



Climate Emergency Development Plan Document

Topic Paper: Sustainable Transport

V3 July 2020



This is one in a series of topic papers produced to inform the preparation of the Council's Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (DPD)

Topic Paper
Renewable energy
Natural climate solutions
Town Centres
Mine water energy and deep geothermal
Energy and Sustainable Construction
Coastal Change and flood management
One Planet Development/Alternative living
Transport
Agriculture and Rural Sustainability

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Executive Summary

Road transport greenhouse gas emissions represent a fifth of total UK emissions. The biggest contributor to this is private vehicle trips. Only 0.5 % of vehicles in the UK at the end of 2018 were ultralow-emission vehicles. Road traffic in Great Britain increased from 255 billion miles travelled in 1990 to 328 billion miles in 2018, an increase of 29%. Transport emissions have fallen by only 1.5% since 1990. The government forecasts that by 2040 traffic on England's roads is forecast to increase by between 19% and 55% to between 300 and 400 billion vehicle miles under different scenarios.

Current private car trips and predicted growth represents a significant challenge in meeting national and local carbon reduction targets. New developments provide an important opportunity to influence behaviour change and achieve necessary modal shift.

Policy 27 of the Cornwall Local Plan sets out the approach to transport and accessibility which is underpinned by Connecting Cornwall 2030 (the Local Transport Plan).

To ensure new developments support sustainable transport and contribute to reducing emissions the draft DPD proposes a number of new policies focussed around:

- Sustainable transport which aims to reduce the need to travel by car, encourage a hierarchy of modes (walking, cycling, public transport) through active travel and the design of new development;
- Parking which sets out the Council's expectations in terms of parking provision including for non-vehicular modes, electric vehicle charging points and design of parking areas;
- Safeguarding of transport infrastructure sites and land is designed to ensure that land required for the expansion of the transport system or walking/cycling routes which have the potential to contribute to a cohesive travel network is safeguarded.

What is this topic paper about?

The Council is preparing a new Plan to set the framework for dealing with climate change. This will sit underneath the Local Plan and forms the strategic framework for planning decisions. This topic paper summarises the latest available evidence on transport. Reflecting the wide scope of this topic there are a number of overlaps between this paper and the other papers.

To view all the topic papers and the latest update on the Climate Emergency DPD, please visit www.cornwall.gov.uk/climatechangedpd

Can I comment on this topic paper?

The Climate Emergency DPD topic papers are factual in nature and set out the planning policy context and current issues in Cornwall, along with potential future approach to inform policy development. There will be opportunities to comment on the content of the Climate Emergency DPD at various stages of its development. As such we are currently seeking views on these topic papers, in particular any gaps in evidence.

If you wish to be kept informed of any forthcoming consultation please email climateemergencydpd@cornwall.gov.uk with your contact details.

Introduction

Road transport is an important source of both greenhouse gases and air pollutants, with road transport¹ greenhouse gas emissions representing a fifth of total UK emissions. The biggest contributor to this is private vehicle trips. Only 0.5 % of vehicles in the UK at the end of 2018 were ultra-low emission vehicles².

Road traffic in Great Britain increased from 255 billion miles travelled in 1990 to 328 billion miles in 2018, an increase of 29%. Transport emissions have fallen by only 1.5% since 1990. The government forecasts that by 2040 traffic on England's roads is forecast to increase by between 19% and 55% to between 300 and 400 billion vehicle miles under different scenarios.

The SW Peninsula Transport Economic Connectivity study identifies the established link between population growth and car trips. Despite the recession triggered in 2008, Cornwall has witnessed continued growth in road trips. Whilst emissions from other sectors has reduced, transport emissions have not. Reducing emissions in the context of sustained population growth is the central transport challenge for the next 30 years. Mass take up of low emission vehicles will not solve the problem alone, neither will it solve the challenges of capacity, congestion, deteriorating health and wellbeing and pressure on space. The study also examines the potential influence of spatial development policy on transport behaviour and even under an urbanisation scenario, the resultant transport emissions do not differ significantly from business as usual as the main driver of road transport trends is population.

One of the biggest challenges in reducing highway transport emissions is achieving behaviour change. The planning of new developments offers an important opportunity to influence behaviour. To successfully achieve modal shift new developments should:

- Be located in areas that are connected by public transport, walking and cycling links as far as possible;
- Offer a mix of uses i.e. live, work, services
- Provide appropriate densities that reduce distances and promote walking and cycling trips;
- Reflect the hierarchy of users through the site layout and streetscape as established in national guidance (Manual for Streets 2) and the Cornwall Design Guide streetscape guide i.e. pedestrians, then cyclists, then public transport, then car clubs, then private car;
- Be permeable for pedestrians, cyclists and bus
- Provide off site sustainable links to the surrounding network
- Limit parking spaces whilst allowing space for car club cars

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmental/accounts/articles/roadtransportandairmissions/2019-09-16>

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmental/accounts/articles/roadtransportandairmissions/2019-09-16>

- Provide Electric vehicle charging points, cycle parking and sheltered cycle storage for residents of flats;
- Establish robust and resourced Travel Plans if of an appropriate scale.

Policy Context and Evidence

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) contains a specific chapter relating to the promotion of sustainable transport stating that transport issues should be considered at the earliest stage of plan-making. This will ensure that opportunities for transport infrastructure to embrace technological change are realised, opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use are pursued, and that transport is integral to the design of schemes and contributes to high quality places.

The NPPF also recognises that focussing development on locations which are sustainable can assist with limiting the need to travel, give choice of transport modes and help reduce congestion and emissions. The NPPF also recognises that there are opportunities to improve air quality through traffic and travel management.

In terms of parking, the NPPF states that if local parking standards are set these should take into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of development, the availability and opportunities for public transport, local car ownership levels and the need to ensure adequate spaces for vehicle charging points. The NPPF does include an opportunity to stipulate maximum parking standards on the following grounds 'maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure'.

Local Planning Policy

Policy 27 of the Cornwall Local Plan sets out the approach to transport and accessibility which is underpinned by Connecting Cornwall 2030 (the Local Transport Plan³). The Local Plan states that reducing the need to travel is a key strategy but also recognises that infrastructure and services to enable movement will be required. There is a commitment to maintaining our transport network recognising our settlement pattern and building on opportunities to live more locally.

Evidence

Sustainable transport aims to reduce the need to travel by car, encourage a hierarchy of modes (walking, cycling, public transport) whilst recognising that due to the rural nature

³ <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/transport-policy/local-transport-plan-connecting-cornwall-2030/>

of Cornwall some form of private vehicle is likely to still be necessary, but the aim is to reduce the number of these trips. To achieve the goal of reducing the need for travel by private vehicle, particularly for shorter journeys, active travel needs to be embedded in design of new places, promoted by parking and design standards. The approach to transport assessments and travel plans⁴ is vital in driving change in the way the development plans for travel and change is needed to create less car dependant places.

The Government published the 'Road to Zero' in 2018, this sets out how the Government will support the transition to zero emission road transport. The policies in the strategy focus on reducing emissions from existing vehicles alongside the promotion of low-emission vehicles.

The UK Industrial Strategy⁵ aims to deliver a more reliable, less congested and better-connected transport network but only makes reference to the potential role of electric vehicles in reducing emissions.

UK Transport Investment Strategy⁶ aims to create a more reliable, less congested, and better-connected transport network that works for the users who rely on it. Its main priorities don't explicitly reference the need to de-carbonise the transport sector and the underlying expectation appears to be that electric vehicles will be the focus of carbon reduction. Electric Vehicles can only be part of the solution not the whole solution. Investment proposals seems to be more skewed towards increasing capacity on the existing highway network.

The ambition of the Government's Local Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy⁷ is to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys or as part of longer journeys. It advocates the development of local walking and cycling infrastructure plans to inform investment.

More recently the Government have published a plan⁸ to increase walking and cycling. This plan sets out the Government's vision to change walking and cycling in England. It sets out the actions required under four themes; better streets for cycling and people; cycling and walking at the heart of decision-making; empowering and encouraging local authorities; and enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do.

The Council secured technical assistance funding to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan for Truro which is near completion. This will help developers to anticipate planned infrastructure improvements on the wider network and ensure

⁴ Travel Plan guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-plans-transport-assessments-and-statements>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-building-a-britain-fit-for-the-future>

⁶ UK Transport Investment Strategy https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885742/transport-investment-strategy-print-version.pdf

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy>

⁸ Gear Change <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england>

their proposals are complementary. It will also help secure contributions towards delivery. Ideally similar plans need to be developed for all Cornwall's main towns.

Parking is important to the social and economic infrastructure of Cornwall. Well planned residential parking involves delivering the right number of spaces in the right places. In order to anticipate cycle and car parking demand and achieve the right parking solutions it is important to understand the nature of surrounding uses, opportunities for active travel, public transport connections and frequency and local car ownership trends. Whilst the Council is committed to improving sustainable transport options, car travel will remain a significant mode of travel for the foreseeable future. As such getting the level of car parking right is particularly important. Over provision of car parking should be avoided as it can lead to unattractive streets, smaller gardens, less green infrastructure, unsustainable transport habits and unhealthy lifestyles. The Council has published a Design Guide⁹ which sets out detail on the Council's expectation for parking provision, layout and design. A Streetscape Design Guide has also been incorporated into the Design Guide¹⁰. Electric charging points for cars and provisions for other low emission vehicles are encouraged. Where they are not initially provided, car parking spaces and roads should be designed to be able to offer electric charging in the future. Neighbourhood Development Plans will be expected to follow the guidance set out in this DPD, the Council's Parking Standards Guidance and the Cornwall Design Guide when considering policies regarding the provision of parking in the neighbourhood plan area.

In order to support a shift towards more active travel such as cycling, cycle parking needs to be introduced in the same manner as car parking, if there isn't somewhere secure and safe for people to leave their bikes at the end of a journey they will be unlikely to make that journey by bike.

Future Approach

Current private car trips and predicted growth represents a significant challenge in meeting national and local carbon reduction targets. New developments provide an important opportunity to influence behaviour change and achieve necessary modal shift. To ensure new developments support sustainable transport and contribute to reducing emissions a number of new policies are proposed:

- Sustainable transport which aims to reduce the need to travel by car, encourage a hierarchy of modes (walking, cycling, public transport) through active travel and the design of new development;
- Parking which sets out the Council's expectations in terms of parking provision including for non-vehicular modes, electric vehicle charging points and design of parking areas;
- Safeguarding of transport infrastructure sites and land is designed to ensure that land required for the expansion of the transport system or walking/cycling

⁹ <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/adopted-plans/planning-policy-guidance/cornwall-design-guide/>

¹⁰ <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/3626680/CDG-Sections-4-5-6.pdf>

routes which have the potential to contribute to a cohesive travel network is safeguarded.