



3.4 SHARED PRIORITY – SAFER ROADS

The council's strategic goals of 'developing safer and stronger communities' and 'providing safer pavements and roads' are part of a wider duty to promote well being. Keeping the travelling public safe on the county's roads is a key activity in discharging that duty.

3.4.1 Community Safety

Tackling crime and fear of crime is a priority for the Council. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities to: "Exercise its functions with due regard to ... the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area."

Government Circular 5/94 states that crime prevention is one of the social considerations to which regard must be given in development plans. This has been taken on board in the adopted County Structure Plan, where policy GS5 calls for "measures for planning out crime" and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been produced to meet this policy.

The SPG ensures that crime is a material consideration, and is considered at an early stage, of the planning process. This is particularly important, as once a development is completed, the main opportunity to incorporate crime prevention measures is lost.

Objectives of the SPG

To reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime by:

- providing guidance to local authorities to help assess and determine planning applications;
- providing guidance to architects, developers, landscape architects, urban designers and individuals in drawing up planning applications; and
- establishing principles for the design, layout and landscaping of the built and semi-natural environment which:
 - creates a safer and more secure environment
 - increases the risk of detection of criminal and anti-social activity
 - makes crime more difficult to commit

The SPG focuses on six specific, crime-related issues:

- the layout of developments, footpaths and cycle ways;
- surveillance;
- landscaping;
- play areas;
- closed-circuit television (CCTV); and
- lighting

The SPG has the full support and ownership of all local authorities in the county and the Police. Whilst the SPG is only one tool in a whole range of social, economic and environmental factors that influence people's behaviour and the incidence of crime and disorder, it is important that the planning system can play its part.

The SPG is now a material consideration in planning decisions across the county in both urban and rural areas. This means that the impact of crime and fear of crime is given due consideration in the decision-making process, and applicants are encouraged to consider crime implications at an early stage of their plans. Although there will be times when other policy considerations will need to take precedence, the SPG has heralded a real step forward and it provides a clear message to developers, architects, local decision-makers and local people that crime implications must be considered through the planning process when designing and developing the places and spaces for our future.

We will now look to expand the influence of the SPG by bringing the principles behind it into the mainstream of our transport activity, particularly where these can encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport.

3.4.2 Road Safety

Northamptonshire adopted local casualty reduction targets in its first LTP that were based on the national targets in the 2000 white paper daughter document Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone.

Delivery of these targets is the responsibility of the Northamptonshire Casualty Reduction Partnership. This partnership includes the County Council, the Police, the Highways Agency, local health authorities, the Fire & Rescue service, the magistrates' courts as core members, and local councils on an ad hoc basis. Its remit covers all roads in the county (including trunk roads and motorways) and has been based on four key principles:

- collaborative working;
- being intelligence led;
- maximising community engagement; and
- maximising the use of new technology.

The Casualty Reduction Partnership has not yet had the opportunity to fully discuss the implications of the revised guidance on Road Safety and Safety Camera Partnerships issued by the Department for Transport in December 2005. However, we believe that the excellent co-operation and wider collaboration between the County Council, Northamptonshire Police and a wide range of other partners through the existing Casualty Reduction Partnership, including our linkages with other areas of work and our approach to tackling individual problematic locations means that we are well placed to continue to deliver substantial casualty reductions under the new system.

It is the responsibility of those involved in road traffic accidents in which somebody is injured to inform the police of the incident. The police share this information with us, and this gives us one of our most effective databases to make informed decisions. The database is linked to a mapping system which allows us to easily identify any problem junctions or routes, while interrogation of the database allows us to examine the causal effects of accidents to different groups of people. Key trend data is examined on a monthly basis, enabling us to identify and react to any changes in circumstances.

Progress to date

Due to the success of the Casualty Reduction Partnership, by the end of 2004 the county was close to meeting the targets it had set for 2010.

Table 3.21 – Casualty Reduction Targets

Target Group	1994-98 baseline	2004 actual	Reduction on base by 2004	Target for 2010
All KSI	773	495	- 36%	- 40%
KSI aged 0-16	104	58	- 44%	- 50%
Slight casualties	2,316	2,203	- 5%	No change

Note: KSI Definitions :

- Killed – Death within 30 days as a result of involvement in a traffic accident
- Serious Injury – Death after more than 30 days, permanent disability, broken bones, concussion, severe cuts, burns or general shock, or other injury resulting in an overnight stay in hospital.

Within these overall totals, good progress has been made amongst almost all classes of casualty:

Table 3.22 – Casualty Reduction

Casualty Class	1994-98 baseline	2004 actual	Reduction on base by 2004
Pedal Cyclists	47	22	- 53%
Car Passengers	165	98	- 41%
Car Drivers	293	179	- 39%
Pedestrians	122	74	- 39%
Motor Cyclists	90	86	- 4%
Others	56	37	- 34%

3.4.2.1 The Second Casualty Reduction Strategy

In view of this success, the Casualty Reduction Partnership has recently produced a revised Casualty Reduction Strategy, which includes a new, stretched target for 2010: this is for a 50% reduction on all KSI from the 1994-98 baseline.

The development of the second Casualty Reduction Strategy was formally instigated by the Casualty Reduction Partnership in 2004, given that the targets set in the first strategy (produced in 1999) had already been met. The opportunity was taken to align the new strategy with the LTP2 period.

A comprehensive review of the activity of previous activity by the partnership was undertaken, examining engineering, education and enforcement. Based on this review of what had worked and what hadn't, and an analysis of the results to date, trends were projected forward in the light of likely funding levels, diminishing returns as the worst sites had already been addressed, the counter-trend increase in motor cycling casualties and a number of other relevant factors.

In view of the Partnership's award-winning status and recognition of its achievements at national level, a number of best practice seminars have been organised by the Partnership, including events on safety camera operation, motorcycle casualty reduction and emerging issues in road safety. Papers have also been presented at other conferences, and officers take the lead in chairing regional working groups. The opportunity is also taken to learn from others by making visits to other high-achieving or innovative authorities, and the findings of these conferences, seminars and visits were also used to inform the new strategy.

The draft strategy was presented to stakeholders (including the police, Highways Agency and local health authorities) for challenge at a Steering Group meeting in the autumn of 2004. In the light of their comments it was modified and adopted in spring 2005.

The partnership's strategic aim is:

To provide safer roads within Northamptonshire, whereby the current levels of death and serious injury resulting from road collisions are significantly reduced.

In addition, the principles of the partnership have been re-focused as follows:

Partnership working

- We will co-operate in sharing data.
- We will agree joint solutions to specific problems.
- We will provide a seamless service for all road users.

Being intelligence-led

- We will act on facts.
- We will analyse data to identify trends and patterns.
- We will employ resources where they will do most good.

Maximising the use of technology

- We will investigate new and emerging technology.
- We will adopt cost-effective procedures.
- We will be innovative and proactive in our approach.

Maximising community involvement

- We will engage with local communities.
- We will work with road user groups.
- We will test new ideas with local people first.

Learning from the best

- We will investigate best practice in other areas.
- We will seek out academic research on road safety issues.
- We will showcase the work of ourselves and colleagues.

Maximising use of the media

- We will take a proactive approach to the media.
- We will communicate our messages widely.
- We will answer queries positively.

The foregoing principles highlight the general approach to be taken over the longer-term, covering this and future LTPs. Within that framework we have adopted specific priorities for the period to 2010, with interim targets and programmes of activity directed at target areas, groups and activities.

3.4.2.2 Method of Operation and Key Areas of Activity

The basis of our operation will be to combine the three "E"s of Education, Engineering and Enforcement in order to achieve casualty reductions across the county in any way we can.

We will make no distinction between Motorways, trunk roads or other roads, but concentrate activity at the sites where it will be most effective.

To this end we have adopted three main approaches:

Where Accidents Happen –

We will continue to use our traffic light classification for all roads in the county. A list of “Red Routes” in the county will be produced each February, based on accident data over the preceding three years. This list will form the focus for activity over the next year.

Currently, the criteria for inclusion on the list are four or more KSI accidents within 1km (rural roads) or 500m (urban roads) in three years, but this is kept under review on an annual basis.

Additionally, an area-wide approach has been adopted for Safer Routes to School projects, centred on specific schools but extending into their local communities.

In further recognition of the role played by disadvantage in accident involvement, we are introducing our first Urban Safety Management project in 2005/06. This is for Corby, the town with the highest levels of deprivation in the county, and will be followed by projects in further towns as part of a rolling programme.

Who Accidents Happen To –

Whilst all types of road user are potentially at risk of accidents on the county’s roads, some must be higher priorities for intervention than others.

We will therefore continue to identify Key Target Groups of road users who are over-represented in the casualty statistics. Specialist teams will be established to organise activity to reduce KSI casualties amongst these groups.

At present, four such groups have been identified: Motor Cyclists, Working Drivers, Children, and Young Drivers. These priorities will be kept under review on at least an annual basis.

Why Accidents Happen –

We will investigate the underlying causes of traffic accidents in order to determine Common Causation Factors.

Causes currently identified include: Speed, drinking and driving and the non-use of seat belts.

3.4.2.3 Specific Issues

Within the overall strategy, certain issues have been highlighted for attention at the current time. The following section gives a brief summary of these areas, which will be subject to annual review and communicated through the LTP2 Delivery Reports. This process has already led to the identification of the effect of disadvantage and the rise in motor cyclist casualties as two key areas and, over time, may lead us to focus on older drivers as they become more prevalent within an ageing population.

The following areas are highlighted at this time:

Disadvantage

In recognition of the influence that deprivation levels exercise over the incidence of casualties to child pedestrians, we have re-focused our Safer Routes to School programme.

The council has been implementing Safer Routes to School schemes since 1999, but re-focussed its activity from 2004 onwards. Schemes are now prioritised on the basis of both deprivation and casualty statistics, following the production of research that showed children in deprived areas were four times more likely to be injured in traffic accidents than those living in the most affluent areas.

These schemes will see 20-mph limits introduced in the vicinity of all schools, as well as the provision of; new walking and cycling routes; new crossing points; and new facilities for cyclists and pedestrians within school sites.

A total of 102 schools (out of the 334 in the county) will have Safer Routes To School schemes in place by the end of 2005/06. It is intended that coverage will extend to all urban schools by the end of the LTP2 period.

We have also focused our education and training programmes such as Kerbcraft into the most deprived of the county’s wards. This programme is delivered by one of the local Primary Care Trusts on behalf of the partnership.

Children

We have developed a comprehensive package of education and training interventions for each stage of a child’s development from pre-school to pre-driver, and beyond.

Pre-school – incorporates road safety input to playgroup activities, providing carers and teachers with relevant resources for developing a child’s awareness of the dangers of road traffic, through to the first years of schooling. The Children’s Traffic Club helps parents teach their young children how to stay safe when they are out walking, playing or travelling by car. Safety check days for child seats are also organised.

Key Stage 1 – the Kerbcraft programme introduces pedestrian skills through a pedestrian training programme for 5-7 year-olds.

Key Stage 2 – The Junior Road Safety Officers’ scheme ties in with KS2 guidelines for the National Curriculum and influences pupils at the peer level to take responsibility for their own learning and decision-making. In year six cycle training is promoted to all schools.

Key Stage 3 – Cycle training is now being extended to years seven and eight, and interactive lessons are provided over an internet link.

An interactive website has been set up under the Street Cred programme (www.reducingroadcasualties.com), providing information and resources for both teachers and children from the ages of 5 to 14. Funding has been secured to provide additional training for teachers of Personal, Social and Health Education.

Key Stage 4 – The CarKraft : Drive 16 programme is for sixteen year-old pre-drivers. It includes a first driving experience, and seminars on drink-driving, speed, accident causation and hazard perception. The aim is to educate pre-learner and inexperienced drivers into the dangers of speeding, drink / drugs and distractions when in control of a vehicle.

The Keep Yer Wheels programme deals with similar issues and aims to improve the driving skills of young people who have already passed their test. Students are required to attend a one day course, concluded with a 2-hour assessment to identify key skills learned.

Road safety is a key factor in promoting School Travel Plans, including risk assessments for alternative means of travel such as walking buses or cycle trains.

Over-arching these programmes, and covering all key stages, a ‘Street-Cred’ website has been developed. There are two parts of the site: Firstly the pupil site, which is full of interactive road safety-related games for pupils to play and learn from; and secondly the teachers’ site has lesson plans and ideas, as well as sections entitled “What They Should Know”.

Targeted interventions also take place through partnership events, such as Essential World, the Northampton Balloon Festival, Child Safety Week, Road Safety Week, etc..

Urban Areas

In recognition of the greater accident risk incurred by vulnerable and disadvantaged road users in urban areas, the Safer Routes To School programme is being directed towards deprived areas, which are almost entirely urban. These schemes will include 20-mph zones in the vicinity of all schools.

Rural Areas

The partnership has already undertaken a great deal of work on rural Red Routes, and will continue with this activity. In addition, we are designating a core road network as part of this LTP, which will be used to direct resources for future road improvements. The core network will also be subject to a programme of “Route Audits”, which will apply safety audit techniques to existing road infrastructure.

The partnership has recently launched a ‘Fatal Accident Project’ with the aim of researching the stubbornly high number of fatalities amongst the KSI totals. This will focus primarily on the rural roads that are the location for 77% of fatal accidents.

The partnership has worked with the British Horse Society on issues of rider and animal safety, particularly in respect of high visibility clothing and safety equipment and driver awareness, and is pleased to note that there were no reported injuries to horse riders in 2004.

We are currently investigating the concept of “visual traffic calming” with a view to piloting a scheme within the county.

Speed Management

The management of traffic speeds forms a fundamental part of the casualty reduction strategy.

Northamptonshire was a pilot area for the hypothecation of safety camera fines, and remains committed to the operation and development of its Safety Camera Partnership. The introduction of speed, and latterly red light, cameras in the county from 2000 has seen KSI casualties decline by 58.4% at fixed sites.

Northamptonshire has also piloted Speed Workshops for drivers who are caught exceeding a 30-mph limit by a small amount. Over 30,000 drivers have now attended the three-hour workshops, and research by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency has shown that attendees are 25% less likely to re-offend than those who do not attend. The Northamptonshire course model is now being evaluated for national roll-out

Northamptonshire has also launched a ‘Community Speed Watch’ scheme whereby villages with an identified speeding problem but a low accident record collect anti-speeding pledges from residents. Once pledges exceed an agreed threshold, a team of villagers is loaned and trained in the use of speed detection equipment to conduct their own speed checks. Offending drivers receive a warning letter from the police, but no fine at this point. The scheme is very popular (now running in 18 villages with 60 waiting to join), and effective as average speeds have been reduced by up to 7-mph.



Speed Limits

In line with the Department for Transport’s recommendation in “New Directions in Speed Management” the Council will continue with its policy of introducing 30-mph limits in all towns and villages.

Limits of 20-mph will be introduced in specific locations, such as in the vicinity of schools, where such limits will encourage the safe use of the highway by pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

Speed limits may also be reduced in rural areas where such reductions will have a demonstrable impact on road safety.

We will review, in accordance with guidance, the speed limits on all our A and B roads by 2011, and will give priority to reviewing the limit on any road (not just A and B roads) on which there are poor current casualty histories or where there is a widespread disregard for the current speed limit. We recognise the role that the raising of inappropriately low, as well as the lowering of inappropriately high, speed limits can have in encouraging motorists to have greater respects for speed limits generally.

Road Safety at Work

The partnership has identified working drivers (salesmen, lorry drivers, people travelling to meetings etc.) as a key target group. Combining road safety education and training and assistance with the preparation of travel plans, the Council is targeting the 50 largest employers in the county for specific intervention.

In addition, we have commenced a series of seminars for up to 50 businesses at a time to discuss road safety at work. These include the dissemination of model road safety policies and follow-up consultancy advice to firms.

Motor Cyclists

In 2003, KSI motor cyclist casualties in the county rose alarmingly. As a result, the partnership introduced "Operation Biker" to cover a high profile campaign throughout 2004, supported by the appointment of a dedicated Road Safety Officer.

This included: engineering activity directed by our Motor Cyclists' Forum (where expert motor cyclists give the rider's eye view of the difficulties they experience on our Red Routes); targeted, high-profile police enforcement on motor cycle Red Routes and known "leisure routes"; the 'Keep Your Head' campaign of road show visits to motor cycle dealers; the BikeKraft and BikeKraft Experience training for riders in partnership with the Institute of Advanced Motorists; and collaboration with the East Midlands 'Shiny Side Up' partnership on their 'To Die For?' campaign. In 2004, Operation Biker saw motor cyclist KSI reduced by 29%, so that the total is now below the baseline once again. Early indications show a projected reduction in motor cyclist KSI of 21% in 2005. This success will be embedded throughout 2006 and beyond by the continuation of Operation Biker, and its expansion to include emergency first aid courses for motor cyclists who are likely to be first on the scene of an accident, and the launch of a Trainers' Forum to maintain and improve standards of tuition.

The Council has taken a lead in developing and sharing good practice in relation to engineering improvements as well as more traditional educational and training initiatives. Throughout the period of the first LTP a specific budget for motor cycle engineering improvements has been dedicated from within the Casualty Reduction programme. These have been identified through the Motor Cyclists' Forum, where the expert motor cyclists involved have ridden identified problem routes and recommended specific improvements from the riders' point of view. In 2004 the Council ran a seminar for regional colleagues to share this best practice and thereby contribute to the development of the Institute of Highway and Transportation's recently produced guidelines.

Young Drivers

The partnership has made excellent progress in reducing KSI amongst 17 - 24 year-old drivers. Activity includes our family of popular CarKraft courses, and targeted marketing of our 'MPH' magazine.

Whilst it is arguable that, as we have already reduced casualties amongst this group by 44%, resources should now be diverted to other groups, our view is that this target group is continuously refreshed by new drivers and pre-drivers, and that by influencing young drivers, we can make a positive contribution to casualty reduction throughout their driving career.

3.4.2.4 New Approaches to Traffic Calming

The council is currently investigating new approaches to traffic calming schemes, involving 'visual cues' to influence drivers' speeds. New approaches to highway design have been pioneered in recent years, which take into account the overall appearance and characteristics of the highway environment to encourage drivers and other users to use road space in a safe and appropriate way. These techniques are based on the following concepts:

- Reducing segregation between different road users (within low speed limits) eg removing pedestrian barriers, pavements and cycle paths;
- Reducing certainty for motor vehicle drivers (within low speed limits eg removing white lines);
- Within certain parameters, encouraging all road users to take more responsibility for their behaviour; and
- Relating the appearance of roads to the desired speed level on that road ("self-explaining roads) eg adjusting line marking, trees, type and amount of signage, presence of shop/residential frontage, presence of footpaths, road surfaces, etc.

Proposals for pilot schemes are currently being developed for the county. Funding of £175,000 has been identified in the 2006/07 LTP delivery programme to implement two pilot schemes in Northamptonshire: one rural and one urban.

3.4.2.5 Funding Sources

Whilst the Local Transport Plan focuses on capital expenditure to achieve targets, this is only one source of funds for casualty reduction. The County Council will maintain its commitment to funding Casualty Reduction and Safer Routes to School programmes through the LTP, but will also continue to fund road safety education, training and publicity programmes through its revenue budgets. In addition, funds will also be sought from all potential external sources, including government funding for the growth area, sponsorship opportunities and the joint-funding of works with our various partners.

We welcome the greater flexibility offered by the replacement of current funding arrangements for Safety Cameras with a specific Road Safety grant within the LTP (including both capital and revenue funding). The revised funding arrangements will assist us in implementing the most appropriate road safety solution for a particular problem. We will, however, need to examine further the implications of the new funding guidelines, which are less than the current funding of the Safety Camera Partnership. Along with our partners, we will review the Casualty Reduction Strategy in line with both the new flexibilities and funding arrangements and advise any changes to the strategy in our LTP2 Delivery Report in 2008.

All expenditure, whether on engineering, education or enforcement will be targeted jointly on the priorities set out in the Casualty Reduction Strategy.

3.4.2.6 Value for Money

All Red Route schemes are required to achieve a minimum 100% first year rate of return on money invested, i.e. they have to pay for themselves within a year. These returns are calculated on the basis of detailed cost estimates for the proposed works and average KSI costs determined annually by the Department for Transport.

Individual schemes are ranked on the basis of their relative returns, with the most cost-effective being prioritised for construction.

3.5 SHARED PRIORITY – BETTER AIR QUALITY

Air Quality was not a major issue for Northamptonshire in the first Local Transport Plan. Although one Air Quality Management Area was designated adjacent to the M1, this is on a Highways Agency road and therefore out of the County Council's control. The County Council and Northampton Borough Council will continue to work with the Highways Agency to monitor and mitigate air quality issues on this stretch of road where possible.

However, shortly after we began preparing LTP2, Northampton Borough Council became concerned at the air quality level at two of their monitoring sites in Northampton. As a result two further Air Quality Management Areas have been designated. Because it is evident that these problems are transport-related, we are closely involved with Northampton Borough Council in addressing these problems and drawing up the Air Quality Action Plan. In doing so, we have drawn heavily on the experience of other authorities who have already had to tackle this issue.

In September 2005 a stretch of the A5 in Towcester was designated an Air Quality Management Area by South Northamptonshire Council. The A5 is a Highways Agency road, so we are currently working with South Northamptonshire Council and will both work with the Highways Agency in drawing up an action plan for this area.



We are also working more closely with the other District and Borough Councils in the county to ensure that we highlight any potential problems at an early stage. There are some areas of the county that appear to have elevated levels of pollution that will require close monitoring by the Borough and District Councils along with increased communication with the County Council. One of these areas is in Rushden and we will be working closely with East Northamptonshire Council to assess the situation and take the appropriate action.

The council's Air Quality Strategy is based on reducing the number of Air Quality Management Areas to zero and maintaining that position. The immediate focus is therefore on the current locations that have been declared in Northamptonshire, plus implementation of the Congestion Strategy to keep traffic flowing and thereby reduce the likelihood of further areas being declared.

We are working in partnership with the borough and district councils to develop cost-effective solutions to air quality problems.

3.5.1 Our approach to tackling Air Quality problems

Our overall strategy for tackling air quality is closely linked to our strategy for congestion. This is because transport-related air quality problems are usually the direct result of congestion, or at the very least heavy traffic flows.

Alongside our designation of congestion hotspots (Table 3.2 on page 102), we will also identify areas which are either designated Air Quality Management Areas or where air quality is likely to be a problem in the near future. The principles upon which we will tackle the air quality problems will be similar to our strategy for congestion, but a little different.

We will adopt a four step process for tackling air quality problems:

- Step 1** Examine whether we can mitigate the air quality problems by better management of the existing traffic flow, eg by freeing-up queues or relocating either the traffic or the queue to a less sensitive area;
- Step 2** Consider whether there is an engineering solution, eg providing more capacity at a junction;
- Step 3** Examine whether the provision of less-polluting alternative forms of transport along the corridor is likely to mitigate the problem; and
- Step 4** Consider restricting the supply of road space, either as a means of managing demand or encouraging the use of alternatives.

3.5.2 Monitoring

Monitoring is undertaken by each of the Borough and District Councils in the county and these are made available to the County Council through regular liaison meetings.

Throughout Northamptonshire there are over 170 nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube sites use to monitor Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂). These sites are split between the local councils as follows:-

Table 3.23 – Number of Air Quality Monitoring Sites

South Northants	32
Kettering	32
Corby	4
East Northants	32
Wellingborough	16
Daventry	28
Northampton	59

3.5.3 Declared areas

Northampton Borough Council declared two sites within the town to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in April 2005. These are Victoria Promenade and St James Road / Weedon Road (see section 2.6.1 on page 76). South Northamptonshire Council has declared one site on the A5 in Towcester (Watling Street). Although some areas are causing concern, the other districts do not have any areas to declare at this time.

Following consultation and agreement with the County Council, equipment for continuous monitoring of the existing nitrogen dioxide levels has been installed at two sites in the new Air Quality Management Areas in Northampton in July 2005. Data is downloaded every two days to provide a clearer picture of the situation. The Real Time Analyser in Towcester has been in place since March 2004. Data is required for at least 9 to 12 months before we can come to any conclusion about the air quality within these areas. The ratified data from these sites for 2005 is unavailable at this time.

Northampton Borough Council, in partnership with the County Council, has produced an Air Quality Management Area information leaflet and questionnaire for all households and businesses in the declared areas. This included details of the sites and explained the purpose of the monitoring equipment which is to be installed. Public consultation meetings with all stakeholders also took place in February 2005.

South Northamptonshire Council, Northamptonshire County Council and Northampton Borough Council are working closely together in order to develop Air Quality Action Plans for the declared areas. These action plans will include many areas covered elsewhere in the Local Transport Plan.

3.5.4 Tackling Air Quality Issues (Action Plans)

Draft Action Plans for the Air Quality Management Areas in the county are being formulated by Northampton Borough Council and South Northamptonshire Council in conjunction with the County Council and other external organisations. These drafts will form the basis for consultation with members of the public and businesses. Final versions of the Action Plans will be approved during autumn 2006. They will formalise the air quality improvement measures to be taken to ensure good air quality for all the people in the Air Quality Management Areas.

The action plans are the District or Borough Council's plans but, as they do not have jurisdiction over the highways, they are developed with the full cooperation of the County Council and the Highways Agency where applicable. They will include all measures that will be taken to reduce the pollutant levels in the Air Quality Management Area and also to prevent other areas progressing to Air Quality Management Areas in the future.



Our air quality action plans will include, but not be limited to, the following measures:-

Modelling: We are looking to utilise forecast modelling programmes which link to Air Quality data in order to gain a better understanding of the impacts of schemes on the air quality of an area. We will also look at the impact of traffic growth and ensure that any works carried out in order to reduce air pollution in one area does not simply relocate the problem to another residential area. The modelling software will also enable us to gauge the cost / benefit analysis for the below measures in ensuring that schemes implemented are the most cost efficient whilst having the desired impact on air quality in the county.

Park & Ride: Two park & ride sites are proposed for Northampton (see section 3.2.3.2 on page 115). These will be located on the Western and South Eastern approaches to the town. They will provide an alternative mode of travel for people travelling into the town centre from these approaches. These sites will have an impact of reducing traffic in the two Air Quality Management Areas currently in the town.

Travel Plans: The aim of travel plans is to encourage people to think about their choices when it comes to travelling to work or school. Alternative modes could be walking, cycling, public transport or car sharing. We are currently working with major employers within Northampton to develop company travel plans. We have also introduced our own travel plan and we will offer any assistance required to Northampton Borough Council and South Northants Council to develop their travel plans in line with this action plan. We are also working with schools in Northamptonshire in order to obtain modal shift and improve safety on journeys to school.

Bus Priority Measures: In order to encourage more people to use public transport and to ensure that the park & ride sites are successful, there needs to be a system whereby buses get priority over other motorised road traffic. This will be done by engineering measures on the highway and by using technology (see NetCoM below). This will make public transport a more attractive alternative to the private car by producing faster journey times than are currently being experienced.

NetCoM: This is a computerised system linking traffic signals / pedestrian crossings and bus priority. This system will be used as part of our Network Management to distribute the traffic on the network more effectively. This will enable us to provide bus priority measures to speed up journeys by public transport and also to redistribute queues to different areas of the network to alleviate air quality issues.

Promoting Alternative Modes: With our walking and cycling strategies we are working with partners to encourage and provide improved facilities for walking and cycling in urban areas. We will concentrate on providing complete routes to link residential areas with commercial and leisure areas in order to encourage journeys to be made by alternative modes. We will ensure that we focus on desired routes and destinations whilst concentrating on actual needs.

Getting Northampton to Work: Part of the Getting Northampton to Work project is to work on major junction improvements in and around the town to make it easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists to move around the town as well as providing junction improvements to assist the traffic flows. As part of this project, there are already plans agreed to redirect traffic flow in the Victoria Promenade area and this work will commence in 2006 / 07.

Parking Strategy: Following the decriminalisation of parking and the transfer of staff responsible for parking from Northampton Borough Council to Northamptonshire County Council, we will develop our parking strategy for the town. We will provide residents parking zones, examine parking charges and also consider the space allocated for parking with the aim to provide sufficient short stay parking whilst encouraging long stay parking to be redirected to the park & ride sites, therefore reducing the number of vehicles coming into the town centre.

Network Management: An integral part of our air quality strategy involves the link into Network Management. This relationship is currently being determined but will look at connecting air quality monitoring to signal junction improvements, redistributing the traffic queues, providing bus priority measures and the co-ordination of the booking of road space for road works, repairs and utility company works.

Planning / Developer Works: When considering planning applications we will undertake to consider the likely impact of any development on current Air Quality Management Areas and also on hotspots (see above on modelling). Where a development will have a negative impact, if planning permission is approved, we will secure mitigation measures and possible air quality monitoring equipment as part of any Section 106 agreement.

Raise Awareness: Currently, Air Quality is an area that many people have little knowledge and understanding in. Consequently, we will increase awareness and raise the profile of air quality issues across Sustainable Transport, the county council and with other key partners. This will ensure that everyone has the necessary information to consider the impact on air quality of all decisions made.

The action plans will also include the predicted outcomes of these measures in terms of the level of pollutants.