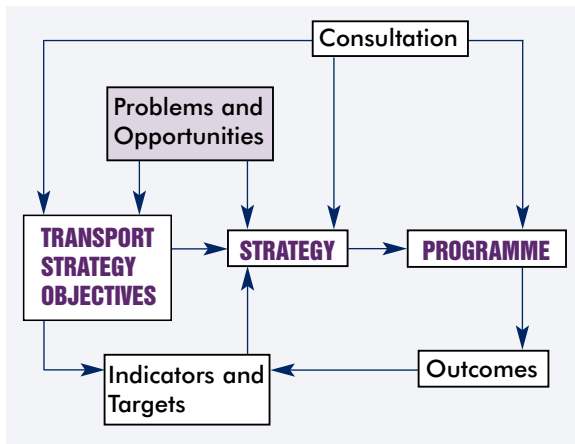


TRANSPORT ISSUES - PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES



DETR projections for growth in car ownership forecast that the proportion of households without a car will decrease from the current 38% to between 30 and 35% by the end of the Plan period (2006). This has implications for both assumptions regarding future traffic growth and the social inclusion requirements of public transport provision.

“our love affair with the car needs directly and boldly to be challenged”

INTRODUCTION

3.1 The development of the Local Transport Plan objectives and strategy is based upon an analysis of problems and opportunities.

3.2 Transport data for West Yorkshire are available from a number of sources, including the specific monitoring arrangements that have been developed by the West Yorkshire authorities. Key data and trends are analysed below. More detailed information relating to transport trends is contained in the Annual Progress Report.

CAR OWNERSHIP

3.3 In 1991 car ownership in West Yorkshire was 0.316 cars per person, 13% less than the national average of 0.363. The growth in car ownership between 1988 and 1998 is shown on Figure 3.1.

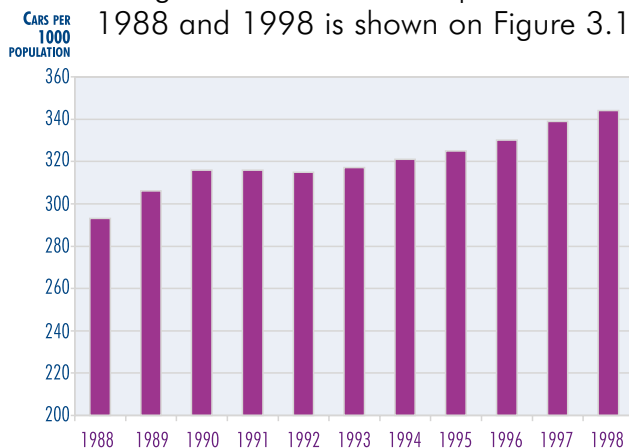


Figure 3.1 Growth in Car Ownership

(cars registered) between 1988 and 1998 (source DETR)

MODE OF TRAVEL

3.4 Recent years have seen modest traffic growth, significant increases in rail travel and a decline in the use of bus services, as shown on Figure 3.2.

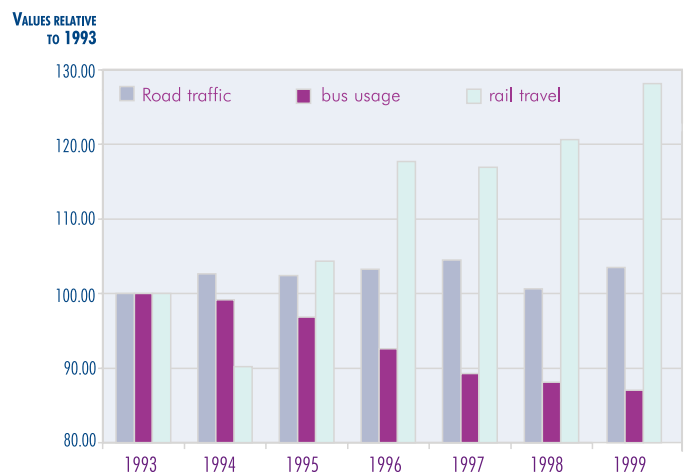


Figure 3.2 Trends in Transport Usage

There is clear evidence of an increasing duration of peak traffic conditions on major routes in West Yorkshire, indicating that saturation conditions have been reached with no spare capacity. The growth in rail travel has resulted in problems of overcrowding at peak times, particularly on commuter trains to/from Leeds. The decline in bus travel, the dominant public transport mode, has been a major cause for concern for some years though this trend now appears to be reversing in some areas.

3.5 There has been a decline in walking and cycling, in part due to concerns regarding safety and personal security.

JOURNEY TO WORK

3.6 Data regarding the main mode for travel to work is available from the Autumn 1998 Labour Force Survey. Use of public transport (14%) was higher than in any other metropolitan area except Tyne and Wear. Research carried out in 1998 confirmed the importance of public transport for travel to work in the main centres. Significant employment growth has taken place in the centre of Leeds, with further growth forecast. Draft Regional Planning Guidance seeks to direct significant trip generators to locations accessible by public transport, which will have a key role in supporting sustainable economic development.

3.7 Data from the 1991 census (Special Workplace Statistics) revealed that the average length of the journey to work in West Yorkshire was 7.2 km, journey lengths being longest for work locations in Leeds District (8.7 km) and shortest in Kirklees (6.0 km).

3.8 Analysis of census data from 1971, 1981 and 1991 reveals a trend of increasing commuter journey distances. These data also show important cross-boundary journey patterns, with the most significant being flows into Leeds and, to a lesser extent, Bradford from North Yorkshire. There is also a net commuter flow from South Yorkshire to West Yorkshire.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

3.9 Transport is one of the important underlying factors affecting health and safety. The key transport impacts on health are summarised below:

- physical health is affected by road injuries and air quality;
- mental health, in terms of stress, anxiety and fear of injury and crime, is affected by reliability, security, lighting, physical environment and noise;
- social health, in terms of social contact and social exclusion, is affected by disability, mobility and access to work, schools, services and facilities.

There is growing awareness of these transport impacts on health and some evidence that the increase in traffic and decline in bus use, cycling and walking has had adverse impacts on health.

3.10 Exercise is fundamentally important to our health. In childhood it is essential for the development of healthy bodies and it lays down good habits for the rest of our lives. Adults who are physically active have only half the risk of heart disease compared with inactive people and heart disease kills more people in West Yorkshire than any other disease. Exercise also helps prevent much of the ill health caused by such common conditions as stroke, high blood pressure, obesity and many other diseases associated with a sedentary life style. Yet research shows that the majority of the population does not get the recommended minimum of 30 minutes moderate exercise most days of the week. The Health Authorities in West Yorkshire have suggested the best way to achieve the recommended minimum is to integrate exercise into everyday life, for example walking and cycling for all or part of the journey to work or school. Currently the volume and the speed of traffic are two of the factors that discourage some people from walking and cycling.

3.11 Road casualty trends are shown in Figure 3.3. By 1998 the number of fatalities has been reduced by 52% from the baseline of 1981-85 average. Over the same period there has been an increase of 40% in the number of slight casualties.

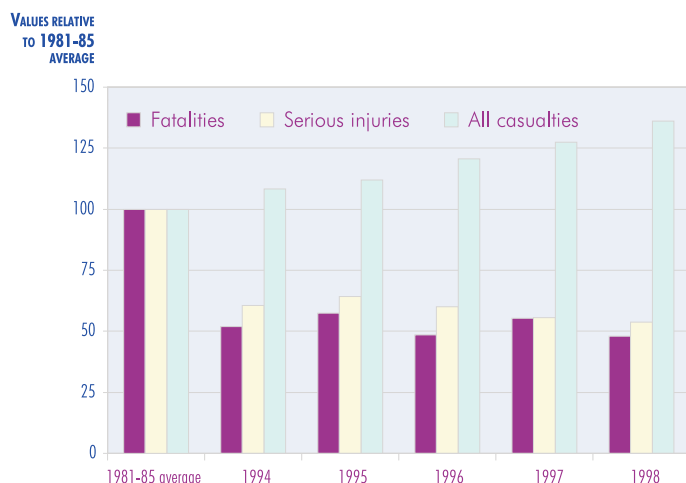


Figure 3.3 Road Casualty Trends

The overall casualty rate per 1000 population in 1998 was 6.87, worse than all of the metropolitan areas except Merseyside.

AIR QUALITY

“recognise that climatic change (especially storms) will soon be a big problem”

3.12 Transport is a major source of air pollution in West Yorkshire. The National Air Quality Strategy 2000 requires the District Councils to review and assess their local air quality. This review process requires compliance of 7 air quality standards/ objectives. For transport there are 2 pollutants (nitrogen dioxide and PM₁₀ - fine particles) of concern where relevant standards may be breached. Any areas where standards are breached will be designated ‘Air Quality Management Areas’.

3.13 District Councils are working closely together on issues of air quality. The work to identify problem areas has yet to be completed. It is expected that there will be locations within West Yorkshire where air quality standards are breached because of traffic related pollutants. Once these locations are identified appropriate transport Action Plans will need to be developed with the aim of reducing traffic emissions and achieving acceptable local air quality.

FREIGHT

3.14 The weight of road freight transported with an origin or destination in West Yorkshire increased by 25% between 1988 and 1998, to a total of 142 million tonnes, the largest increase in any of the metropolitan areas, with only Greater Manchester experiencing a similar increase (+20%). The growth in West Yorkshire has implications for the maintenance of the highway network and requires measures to ameliorate the environmental impact of heavy goods vehicles.

3.15 Road hauliers experience delays and unreliability from congestion and difficulties in being able to park for loading and unloading. Residents, workers, shoppers and other visitors suffer the noise and visual intrusion, obstruction and intimidation caused by the presence of lorries.

3.16 Although the rail freight market share has declined, the licensed freight operating companies are all seeking new business. Growth in rail freight will add to the competition for use of the rail network. Capacity, the speed differentials between freight and passenger trains and the loading gauge are particular problems.

3.17 Waterway transport is a very environmentally friendly mode. Whilst transit times may be relatively long, they are very reliable and for certain products waterways can form an efficient part of the logistics supply chain. There are important lengths of commercial waterway within West Yorkshire which offer potential for increasing the proportion of freight moved in this way.

HIGHWAY NETWORK

Local Network

3.18 Local highways form the greatest proportion of the highway network, including most town and city centre and residential streets. Most bus services make extensive use of the local highway network. Almost all the traffic on the strategic network starts or finishes on the local network.

Strategic Network

3.19 The strategic highway network includes both local and national roads (trunk roads and motorways). Local 'Principal Roads' are the focus for the management of strategic and longer distance local traffic as well as forming part of the bus network.

3.20 Trunk roads and motorways perform a key role within the county road network. The Highways Agency (who are responsible for these roads) have a limited number of significant proposals:

- A650 Bingley Relief Road, scheduled for completion in 2004;
- M62 (east) to M606 link;
- A1 upgrade to motorway standard from Ferrybridge to Hook Moor and Wetherby to Walshford;
- M62 Route Management Strategy.

3.21 Significant transfer of control from the Highways Agency to local authorities (de-trunking) of non-core trunk routes is proposed within the Plan period. However, there are some issues to be addressed:

- a route management strategy for the Aire Valley corridor to maximise the benefits of the Bingley Relief Road;
- a long-term route management strategy for the A6120 Leeds Outer Ring Road;
- strategies for the future management of the A58 and A646 routes within Calderdale.

CONDITION OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

"Roads throughout the UK are in a terrible state of disrepair"

3.22 The generally poor condition of the highway network was recognised in the December 1999 Local Transport Plan settlement. Whilst the additional funding permits an accelerated programme of carriageway reconstruction, it will take sustained investment in maintenance to bring the condition of West Yorkshire roads up to the national average.

3.23 Other problems associated with the condition of the infrastructure are:

- the need to address the deterioration of many bridges, lighting columns and structural highway walling;
- the damage resulting from utility company street work openings (and failures).



Funding from the provisional LTP will assist with the construction of a new bus station for Wakefield.

3.24 There is also a need to improve the quality of public transport infrastructure. Whilst Metro has invested in its larger bus stations, there is a need for accessibility and other works at many of the smaller facilities. The four privately owned bus stations are in poor condition and require investment as a matter of urgency. Whilst the busier rail stations have benefited from investment in recent years, many are not yet fully accessible.

3.25 The maintenance of rail infrastructure (including track and signalling) is the responsibility of Railtrack, who set out proposals for sustaining and updating the rail network in their annual Network Management Statement. This Local Transport Plan, and RailPlan 5, seek to build upon the 2000 Network Management Statement by promoting additional development of the rail network serving West Yorkshire.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

3.26 The West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Forum has endorsed the SWOT analysis of transport in West Yorkshire shown in Table 3.1.

Strengths;

- road, rail, bus and waterway networks;
- Leeds Bradford International Airport;
- integrated public transport information and ticketing;
- partnership working;
- Regional Planning Guidance/Regional Transport Strategy;
- relatively high levels of public transport use;
- integration with land-use planning, regeneration, education and health programmes.

Weaknesses

- poor condition of transport infrastructure;
- lack of fully accessible transport infrastructure and services;
- key corridors not served by rail or rapid transit;
- unattractive conditions for walking and cycling in many locations;
- rail capacity constraints (track and train capacity) preventing further growth;
- past dispersal of land-use activities;
- inefficient resource utilisation through competition.

Opportunities

- Leeds Station Improvement Works (Leeds 1st);
- Local Transport Plan ;
- Transport Act;
- better integration of public transport services;
- road user charging in Leeds;

Table 3.1 SWOT Analysis

- TravelWise initiatives;
- Rural Bus Grant and Rural Bus Challenge funding;
- re-franchising of rail services;
- South and West Yorkshire Multi-Modal Studies.

Threats

- accelerated traffic growth as a result of increased car ownership;
- insufficient capital and/or revenue funding;
- lack of adequate rail rolling stock to meet passenger demand;
- lack of funding mechanism to allow investment prior to introduction of road user charging;
- continued dispersal of land use activities.

Table 3.1 SWOT Analysis (cont.)



CONCLUSIONS

3.27 The key issues for the period of the Local Transport Plan are:

- the forecast growth in car ownership, with the associated likelihood of increased demand for car travel unless attractive alternatives are developed and the demand for car travel is effectively managed;
- the opportunity to build upon a relatively strong public transport base (network coverage and patronage) with the priorities being to reverse the decline in bus travel, to cater for the demand for rail travel and develop new modes (light rail and guided bus) where these are the most cost-effective means of meeting demand and achieving mode switch from cars;
- the need to make the transport system safer (including personal security), particularly for vulnerable groups;
- the need to ensure that transport strategy contributes to the achievement of air quality standards in general and to develop transport Action Plans for air quality management areas;
- the need to remedy the poor condition of much of the existing transport infrastructure.



The comprehensive redevelopment of Leeds City Station including the restoration of the north concourse and the Leeds 1st project designed to increase capacity and accessibility. The station has remained open throughout construction, minimising delays for passengers.