

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL POLICY

The European Union (EU) has developed a Common Transport Policy. Whilst these policies generally have greater importance for international routes they have some relevance at the County level too as completion of Europe wide networks will contribute to the economic and social integration of the Union. The main aims of this policy are:-

- i) improvement of communication in land/sea corridors;
- ii) the integration of peripheral regions into the EU's network; and,
- iii) the construction of links offering a high level of service between the main cities, in particular high speed rail.

Such proposals could affect Motorway and Trunk Road corridors as well as the main railway routes to the South West and Wales. The Government is currently undertaking a number of multi-modal corridor studies to assess the future infrastructure needs within these corridors.

At the National level the Government has recently undertaken a major review of transport policy and produced the White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' in July 1998. In addition, the Government has undertaken a complete review of the role and extent of the Motorway and Trunk Road network and proposed to return a number of roads to Local Highway Authority control. Further 'daughter documents' have also been published which have informed the development of the Plan. In support of this new policy agenda the 'Road Traffic Reduction Act' will require Highway Authorities to explain how they are going to reduce the demand for travel by car in their areas and thus contribute to global commitments to reduce pollution.

2.2 GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT OBJECTIVES

The County Council supports the Government's new transport strategy and this is reflected in the central goals for transport strategy development within the area.

The Government's transport objectives are:-

- to protect and enhance the built and natural environment;
- to improve safety for all travellers;
- to contribute to an efficient economy and to support sustainable growth;
- to promote accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially those without access to a car; and
- to promote the integration of all forms of transport and land use planning, leading to a better, more efficient transport system.

These objectives will be supported by action in the Council's service areas to ensure best value, to encourage partnership working and to increase public accountability. In doing so, the Council will make best use of its powers and responsibilities in exercising its statutory duties.

2.3 REGIONAL POLICY

Planning Policy Guidance for the South West (RPG10) was published in July 1994. In 1999 the GOSW published Draft Revised Regional Planning Guidance for the South West which was prepared by the South West Regional Planning Conference to review the planning horizon to 2016. It was subject to Public Examination in March 2000 and the report of the Panel is expected in late June. The Draft Regional

Guidance envisages a Region which will develop in a sustainable way to compete nationally and internationally, and to enhance the quality of life for all its residents and businesses.

The main aims are:-

- to protect the environment
- to encourage prosperity
- to meet society's needs and aspirations
- to use resources wisely
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These aims will be delivered by the following strategy:-

- adopting an integrated approach to managing future changes (policies, programmes, investment)
- building on areas of opportunity for growth and spreading economic prosperity throughout the Region (as defined by the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWERDA))
- maintaining strategic environmental assets (rural and coastal)
- focusing the majority of future development in/around principal urban areas and offering potential for balanced development of other towns, particularly free standing towns such as Salisbury
- promoting areas for priority economic and social investment
- spatially:-
 - North: fostering growth to maintain economic performance and competitiveness and addressing constraints to growth
 - South East: growing economy through quality, and focusing development within existing built up areas
 - Centre: pivotal role between prosperous east and less prosperous west
 - West: strong interventionist policies to address economic and social problems

The means for achieving this include the development of well-located sites (especially in relation to public transport),

promotion of public transport and the reduction of the need to travel (especially by car).

There are no "principal urban areas" in Wiltshire, but the County has close links with Swindon and Bristol-Bath. The M4 motorway and rail links across the north of the County and the A36/A350 road and rail corridors and the A303 are recognised as key transport axes within the emerging regional strategy.

The SWERDA consultation document set out a mission statement to "improve the competitive position of the South West of England within the European Union and internationally in order to increase sustainable prosperity for the region and all its people". The document goes on to identify past deterrents to growth which highlight the importance to business groups of:-

- the quality of life and environment as an attraction for inward investment and migration;
- accessibility to strategic transport corridors and proximity to London and the South East;
- labour market skills to match growth in technology and service sectors as well as strong educational support structures;
- low unit costs of labour and sites; and,
- high levels of inward investment by others/complementary services.

In Wiltshire the document identifies key sites at Swindon (3 sites), A350 Corridor (5 sites) and MOD sites (2 sites). Clearly there will be a need to facilitate the development of these sites in a sustainable manner and this must be a cornerstone of the Local Transport Plan, which highlights the importance of providing the necessary physical infrastructure.

2.4 STRUCTURE PLAN POLICY

The County Council's Transport policies are guided by the European, National and Regional objectives set out above. The County Council and Swindon Borough Council interpret these policies through the Structure Plan to define what is needed to fully implement the guidance issued by central government. In turn, the District Councils interpret the Structure Plan through their respective Local Plans

Structure Plans and Local Plans are developed in accordance with 'Planning Policy Guidance 12: Development Plans' which highlights the need for these Plans and LTPs to conform closely with each other. There are currently three operative Structure Plans (with alterations) in Wiltshire. However, their replacement with a single Plan, the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011, is well advanced and it is hoped to adopt this Plan in January 2001 following a second Examination in Public in November 1999.

It is now generally accepted that it is unsustainable to continue to rely on the private car and that action is needed to reduce the growth in motorised transport that would be likely to occur if policies do not change. The County Council's policies are developed in this context and take on board the strategic objectives of reducing reliance on the car whilst maintaining economic growth.

The broad thrust of the County Council's land use and transport strategy is to reduce out-commuting to surrounding areas by improving employment opportunities locally and by concentrating new development at existing urban centres. The Council believes that this will provide the right climate for investment in infrastructure which supports local trips and enables increased use of more sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.



2.5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

Achievement of the Government's objectives will be ensured by focusing investment on those schemes that can be demonstrated to support them. To this end the County Council's Best Value Performance Plan guides the activities of the Council to support the following 'Quality of Life' objectives:-

- to balance the need for growth with protection of the environment;
- to create learning opportunities for all people to expand their personal and employment horizons;
- to provide supportive services in ways that increase people's independence and choice whilst ensuring protection for the vulnerable;
- to strengthen local community life; and
- to work with local partners to promote Wiltshire's interests at a regional, national and European level.

The Environmental Services Department has undertaken a detailed review of its services and, in 1998, produced a County Transport Plan that set out priorities for investment. These priorities were reviewed during the development of the Provisional LTP in 1999 and have been further reviewed during the development of this Plan and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.