

Joint Local Transport Plan

Strategic Environment Assessment: Statement

Background

The four councils of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire have been working together to prepare a Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) for the Greater Bristol area. The JLTP was submitted to the Department for Transport at the end of March 2006 and sets out the councils' transport policies and programmes for the five years 2006 to 2011) and the transport vision for the next 20 – 30 years.

The four councils have carried out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to pinpoint any significant effects the JLTP is likely to have on the environment. This statement shows how the findings of the SEA have been taken into account.

Changes to or deletions from the JLTP

The Environmental Report outlined environmental problems and opportunities. Transport affects the area in a variety of ways and the SEA looked at a range of topics from air quality to traffic congestion, landscape to biodiversity. No significant adverse impacts were identified as a result of the SEA and the overall effect of the JLTP was found to be beneficial.

In the light of the findings of the SEA, no changes to, or deletions from the JLTP have been made.

Consultation and the Final JLTP

As illustrated below, extensive consultation on the JLTP took place in Spring and Winter 2005. Alternative strategies (Options A, B and C) were put forward for public debate. On the basis of the public responses Option A was abandoned in favour of pursuing Option B: see Figure 1. The public consultation showed that most people considered it essential to proceed with the Greater Bristol Bus Network and Bath Package major schemes, the main features of Option B. Option C was strongly supported by the public but it was decided that further investigation and consultation should be carried out on that option in view of its implications beyond 2010/11.

In terms of priorities for the 5-year JLTP integrated transport programme the public consultation showed a clear view that bus-based solutions were preferred (Figure 2). Rail also received strong support and this was clearly represented in written and verbal responses from the public and stakeholders. Walking and

cycling also received strong support from the respondents. These priorities have been reflected in the JLTP implementation programme.

Figure 1: Public Support for Alternative Options

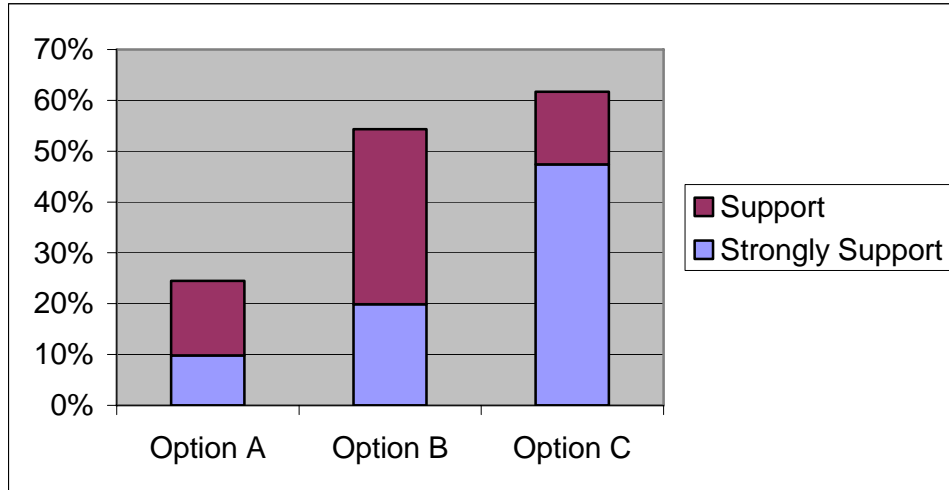
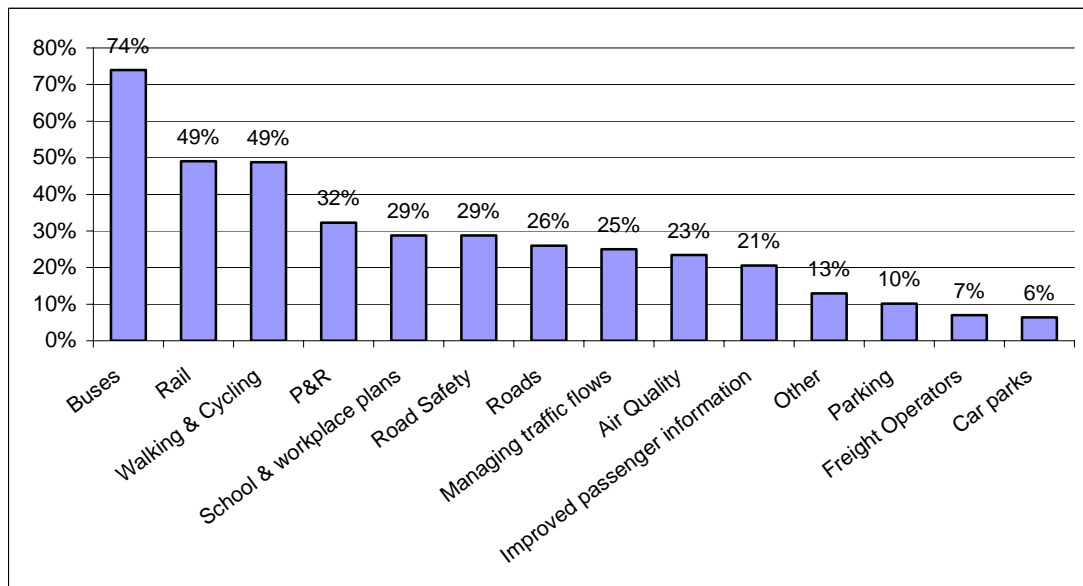


Figure 2: Priorities for Joint Local Transport Plan 5-Year Integrated Transport Programme



Consultation and Engagement with Partners

JLTP Consultation Leaflets

The leaflets produced in Spring and Winter 2005 provided an easy-to-read but comprehensive overview of ideas and proposals with a freepost questionnaire seeking further views. They were made available through council offices, libraries, local interest groups and businesses. Over 60,000 leaflets were distributed and the document and questionnaire made available on the website (www.greaterbristoltransportplan.org), allowing people to complete the consultation response forms electronically. To date the website has received over 50,000 hits.

Member and Parish Councillor Seminars/ Briefing

A wider audience of Councillors was kept informed through a combination of briefings and seminars agreed by the Executive Members and information sheets produced by the JLTP Team.

Joint Scrutiny

A Joint Scrutiny Committee made up of elected Members from the four Councils was established. It has monitored and assessed the development of JLTP strategy and made recommendations, with a particular focus on the sub-regional context and strategic issues.

Transport Plan Commission

This small focused grouping has representatives of key sectors including business, education, regeneration, sustainability, health and rural interests. The Provisional JLTP and the findings of the public consultation were considered by the Commission. They also raised areas of concern for further consideration. For example, the Councils commissioned an independent CO₂ assessment of the proposals following a recommendation made by the Commission.

Joint Transport Forum

Supplementing the local forums of the four councils, a Joint Transport Forum was held on 14 March 2005 focusing on the four Shared Priorities. A second forum was held on 30 November 2005. It considered potential major schemes, funding priorities and the Accessibility Strategy.

Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation with key stakeholders went hand-in-hand with parallel consultation on the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study and the Regional Spatial Strategy, giving a unique opportunity to take an integrated approach to strategic

spatial planning and transport policy formulation.

JLTP Focus Groups

Focus groups were held with a representative cross-section of the local population. Key transport issues and themes were discussed and explored.

Joint Media Strategy

Prepared by the four councils' press officers. Media coverage is vital to ensure maximum exposure of the JLTP. Press enquiries and media briefings will continue to play an important role in raising the profile of the JLTP beyond its submission in March 2006. The emphasis will shift toward delivery of the strategy rather than preparation of the plan itself.

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)

Consultation and briefings were held with all four LSP lead officers, followed by consultation meetings with all four LSPs. Ongoing dialogue continues on common priorities for promoting economic, environmental and social well-being.

Cross-Boundary Transport Planning with Neighbouring Authorities

Regular meetings and ongoing discussions took place over cross-border issues with Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Monmouthshire.

Provisional JLTP – July 2005

The Provisional JLTP was circulated widely for comment. Summaries of the document have also been circulated. Comments made on the document were considered and helped inform the preparation of the Final JLTP.

Monitoring Measures

A number of SEA indicators were put forward in the Environmental Report to monitor the environmental effects of the JLTP schemes and measures as they are implemented in the next 5 years. These indicators and monitoring arrangements have been confirmed without the need for modification.

Conclusion

The JLTP and potential alternative policies and strategies have been the subject of extensive consultation. The four councils are satisfied that the necessary environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan and the public's views properly taken into account. As outlined in the Environmental Report the SEA found that there would be no significant adverse impacts arising from the JLTP.