

10. REGENERATION

The fallout from Nottinghamshire’s declining industrial heritage, particularly past reliance on mining and textiles, continues to hamper economic activity. Although progress has been made to bring unemployment rates down to match national figures, the quality of these new jobs has been low. Educational aspirations and attainment of school leavers is poor, creating a pool of unskilled people seeking low paid work – with the consequence that low value industries are encouraged to invest in these areas. Towns and villages, predominantly in the west of the county, continue to under-perform in terms of business activity, environmental appearance and inward investment – reflecting the low disposable income of the surrounding community.

The LTP2 transport strategy will support regeneration in the following three main areas:

- First, it will **provide access** to education, further education, skills training and employment zones
- Secondly, it will **help create** economically vibrant and attractive towns and villages and open up employment sites, and
- Thirdly, it will provide **support** for local partnerships to develop ‘action plans’ addressing the unique needs of their community.

Table 10.1 shows more specific links between these three main areas and proposed intervention measures in the transport strategy. The table also shows how these intervention measures will be prioritised.

Regeneration issue	How transport strategy will help	Priority
Access to Education, training and employment zones	Provide greater choice of transport mode where it is most needed	Primary focus on Mansfield/Ashfield and Worksop sub-areas
	Work with employers to provide appropriate public transport access	
	Encourage employers to promote travel plans	Use accessibility planning tools to identify measures and specific locations
Help create Vibrant attractive towns and villages and open up employment zones.	Ensure that measures maximise redevelopment potential	Link to regional spatial strategy/ local plans/local development framework
	Be supportive of private redevelopment proposals (but ensure compliance with development control policy)	
	Focus on developing attractive and accessible towns and villages to promote sustainable communities. Invest in town centre infrastructure proposals such as bus stations, pedestrianisations etc	Link to Local Accessibility and Transport Studies (LATS)
	Maximise funding availability from other capital programmes and grant funding to support town centres work	Link to grant funding opportunities
Support for Local partnerships to create integrated ‘action plans’	Support and develop local town centre partnerships	To support action plan timetables as developed in the Local Area Action Plans
	Support action plan programmes with early LTP2 measures	

Table 10.1 Links between the three main areas of regeneration and transport strategy

10.1 NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO REGENERATION

The development of a modern, efficient communications infrastructure should be seen in the context of wider regeneration initiatives. The County Council's current Regeneration Business Plan sets out its aims as follows:

- Developing with partners a strong, diverse local economy to raise the county's Gross Domestic Product – its overall wealth
- Tackling disadvantage and building economically sustainable, safe and socially inclusive communities
- Linking Nottinghamshire people to local learning, training and job opportunities.

These issues will be translated into the priorities for the new Strategic Plan for the County Council over the forthcoming five-year period.

To support this regeneration strategy, the main areas for intervention that can be supported by the transport plan are:

- Improve access to education and skills training
- Improve access to employment zones
- Provide access to open up development sites
- Encourage the development of skilled/knowledge industries in target areas suffering from unemployment and low paid work
- Improve transport services to towns and district centres where jobs are concentrated
- Invest in the infrastructure of town centres, particularly market towns, to ensure that they remain or become vibrant, attractive places to work and visit
- Support access to business training
- Leverage external grant funding using local transport plan monies as match funding.

10.1.1 Improving accessibility

Accessibility planning and the emergence of an all encompassing Accessibility Strategy will play a significant role in helping regeneration throughout the county. More detail on accessibility and the role it will play can be found in section 3.1 of this chapter, within chapter 5, Accessibility of this Plan and within the accompanying Accessibility Strategy document.

10.1.2 Development control

The development of brownfield sites as opposed to edge of town greenfield development will be encouraged, and where appropriate, new or improved transport links will be provided to make such previously used sites more attractive for investment and more sustainable. In opening up these areas for investment, transport provision is often necessary in the form of new infrastructure and public transport service provision. Support for appropriate sites will continue to be offered through the development control process.

10.1.3 Transport choice

The measures detailed within the accompanying Bus Strategy and within Chapter 5, Accessibility, detail the measures that will help improve the accessibility of public transport, which will in turn help regeneration areas and socially excluded sections of society. The strategy will also contribute towards reducing congestion through the provision of bus priority measures and thus increase the overall competitiveness of areas.

An example of such work already undertaken in the Plan area is the bus links developed from Retford and Worksop to RHADS which has opened up vital employment opportunities to the residents of Bassetlaw District. RHADS is also a learning centre delivering customer service training and more recently the Aviation Academy which is teaching engineering skills. The bus links have therefore opened up business training as well.

The Demand-side solutions, and particularly 'Smarter Choices' programme of work that will be undertaken during the lifetime of LTP2 offer similar regeneration benefits to those above, and are detailed within Chapter 8, Congestion.

10.1.4 Investing in infrastructure

In terms of transport much progress has been made in recent years to improve the accessibility of the west of the county with the development of the Robin Hood Rail Line linking Nottingham with Ashfield, Mansfield and Worksop; the opening last year of the light rail link (Nottingham Express Transit) from Nottingham City Centre to Ashfield; and the completion of the Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route. Work is continuing around MARR with the provision of complementary schemes in LTP2 to ensure that its development potential is maximised. Work is also continuing on developing measures that will support 'master plan' visions for redevelopment opportunities in Mansfield and Worksop.

The County Council has long recognised that a continuous programme of investment is needed in many areas of Nottinghamshire to create desirable, attractive places to live and has a proven track record over the last 30 years of undertaking improvement schemes aimed at complementing local transport initiatives. To continue this work it has set up a substantial five-year capital programme to provide funding for 'Building Better Communities' (BBC). The initiative concentrates on physical improvements, with a particular focus on areas of deprivation. The programme has already completed over 240 projects in its first year – many of them linked to transport improvements. Schemes are developed from the 'ground up' with community groups being encouraged to suggest projects for their local areas. Schemes are then checked to identify potential added value that can be achieved if maintenance issues, transport measures, health and education benefits and additional grant funding bids are packaged together.

The creation of a high quality public realm together with attractive access points and gateways into district centres are important to their overall impression and appeal, particularly in appealing to investment. The Council will continue to work in partnership with the private sector and other agencies to secure an improved public realm particularly where such collaboration will help unlock further private sector investment.

The quality of public space and BBC is detailed further in section 3.3 and in Chapter 7, Quality of Life.

10.1.5 District centres

The County Council acknowledges the essential role played by the district centres of Mansfield, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Newark, Retford and Worksop in providing the services and jobs necessary for a prosperous and sustainable community. A vibrant town centre will attract inward investment from business, creating jobs and security for its community. The LTP aims to revitalise the district centres, as necessary, in order to maintain their competitiveness and economic viability. A number of centres have already benefited from economic 'health checks' that have been undertaken in collaboration with local business groups and their results have been supplemented with the findings of combined MMAA studies. This linkage allows environmental improvements, promotional activity and access improvements to be integrated to help meet the needs of businesses to revitalise the district centres; making them more pleasant places to shop and work, encouraging civic pride and making them easier to access.

In LTP2, LATS will place a great deal of emphasis on regeneration issues in district centres, specifically:

- Promoting their role as shopping/service centres
- Promoting leisure and tourism
- Encouraging sustainable access
- Adding to the attractiveness of the centres
- Promoting a local partnership approach
- Supporting the development of Local Area Action Plans as required by the Local Development Framework.

The accessibility planning process will also concentrate on the development of better access to these district centres to ensure that all sections of the community served by the centre have the ability to access local services, jobs, education, training, health and recreational facilities.

10.1.6 Rural areas

In the rural areas of the plan, LATS will promote the local market towns and larger villages as foci for economic growth, particularly as service centres and transport hubs for their hinterlands. Continued investment in creating high quality public transport interchanges and improving access to these centres through the accessibility planning process will aid this process.

Promoting tourism can also assist rural regeneration, and North Nottinghamshire has a number of tourist attractions, particularly around Clumber Park and Sherwood. Increased tourism brings employment opportunities and income to rural areas but needs to be carefully managed in order to ensure that damage is not done to the environment. The County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan will also offer the chance to exploit the economic potential of these and other rural areas by promoting tourism in the countryside and improving access to it.

The County Council recognises that LTP2 measures alone are insufficient to make a significant impact on rural regeneration. The Council is keen to ensure that these measures are supported and integrated with other initiatives to add value to the programme. The county-wide Building Better Communities (BBC) programme has therefore been designed to not only add substantial capital funds for the improvement of the local environment, but also to link in with the LTP2 programme. The BBC programme is 'rural proofed' in that it ensures that all wards, and particularly deprived wards, benefit from this investment.

The County Council has also recognised that many of the rural areas suffer from the poorest quality road and footway maintenance. The Council has therefore, supplemented the annual maintenance budget with an additional £4m, which will be available for each of the next four years.

In the same way that town centres reflect the general economic well-being of the local community, they can also drive forward economic recovery and prosperity in an area by being the centre of new enterprise. Towns are the focus for local employment, services, retail, education and training. They are the natural hubs for public transport systems and provide the hub for often extensive travel to work areas. The vitality of the market towns and urban centres in the Plan area is essential to the sustainability of those communities.

10.1.7 Maximising funding potential

To supplement additional County Capital funding, such as BBC detailed above, the County Council has been particularly active and successful in attracting external funding to supplement projects that meet wider objectives. The linkage of schemes to meet wider objectives has in itself ensured that projects are developed in a holistic way to meet broader objectives. Overall in 2005/06, some £1.5m of additional funds have been secured to supplement projects in Nottinghamshire. These funds have come from a variety of organisations including the East Midlands Development Agency, European Regional Development Fund, Single Regeneration Budget, Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd and others. This has supported a number of joint schemes including SnipePark at Harworth, Retford Bus Station, Mansfield Transport Interchange and Sherwood Drive Pedestrianisation at Ollerton. It is the intention of the County Council to continue to seek at least this level of external funding for each year of the LTP2 programme.

10.1.8 Local Accessibility Transport Studies

In the first LTP substantial benefits were achieved by linking the programme of MMAA studies with an assessment of the economic health of the town/village/urban area. This research work was particularly valuable when supported by local community partnerships and parish/town/district councils. The outcome of these studies resulted in the establishment of master plans and action plans that provided an integrated approach to a range of needs – with transport schemes playing a key role. Local ownership and empowerment is often crucial in the development and success of schemes and the early involvement of the community ensured that these schemes were well received.

The County Council's proposals to widen the scope of the MMAA programme with the new LATS (which are explained in more detail in section 2.5 Consultation) will place a great deal of emphasis on regeneration issues in district centres. In the first LTP, the MMAAs helped to promote the role of district centres as shopping and service centres, promote leisure and tourism, and add to the attractiveness of each area. Work on existing study areas will continue into LTP2 along with new studies that target regeneration priority sub-areas.

In Retford, for example, the MMAA process was linked to the Countryside Agency's initiative for market town healthchecks. This resulted in a six month intensive survey, information gathering and public meetings on the wider needs of the community, culminating in the creation of an Action Plan for Retford. The healthcheck also looked at the accessibility by car and public transport of remote villages in the hinterland of Retford - an early form of accessibility planning. Transport improvements play a significant part in this integrated plan and the schemes and measures developed, such as the rebuilding of the bus station, improved access from the town to the railway station and environmental improvements to Cannon Square, all feature in either the first LTP or are planned for LTP2.

10.1.9 Neighbourhood renewal

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal is a major initiative from Government's Social Exclusion Unit. It concludes that problems require co-ordinated, long-term action which is developed and managed locally and invests in people and communities. The goal of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is to narrow the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country to ensure that everyone has a genuine opportunity to benefit from an enhanced quality of life.

The process of neighbourhood renewal will involve a transformation programme that improves homes and the environment of estates. A robust management system is in place to ensure this is undertaken in a joined-up manner. The implementation of small-scale transport improvements such as local traffic management schemes, lighting schemes and footway maintenance are an important element of this and will continue through the lifetime of the strategy.