



13. Road Traffic Reduction Statement

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1. Setting the Scene

1.1 The Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 obliged local highway authorities to produce a report assessing existing traffic levels and forecasting expected growth. It also required authorities to specify targets to reduce the level, or rate of growth, of traffic in their area (excluding trunk road and motorways). All four authorities submitted a Road Traffic Reduction Report with their July 2000 LTPs, with varying targets to reduce the rate of traffic growth throughout the sub-region. In the JLTP the authorities have set targets to limit growth in area-wide traffic mileage and to cap peak-period traffic volumes into Bristol City Centre at 2004 levels. These fulfil the requirements of the Road Traffic Reduction Act.

2. Vision

The JLTP includes a key aim to tackle congestion on the highway network, to be delivered through the realisation of the following objectives:

- Promote use of alternatives to the private car
- Encourage more sustainable patterns of travel behaviour
- Manage the demand for travel by the private car
- Achieving these objectives will contribute to lower traffic volumes and our overall vision for the West of England (go to Chapter 2 of the JLTP)



3. Road Traffic Reduction and the Shared Priorities

Congestion

Achieving a reduction in road traffic (or the growth in road traffic) will help address congestion

Road Safety

Reducing road traffic will also lower the potential for accidents.

Accessibility

Road traffic volumes as a contributor to congestion inhibit the journey time and journey reliability of other modes, particularly public transport. Schemes that reduce or redistribute traffic so that these modes benefit will contribute to improved accessibility.

Air Quality

Reducing traffic will have a direct benefit for air quality due to a reduction in the number of vehicles on the road.

4. Issues

- 4.1 As well as the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997, the Traffic Management Act 2004 places a network management duty on local authorities to keep traffic flowing on local roads, including the appointment of a 'Traffic Manager'. This Act also facilitates the deregulation of some moving traffic offences, and tightens up the framework for utilities undertaking maintenance of services beneath the highway, to further reduce congestion and improve the efficiency of the highway network.
- 4.2 The Secretary of State for Transport announced in July 2005 a new DfT Public Service Agreement for urban congestion, to include congestion targets for the ten largest urban areas, which includes Greater Bristol. As shown below under the LTP7 Congestion target, work is

currently underway to establish a baseline figure for the JLTP based on a journey time per person per mile indicator.

- 4.3 The Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study reported on its emerging strategy for the JLTP area in September 2005. It recommends a package of transport schemes and measures to reduce forecast growth rates in car traffic and to facilitate future development. The strategy considers a time scale up to 2031 and forecasts growth in traffic movements of approximately 20% by that date if no action is taken.
- 4.4 The impact of these factors has been included in the formulation of appropriate targets for road traffic growth within the JLTP, which are summarised below.

5. Delivery programme in the Plan Period 2001/02 – 2005/06

- 5.1 The delivery mechanisms that achieved the road traffic reduction targets were a combination of the schemes set out in the Councils' LTPs, together with closer integration between transport and land-use planning. In broad terms, this was based on the combination of positive measures to encourage greater use of non-car modes, improved network efficiency and incremental implementation of demand management measures (including parking controls).



The key strategies that helped the authorities meet their road traffic reduction targets include:

- Bus Strategy
- Park and Ride
- Cycling
- Walking
- Rail
- Travel Plans (including car sharing, car clubs and working with schools and employers)
- Parking
- Network Management

6. Good Practice

High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes

There has been a history of severe congestion around the A4174 Avon Ring Road. To ease this congestion a High Occupancy Vehicle lane (HOV) was introduced, one of only three such initiatives nationally. The HOV lanes are available to buses, coaches and other vehicles carrying two or more people, motorcycles and pedal cycles. The HOV lanes effectively reallocate road space to more sustainable forms of transport. Restricting use of the carriageway to vehicles with two or more occupants provides a real incentive to car sharing, not least because it beats the queues.

In addition to this, developments in the signalisation (Urban Traffic Management and Control) of junctions seek to maximise the time advantages for car sharers.

To support the HOV lanes a car sharing database, 2Carshare.com has been promoted.

Extensive promotion and marketing was built into the campaign with activities across the region to develop an understanding of, and stimulate interest in car sharing.

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These measures have contributed to:

- 1000 fewer cars per day on these roads.
- Single car occupancy has reduced by 15% to 65%.
- Reduction in average journey times along the HOV network by almost 50%.
- Reallocating the network in favour of sustainable transport – during the busiest period each morning, the 2+ lanes carry over half the passenger flow in one third of the vehicle flow.
- 13.9% of employees in the main employment areas around the A4174 now car share (8.8% in 2001).

7. Strategy

7.1 The JLTP includes three strategic funding options delivering an incremental range of investment in the transport network:

- Option A - £12 million per year. Assumes current levels of annual grant and no additional funding.
- Option B - £25-35 million per year. Significant additional funding through joint working with the bus operator and government funding of major scheme bids for improved bus infrastructure.
- Option C - £60 – 100 million per year. Securing of substantial further funding through a joint commitment to congestion charging. This would deliver significant additional transport improvements to an accelerated time scale.



- 7.2 Public consultation conducted in support of the JLTP revealed a strong preference for Options B and C.
- 7.3 Higher levels of funding will allow us to deliver more schemes. At this stage the Councils are actively pursuing Option B and have already submitted the Greater Bristol Bus Network Bid. The Bath Public Transport Package will be submitted in Spring 2006. Together these will reduce the growth in traffic from 12% to 11% over the course of the plan.
- 7.4 In response to the March consultation results which favoured Option C we submitted a bid for development funding from the TIF Pump Priming Fund. In November 2005 we were awarded £1.5m by the DfT to assist with investigative works. If Option C is pursued then higher levels of traffic reduction could be achieved.

8. Targets

The following targets are relevant to the requirements of the Road Traffic Reduction Act

LTP2 Changes in area wide road traffic mileage

LTP6 Congestion

LTP7 Air Quality

