national number (**08457 484950**) available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With over 50 million calls per year NRES provides impartial journey planning and timetable advice on the services of all train operators. NRES is rated highly by both users and train operators as a key marketing tool for increasing train patronage.

By contrast, information about bus services has been more difficult for potential customers to obtain. Bus operators generally provide a telephone enquiry service that only offers information about their own services, often only available during office hours. It is recognised that having many separate telephone information services for rail and bus services can hinder public transport use.

A national multi-modal telephone enquiry service, known as Traveline, has been developed, to provide impartial advice about public transport services. This is accessible at a national call rate using a single telephone number (**0870 608 2 608**), and is provided between the hours of 0700-2200 every day except Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Traveline provides an economical, efficient and effective way of meeting the need for timetable and journey planning information from a single source. The Traveline website **www.traveline.org.uk** is an increasingly popular alternative to the telephone enquiry service.

The County Council requires that information shall be made available to the public through Traveline, either in addition to, or in place of, any telephone information service provided by each bus operator about its own local services.

Under the Transport Act 2000, the County Council must have regard to the desirability of working with other local authorities to provide information jointly. Many public transport routes and operators extend into the area of more than one local transport authority. Hampshire County Council has agreed to work in partnership with Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils and with other authorities in the South West region.

South West Public Transport Information (SWPTI), a company limited by guarantee, has been formed by these authorities, in partnership with major transport operators in the South West, to deliver the Traveline service in the region. SWPTI calculates the call handling costs associated with the services of each operator using a formula agreed by the SWPTI partners. The County Council requires each operator to meet these costs.

Both the website and telephone enquiry service use a database of timetables and maps, and for services in Hampshire this database is managed by the County Council Passenger Transport Group (PTG).

Conditions of contract for tendered local bus services

To enable the authority to comply with the Transport Act 2000, operators providing tendered local bus services must meet the reasonable costs of providing service information. This will be implemented once the Passenger Transport Information Strategy has been approved and adopted by the authority. Notice has been given to all contractors of the change in contract conditions.

Traveline actions

- The County Council will work with the Hampshire Consortium and SWPTI partners to improve the quality of the local database and introduce new features, eg fares and SMS text messaging.
- The County Council will work with SWPTI partners and Government to increase awareness of Traveline by engaging in promotional activities.
- All bus operators providing services in Hampshire will participate in the Traveline services and will meet the costs attributed by SWPTI to telephone enquiries about its services

Printed publications

A comprehensive range of publications is currently produced. 11 area Bus & Train Travel Guides are published twice a year. Annual publications include the Hampshire Bus, Train & Ferry Network Map, other local network maps covering the New Forest and Basingstoke areas and the Guide To Rail Services and Stations. A substantial number of these publications are delivered to the door. They are also available by mailing list, on request by email, telephone or through the PTG website. A wide range of public outlets carry the guides including libraries, Tourist Information Centres and council offices.

It is important that any publicity produced by the County Council complements information provided by the operators. In areas where one bus operator dominates and produces its own area guides (such as at Eastleigh, Fareham and Gosport) the County Council avoids duplication by not publishing a travel guide.

In those areas where Travel Guides are distributed door-to-door, BVPI 103 ratings are higher than where bus operators provide their own publicity. Further research will be undertaken to determine whether Travel Guides are the most appropriate form of travel information County-wide.

Publicity for public transport services in north-east Hampshire is already produced jointly with Surrey County Council, in the form of area Travel Guides covering Farnham/Aldershot and Farnborough/Camberley. A third area map for the Blackwater Valley is also published jointly with Surrey and two Berkshire authorities, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Wokingham District Council. This allows costs to be shared, providing good value for money.

There is potential for greater use of external advertising (by public transport operators or other organisations) to offset the cost of producing printed material. Such advertising must be consistent with other aspects of County Council policy, and should not displace existing editorial content from the publication.

Printed publicity actions

The County Council will:

- Carry out further research into residents' opinions of information provision.
- Investigate the possibility of producing Travel Guides to cover all areas of Hampshire, or achieving a wider distribution of operators' own publicity.
- Use the County Council publication 'Hampshire Now', and district and parish council publications to achieve greater local penetration of targeted, relevant passenger transport information.
- Work with public transport operators to increase the availability of all printed bus and rail publicity at public outlets, eg libraries, doctors' surgeries, council offices, and to increase awareness of the locations of these outlets.
- Investigate production of further publicity items in partnership with neighbouring authorities in cross-boundary areas.
- Investigate the use of external advertising to part-fund publications

Electronic travel information

As technology has developed, new electronic information systems have become available to provide increasingly detailed information in a growing range of different formats.

Bus Departure Information Screens (BDIS) have been installed at all of Hampshire's bus stations during the period of the first LTP. A Real-Time Information (RTI) system using electronic departure signs at bus stops has been in operation in Winchester for several years. This will be replaced with a new generation system during 2006.

Research indicates that these latest methods of providing information are an effective tool for building confidence that the public transport network has a level of permanency and is benefiting from strong investment.

The new RTI system is also under test in Basingstoke and there are plans to use it to include Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) routes in Havant, Rushmoor, Eastleigh and Test Valley. Enabling the Hampshire RTI system to communicate with similar systems operated by neighbouring authorities will be a major task during the LTP2 period. This will allow information to be provided across local authority boundaries.

The new RTI system will be capable of providing a real-time text messaging service for bus times. Passengers will be able to text the identity of their bus stop to a central number, and in response will receive real-time information showing the next few bus departures from their bus stop. It is anticipated that text messaging services for RTI will become available during 2006/07.

A number of the latest generation of travel information kiosks are being installed with features including journey planning, selected website access and email. This method of providing travel information will be expanded to new during the LTP2 period.

RTI has been in operation for rail services for a number of years and the electronic signs on station platforms are a familiar sight in Hampshire. This information is now readily available to customers on the Internet www.nationalrail.co.uk/ldb. There is scope to make this available on screens in busy public places such as shopping centres, Council buildings and at major employers. It is proposed to achieve this by working in partnership with the train operators.

Electronic information actions

The County Council will:

- Seek to expand RTI coverage to all Hampshire's Quality Bus Partnership routes, including cross-boundary services.
- Make real-time public transport information and electronic journey-planning kiosks available at busy public places, such as hospitals and shopping centres.
- Develop text messaging services to enable RTI to be sent direct to mobile phones.

Passenger Transport Group website

The PTG website provides comprehensive information about all the services provided by the Group. This includes School Transport (including transport for children with Special Educational Needs), Community Transport, Dial-A-Ride and Cango demand-responsive services, contact details for transport operators and links to Traveline and transport operators' websites. It is anticipated that when RTI facilities are introduced during 2006, live information will be available on the PTG website. An email enquiry service is provided, and many of the Group's printed publications may be requested through the website.

Additional facilities, such as application forms for School Transport and for minibus permits, and booking of Cango journeys, are planned for the PTG website in the near future. The County Council is working to develop these facilities as a contribution to meeting e-government targets.

Website actions

The County Council will:

- Continue to review the effectiveness of the current website, and make changes where necessary.
- Review the links offered from the website and provide links to new sources of information where appropriate.
- Introduce new functions to the website to achieve e-government targets eg online forms, journey booking, RTI.

Roadside information

This type of information includes signs directing road users and pedestrians to bus and rail stations, bus stop signs and information cases at bus stops and shelters.

Bus stop infrastructure has been upgraded as a result of Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) agreements on several major bus corridors in Hampshire. The County Council provides new, high-quality bus stop poles, information cases and bus shelters.

Bus operators provide the majority of information at bus stops. The County Council has an ongoing programme to renew bus stop poles and timetable information cases when required. This will ensure that standards are maintained and improved where possible. The Council will work with bus operators to develop formal minimum standards for the information provided at bus stops, and to improve these standards progressively.

The County Council also provides direction signs on the highway to rail stations, bus stations and ferry terminals. These are generally delivered in partnership with transport operators. Clear signage is vital to encourage people to use public transport. Work has been carried out during LTP1 to clearly identify points of interchange between different modes of public transport and this will continue during LTP2.

Roadside information actions

- The County Council will continue to invest in additional and upgraded information display cases for roadside information, with resources focused particularly on interchange points in town and village centres, or where existing display facilities are of poor quality.
- The County Council will work closely with rail operators to improve information at and around rail stations – eg pedestrian signs and station departure displays.
- Bus operators will ensure that timetable information in an agreed format is displayed in all locations where display facilities have been provided, and is kept up to date whenever timetable changes are introduced.
- The County Council will develop “Where to catch your bus” displays in major town centres to help bus users find their stop.
- The County Council will take account of the specific information needs of elderly and disabled people, and produce new types of information where a need is identified.

Promotion through branding

Surveys reveal that Hampshire’s residents are not always aware of the role of local authorities in providing and improving passenger transport services. To address this, it is proposed to develop a clear brand identity to promote the County Council’s involvement in passenger transport.

A range of activities will be considered, which could include direct branding of bus stop flags, bus shelters and interchange points. Advertising and promotion of Hampshire County Council’s role will also be considered including the use of electronic screens and RTI displays as described in section 7. This work will be undertaken with operators and other stakeholders to determine the most effective way of applying this aspect of the strategy.

Promotion through branding – actions

The County Council will:

- Develop and implement a new Passenger Transport ‘brand identity’.
- Develop a programme to apply the branding as appropriate to all non-commercial passenger transport services, and to the PTG website and all printed publications including Travel Guides.

- Work with operators to identify opportunities to increase Hampshire County Council's profile where appropriate on public transport infrastructure and services, eg on bus stops, tendered bus services and Quality Bus Partnership routes, through clear branding and electronic signs.

Marketing and other forms of promotion

The County Council already promotes passenger transport services in a number of other ways. Advertisements have been placed in displays at town centre information points, on the rear of council tax bills, on local maps, in tourist publications and County and District Council magazines. The County Council and its partners have also used radio advertising on occasions to promote particular projects, such as the Solent Travelcard.

To help meet the objectives of LTP2, the County Council will continue to promote the development of workplace and school travel plans, designed to encourage people to make journeys using more sustainable modes.

As a number of major development areas begin to take shape in Hampshire over the life of LTP2, it is important that new residents are encouraged to make informed transport choices. The County Council and its transport-operating partners will work with developers and District Councils to promote sustainable transport modes to new residents and businesses.

Direct marketing campaigns

During 2003 and 2004, as part of the County Council's Local Public Service Agreement to increase bus use, a direct marketing campaign was carried out. This targeted all households within 400 metres of some of the county's main bus corridors. The project was delivered in partnership with bus operators and was entitled 'Infomotion'. A total of 116,000 households were contacted with the offer of very simple personalised travel information, free complimentary travel tickets or a home visit from a member of the local bus operator's staff.

Research into the effects of this method of marketing indicated a six per cent growth in passenger numbers on routes between Fareham and Gosport. Feedback from members of the public who participated in the project has been extremely encouraging, many praising the simple, fresh approach to providing public transport information. The County Council will seek to further develop the project during LTP2.

Marketing and other forms for promotion – actions

The County Council will:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of different promotion campaigns, and make any necessary changes. The County Council and its partners will review the effectiveness of radio advertising as a marketing tool and establish whether more resources should be used in this way.
- Develop a ‘new resident transport information pack’ for all new major housing and business developments.
- Ensure that public transport is promoted as widely and effectively as possible across major development areas.

Monitoring and enforcement

The County Council will monitor the information provided by individual operators to ensure compliance with this strategy. Where it falls short the County Council will make arrangements with the operators of the services concerned to remedy any shortcomings.

The County Council may serve a notice requiring the operator to provide the necessary information, and will also provide a copy of this notice to the Traffic Commissioner for the area.

If satisfactory arrangements cannot be agreed, the County Council will make other arrangements to provide the information to the public and use powers under the Transport Act 2000 to recover the costs of this from the operator.

Review and revision of the Passenger Transport Information Strategy

The County Council will review its policy in relation to the provision of passenger transport information to take account of developing standards and any revisions to its Local Transport Plan. Amendments will be made after appropriate consultation.

Indicators and targets

The following **indicators** are relevant to the Passenger Transport Information Strategy

- **BVPI 103** - Satisfaction with local public transport information.
BVPI 103 is measured through a MORI poll of 1,000 residents. In 2003/04 Hampshire County Council’s score was 43%, compared to a national average of 50%. BVPI 103 will next be measured in 2006/07 and 2009/10. The target is to achieve the current national average score of 50% by 2009/10. (This

target is under review to encompass the minimum floor being set under the revised Comprehensive Performance Assessment.).

- **BVPI 104** - User satisfaction with local bus services
BVPI 104 was last measured by a MORI poll of 1,000 residents in 2003/04, when the County Council's score was 53%. It will next be measured in 2006/07 and 2009/10. The target is to achieve a satisfaction rating above the current national average of 54% in 2006/07. (This target is under review to encompass the minimum floor being set under the revised Comprehensive Performance Assessment.).
- Percentage of bus stops county-wide displaying up to date timetables.
- Percentage of QBP routes with RTI.
- Number of visits to the PTG website.
- Number of visits to the SWPTI Traveline website.
- Number of calls to the SWPTI Traveline call centre.

The following **targets** are relevant to the Passenger Transport Information Strategy

- To review, and revise as necessary, the range of Travel Guide timetable publications – **by October 2006**.
- Average passenger growth of 5% on new QBP routes – **by April 2008** (LPSA2).
- To implement RTI on all QBP routes – **by April 2011**.

Traveline specific targets

Year	Data completeness and accuracy measurement, to timing point level	Data completeness and accuracy measurement, to all stop level	Verified data
2006/07	100%	95%	65%
2007/08	100%	96%	75%
2008/09	100%	97%	80%
2009/10	100%	98%	85%
2010/11	100%	99%	90%

Funding the strategy

Key elements of capital spending by the County Council on information provision for major bus routes are funded (jointly with other stakeholders) through individual Quality Bus Partnerships. These provide investment in improvements to bus stop infrastructure, including roadside display cases for timetable information in addition to other benefits. The partnerships are costed separately within the Local Transport Plan.

This capital investment is supported by revenue funding from the County Council of approximately £140,000 each year for published timetable information and maps. Smaller amounts are allocated for maintenance of bus stop infrastructure. Further sums cover the staff resources needed for collating timetable information as registered by bus operators, and distributing this information in various ways as described in this strategy.

In addition, for the County Council's contribution to the operation of the Traveline service within the South West Region, LTP funding will provide £180,000 in 2006/7 and similar amounts of £200,000 per year thereafter.