

DAVENTRY TRANSPORT STRATEGY POSITION STATEMENT DECEMBER 2006

The development proposed for Daventry as part of the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy will see the population of the town grow from 23,000 to 40,000. The County Council has commissioned a transport study for the town, which has examined the transport impacts of a number of options in terms of the distribution of development around the town.

Daventry District Council has decided, along with the other planning authorities in West Northamptonshire, to review the allocations of employment and housing land within their area. Until that review is complete, and a preferred option for the distribution of development in the town and district has been produced it is not possible to define a transport strategy for the town in any detail. This position statement therefore outlines the broad strategic approach that is emerging from the work undertaken to date.

Local Road Network

Daventry has expanded considerably over the last 40 years. In consequence, much of the road infrastructure within the town is relatively modern. The ability of the network to absorb additional traffic is therefore greater than for some of the other towns.

The amount of brownfield land available within the town is relatively small, most expansion will therefore take place on greenfield sites. This may involve some upgrading of the current rural roads which pass through these sites. Such upgrading would be planned as part of the site masterplan.

A number of junctions within the town will also require upgrading. The exact locations will vary depending on the development options which are ultimately chosen. Some widening of roads will also be required, but typically only for short sections in the vicinity of junctions. There may be a need for some link road construction, such as a link between the A45 and B4036 to the east of the town; but this requirement is likely to be limited.

The District Council has plans for considerable redevelopment of the town centre. Some junction improvements will be required as part of this redevelopment.

The total cost of highway works required within the town is currently estimated at £20-25million (2005 prices).

Public and Non-Motorised Transport

Current public transport usage within Daventry is quite low. This partly reflects the small size of the town. Stagecoach will be introducing an improved local network using low-floor vehicles in January 2007 including a doubling of the frequency to half-hourly on the main Northampton to Daventry route. Corresponding improvements to the bus stop infrastructure are

planned for 2007/08. This will provide a good basis from which to further grow services to serve the expanding town.

Current walking and cycling networks within the town are of good quality. However, further improvement is possible to encourage further use and the networks will need extending to serve the new development areas.

Current estimates are that some £4-7million (at 2005 prices) is required to improve public transport and non-motorised modes.

Overall Transport Principles for Development Sites

Developments within Daventry should also conform to the same principles of sustainable transport provision which apply to the larger towns, although inevitably these will need to be tailored to the circumstances of a smaller town. These principles are:

- To apply the principles of non-car oriented land use planning
- To provide high quality frequent bus services to serve the development
- To design new developments so that all properties are within reasonable walking distance of a bus stop
- To manage parking supply to level the playing field between the car and other travel options
- To provide good pedestrian and cycle linkages both within the development and connecting to the existing surrounding area
- To have robust travel plans for all new developments
- To provide a conveniently located travel choices centre providing advice on and access to alternatives to the car

Personal Rapid Transit

Daventry District Council have commissioned further work to examine the application of Personal Rapid Transit within Daventry. This is a system where potential customers would summon a 'pod' which would take them direct from their local PRT station to any other station on the network. A system to cover the whole of Daventry is estimated to require a fleet of 500 vehicles and have a capital cost of £80million.

Such a system would almost certainly attract more customers than a less frequent bus-based public transport system. However, for an untried system, both the likely patronage and operating costs have to be based on assumptions and there can be no certainty that the system could be operated at a profit. While likely to generate positive economic benefits, there would be no way of capturing such benefits to offset any losses.

Daventry District Council commissioned further work in December 2006 to study the proposals in more detail.

Links from Daventry

Growth of Daventry will generate additional traffic on the main roads serving the town. In particular, the A45 through Weedon and Flore will see a significant increase in traffic (some 30-40% during the morning peak). Even with some further modal shift from the car, the case for a bypass to Weedon and Flore is likely to be very strong.

Significant increases in traffic are also likely on the A5 and A361. The A361 between Daventry and the M40 poses a particular difficulty because of the number of villages which could potentially need bypassing (Byfield, Chipping Warden and Wardington). It may be more appropriate to downgrade to a B-road and encourage through traffic to use the A45/A5/A43 to reach the M40.

The use of Long Buckby station is likely to increase if development takes place along the Long Buckby road; particularly once regular through services to London Euston are restored. There is likely to be a strong case for providing regular public transport links from Daventry and upgrading the facilities at the station.

What happens next

Once a new set of preferred options have been produced for development locations, the transport strategy can be worked up in more detail and submitted to a future cabinet meeting for approval.

TOWCESTER TRANSPORT STRATEGY POSITION STATEMENT DECEMBER 2006

The development proposed for Towcester as part of the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy will see up to 2500 new houses built in the town. The County Council has commissioned a transport study for the town, which has examined the transport impacts of further development in the town.

South Northamptonshire Council has decided, along with the other planning authorities in West Northamptonshire, to review the allocations of employment and housing land within their area. Until that review is complete, and a preferred option for the distribution of development in the town and district has been produced it is not possible to define a transport strategy for the town in any detail. This position statement therefore outlines the broad strategic approach that is emerging from the work undertaken to date.

Local Road Network

Since the bypassing of the A43 in the 1980s, the key transport issue for Towcester has been the continued presence of the A5 through the town centre. Proposals for a bypass have been around for many years. Recently, an Air Quality Management Area has been designated in the town centre.

Unlike other towns, only one development site has been considered: to the south-west of the built up area. However, there are options relating to the amount of development. The development would be served by a Development Access Link Road connecting the A5 near Towcester Racecourse with the A43 to the north of the A413 junction. This would, inter alia, provide a bypass for the A5. The existing town centre area could then be traffic calmed and a HGV ban applied. This would remove some 60% of the existing traffic in the morning peak.

The A43/A45 Route Management Study (carried out by the Highways Agency) identified that the A43 around Towcester is currently operating very close to capacity. In particular problems are being experienced at the A43/A5 roundabout which is likely to require grade-separation (a flyover or equivalent) even without further development in Towcester. With development, both the A43/Brackley Road (Abthorpe) junction and the junction of the A43 with the new Development Access Link Road will need to be grade-separated.

There will also need to be other, more minor, junction improvements in the town.

The cost of highway works is likely to be around £44million, excluding land costs and the costs of any works in the existing town centre. The need for development to be able to make a sizeable contribution to these works is likely to be a key consideration in the number of dwellings proposed for Towcester.

Public and Non-Motorised Transport

Bus services from Towcester were improved considerably in January of this year. There are now hourly links to both Milton Keynes and Brackley, with half-hourly services to Northampton. Further improvements will be required as the town grows, with the following being possible key features:

- 3 buses per hour to Northampton
- 2 buses per hour to Milton Keynes (including service to Rail Station)
- Through service Daventry – Towcester – Milton Keynes
- Improved evening and Sunday services
- Feeder services from surrounding parishes as proposed in NCC Accessibility Strategy

Good pedestrian and cycle routes are needed between development areas and the town centre, together with improvements within the existing town.

Current estimates are that some £3-7million is required to improve public transport and non-motorised modes.

Overall Transport Principles for Development Sites

Developments within Towcester should also conform to the same principles of sustainable transport provision which apply to the larger towns, although inevitably these will need to be tailored to the circumstances of a smaller town. These principles are:

- To apply the principles of non-car oriented land use planning
- To provide high quality frequent bus services to serve the development
- To design new developments so that all properties are within reasonable walking distance of a bus stop
- To manage parking supply to level the playing field between the car and other travel options
- To provide good pedestrian and cycle linkages both within the development and connecting to the existing surrounding area
- To have robust travel plans for all new developments
- To provide a conveniently located travel choices centre providing advice on and access to alternatives to the car

What happens next

Once a new set of preferred options have been produced for development locations, the transport strategy can be worked up in more detail and submitted to a future cabinet meeting for approval.

TRANSPORT VISION FOR NORTHAMPTON

Since the Northampton Multi-Modal Study reported in December 2003 we have made good progress in implementing the recommendations, both through the Local Transport Plan and the Getting Northampton to Work major scheme.

But a lot has changed in the last three years. While the study did consider the impact of the additional growth proposed by the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy, it was able to do so only in a very preliminary work. Northampton Borough Council have recently commissioned work to define the long term growth options for the town. When that work is complete we will be able to carry out a full update of the Multi-Modal Study.

But in the interim, we need to update our strategy to react to the many proposals and initiatives which are circulating at present. This paper is intended as the start of a consultation process with key stakeholders that will allow us to do this.

Town Centre

Many of the current initiatives centre around the town centre. West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, Northampton Borough Council, English Partnerships and the County Council have commissioned consultants Building Design Partnership (BDP) to produce a Design, Development and Movement Framework (DDMF) for the town centre. The transport vision for Northampton embraces the objectives of the DDMF and it is recommended that the authority supports the principles of the DDMF subject to informed consultations with the partners and other stakeholders. All of the partners are committed to the regeneration of this area to make it once again the main focus for retail and office development in the town. Alongside a growing town, the town centre is expected to grow, particularly towards the railway station.

A growing and vibrant town centre will have more people travelling towards it. There is a limit to how much additional car traffic the approaches to the town centre can accommodate. In addition many of the existing surface car parks are likely to be developed for other uses. While some new multi-storey car parks will replace them, it is unlikely that they will lead to a significant increase in the amount of car parking available. In future many more people will need to access the town centre on bus, by cycle or on foot.

Key challenges:

- To improve the public realm through improvements to the streetscape that make the town centre and its environs a more attractive place.
- To make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to access the town centre, particularly from the immediately adjacent areas.
- To provide a high-quality new interchange facility to replace the existing bus station.
- To make it easier and quicker for buses to access the town centre along the key radial routes.

- To provide new park & ride sites on the outskirts of the town to supplement the parking available in the town centre.
- To promote the area around Castle Station as a major redevelopment site that supports increased use of the railway.

The existing urban area

The existing urban area is already largely built up. There will be some further redevelopment of brownfield sites. The large sites around Nunn Mills and Ransome Road are already being tackled, but there are many smaller sites which are likely to come forward as well. This will lead to some intensification of traffic flows, but more will come from people in new developments on the edge of town who wish to access existing facilities, particularly the town centre. Since there is limited scope to provide additional road capacity, the main focus will be on better management of the existing network to accommodate additional movement.

Key challenges:

- To improve capacity at key junctions
- To make it easier and quicker for buses to travel along the key radial routes.
- To improve the frequency of bus services, including a significant expansion of services in the evenings and on Sundays.
- To expand the walking and cycling network, removing existing barriers to travel, particularly by improving linkages with employment and retail centres

Greenfield Development Sites

While a large amount of development will take place on brownfield sites, there is still likely to be a need for some expansion of the existing urban area onto greenfield sites. Because these are totally new developments, these offer the greatest opportunity to facilitate more sustainable patterns of transport and break the cycle of car dependency.

Key challenges:

- To apply the principles of non-car oriented land use planning
- To provide high quality frequent bus services to serve the development
- To design new developments so that all properties are within reasonable walking distance of a bus stop
- To manage parking supply to level the playing field between the car and other travel options
- To provide good pedestrian and cycle linkages both within the development and connecting to the existing surrounding area
- To have robust travel plans for all new developments
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The Ring Road

Northampton currently has an incomplete ring road focused on the southern part of the town and incorporating Lumbertubs Way, Nene Valley Way, Mereway, Danes Camp Way and Upon Way. The ring road will play an increased role in future, particularly in terms of removing through traffic from the town centre. Large sections of the ring road are already congested at peak times. Efficient operation of the ring road will be important to ensure continued movement of cars around the town.

Key challenges:

- To work with the Highways Agency to balance the strategic role and local uses of the A45.
- To improve key junctions on the existing route
- To replace Sandy Lane with a new alignment of an appropriate standard for all users, including heavy vehicles.
- To promote the Northern Orbital Route both to serve any future development at Dallington Grange and also to remove through traffic from other parts of the town
- To examine options for completing the ring road around the northern part of town.
- To provide new park & ride sites close to the ring road to supplement the parking available in the town centre.

For Northampton as a whole

Alongside these developments, there will be further improvements needed for the town as a whole, both to develop the existing networks and to accommodate growth.

Key challenges:

- To promote integrated ticketing initiatives, including Smartcard technology
- To develop further high quality sources of travel information and marketing, embracing new communications technology.
- To manage the movement of heavy freight vehicles so that they use the most appropriate routes.
- To continue to promote Green Travel Plans whether for schools, workplaces or new developments.
- To address current and potential air quality problems, helping to make the town a healthier place to live
- To continually improve road safety, through engineering, education and enforcement.

Connections with the wider world

Northampton's role as a sub-regional centre requires it to have good links: to the surrounding villages, the neighbouring towns and the wider world. Many of the road links to Northampton are already dual carriageways. There are half-hourly inter-urban bus links to many surrounding towns. The M1 and West Coast Main Line are the main routes for longer-distance traffic, but the A43 and (via the A45) A14 also provide key links to adjoining regions and to ports.

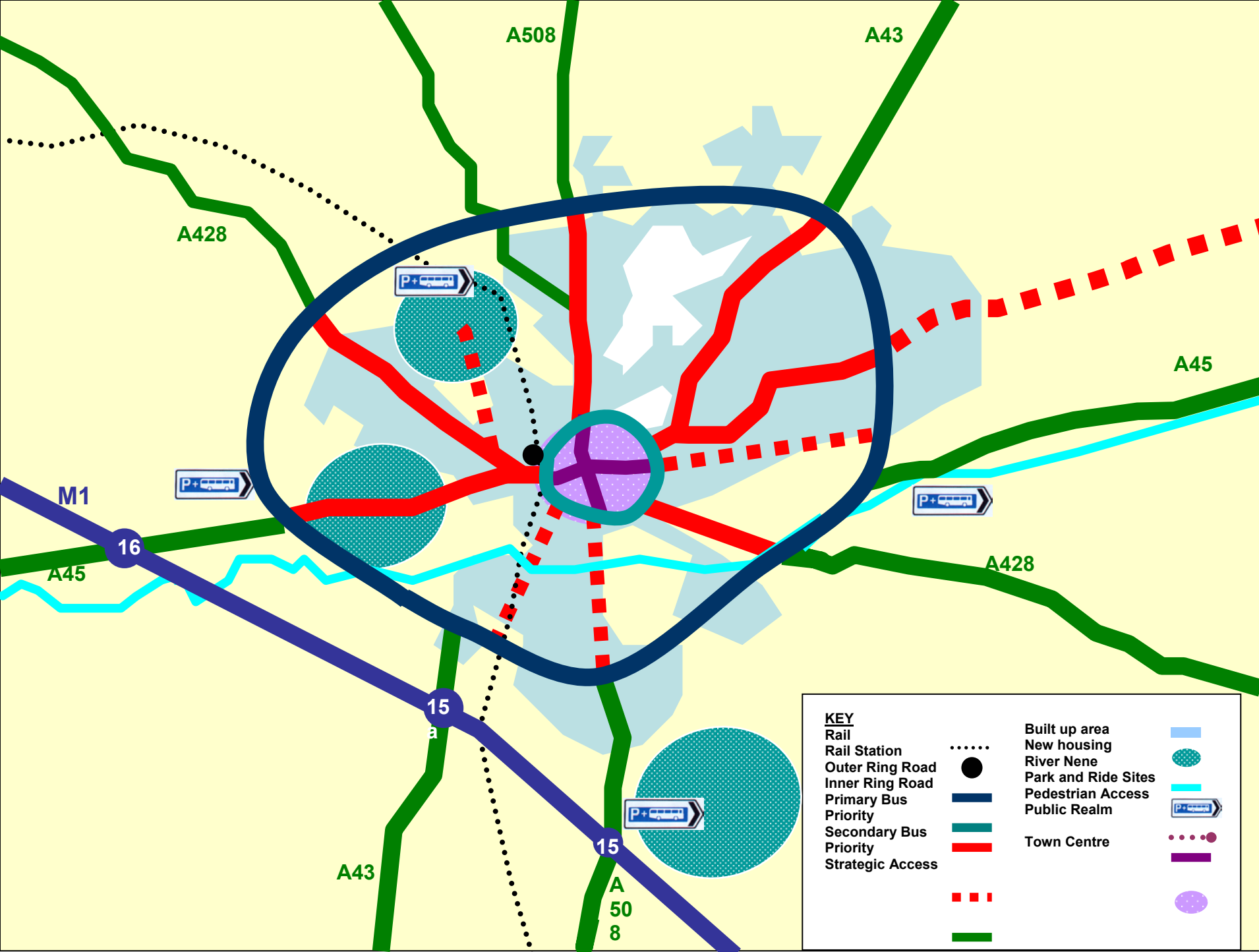
Key challenges:

- To improve the image of Castle Station and other gateways to the town.
- To continue to press for improved rail services to the town, both through the new West Midlands franchise and in the longer term.
- To continue improvements to inter-urban bus services, including the provision of evening and Sunday services.
- To expand bus services to surrounding rural areas, including the use of demand-responsive services linking into core routes.
- To improve the A43 between Northampton and Kettering, with the first stage being a detailed examination of the need and options.

What happens next

Following the 8th January cabinet meeting, officers will undertake further consultation with key stakeholders, including West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and Northampton Borough Council.

Once the results of the Longer Term Growth Options Study are available, further work will be commissioned to examine in detail the transport impacts of the growth proposals. This will contribute to the development of the Core Spatial Strategy for West Northamptonshire, which is due for adoption in March 2009.



KEY	
Rail	●
Rail Station	●
Outer Ring Road	— (Dark Blue)
Inner Ring Road	— (Teal)
Primary Bus Priority	— (Red)
Secondary Bus Priority	— (Cyan)
Strategic Access	— (Red Dashed)
Built up area
New housing	● (Teal Dotted)
River Nene	— (Light Blue)
Park and Ride Sites	— (Blue Arrow with P+)
Pedestrian Access	— (Cyan)
Public Realm	— (Purple Dotted)
Town Centre	● (Purple Dotted)