

5 Improving transport and communications

- 5.1 The emphasis of national policy is now firmly on reducing the need to travel and providing a choice of transport. It is a key element in securing a sustainable pattern of development. Good communications are vital to the economy of Cumbria. The county is not only distant from the main national and European centres of commerce and industry, but long distances also separate the main centres of economic activity within the county from each other and, in the case of West Cumbria and Furness, from national communication routes.
- 5.2 The diverse nature of the county, however, requires a different transport approach in different areas. Its remoteness and predominantly scattered rural nature requires greater than average car use and makes securing good transport and communications difficult. Some parts of the strategic highway and rail networks are poor and need improvement.
- 5.3 It is important that transport provision is made to support access to services and this is addressed in Chapter 9 with particular regard to town centres (see Policy L53). The role of key service centres in providing services also necessitates adequate transport provision to serve their catchment (Policy ST5).

The Strategic Transport Network

- 5.4 Responsibility for the motorway and trunk roads lies with the Highways Agency and policy on control of development is set out in DTLR Circular 4/2001. All other roads are the responsibility of Cumbria County Council. Traffic continues to grow but few of the strategic routes suffer serious congestion. However there is a need to address problems of traffic growth in some areas and encourage the development of more sustainable forms of transport including walking, cycling, ferries on inland waterways and public transport. Targets have been set for reducing traffic or its rate of growth in Carlisle, Kendal and the Lake District and measures are being introduced to achieve these targets. Partnership approaches are providing sustainable travel opportunities for visitors and these need to be developed further. Targets reflect local circumstances and are illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6
Target annual rate of growth taking account of
planned transport improvement schemes

Area	Likely annual rate of growth without restraint	Target annual rate of growth to 2006
Carlisle	2.2%	0%
Eden	0.5%	0.5%
Furness	1%	1%
Kendal	Kendal 2%	Kendal -4.35%
and District	District 0.5%	District 0%
Lake District	0.75%	0%
West Cumbria	1%	1%

Source: The Road Traffic Reduction Act Report: Cumbria
 (2nd edition. August 2001)

5.5 In rural areas there is a need to improve access to services and facilities and community and demand responsive transport are of particular importance. Services found in the urban areas will need to be accessible from rural areas. Whilst measures to maintain and improve the core public transport network and develop the role of community transport will be a matter for the Local Transport Plan, the Structure Plan will assist by ensuring any new development is located where it helps support the viability of these initiatives, (see Policies ST7 and L53). The provision of local services should also be encouraged in order to help reduce the need to travel especially by car (see Policy L55). It will also be necessary to enable access from the urban areas so that all can enjoy the countryside in a sustainable way.

- 5.6 Upgrading the transport system to support jobs and regenerate communities is critical throughout Cumbria and will require major investment in infrastructure. Improving access to employment areas and markets requires upgrading the public transport and highway networks. Key priorities are to improve access to West Cumbria and Furness from the M6, the modernisation of, and access to the West Coast main line, the Furness and Cumbria Coast railway lines, and improvement of the A66 east of Penrith. The development and promotion of the strategic cycling and walking networks are important for both tourism and local use. Any proposed development should not prejudice the safe and efficient operation of the strategic transport network. Where work to the strategic transport networks is necessary as shown for example by a transport assessment this will be required to be implemented at the developers expense. The Strategic network is defined in Figure 7. **Policy T24.**

Transport Infrastructure

- 5.7 Constructing new roads will play a role, although as a last resort when other alternatives have been evaluated and rejected. The A65, A590, A66, A595 and A596 are important routes and further upgrading should be considered. New roads may be necessary to support regeneration. Any proposals to significantly upgrade routes must be subject to a full evaluation of need, consequences and the alternative solutions available. This will include appraisal against the five key transport criteria of accessibility, safety, environment, economy and integration. Improvements will need to be justified within the overall approach to the route (including any route management strategy) its role in the network and its place in the hierarchy. Consideration also needs to be given to consequent impacts elsewhere on the network. As roads can have far reaching visual and environmental impacts there is a need to ensure, through careful design that all possible steps are taken to limit any harm. Appropriate measures for accommodating public transport, cycling and walking will need to be incorporated into the design of new developments at an early stage.
- 5.8 Within the National Park and AONBs the character of many rural roads has remained substantially unaltered for many years and contributes immensely to the area's character. The present unimproved character should be retained subject only to the need to undertake improvements where there are problems of safety. The location and design of any road improvements and traffic management measures will be subject to detailed scrutiny to safeguard the landscape and the character of the built environment. The significant upgrading of existing roads or the building of new roads within the National Park and AONBs, will be treated as major developments under policy ST4, and as a result will only occur in exceptional circumstances. **Policy T25.**

Policy T24: The Strategic Transport Networks

Development should not adversely affect the strategic transport network. Wherever required, development should improve the strategic transport networks including the cycling and walking networks.

Policy T25: New road building and traffic management

New road building or significant upgrading of existing roads will only be permitted where:

1. there is a compelling need to address problems of through traffic or road safety or regeneration, which cannot be met by reasonable alternative means and where all practical measures are taken to mitigate the effects of such works on the environment, or
2. where necessary to serve new development in the immediate locality, and in either case
3. it can be justified within the overall approach to the future network.

In addition in the Lake District National Park and AONBs traffic congestion and other adverse impacts of vehicles will be reduced by appropriate traffic management measures, improvements to public transport, and by ensuring that the design and layout of new development incorporates provision for cyclists and pedestrians. Such measures will need to have regard to the environmental qualities of the area and the needs of local residents and visitors.

Policy T26: Ports and airports facilities

The role of the county's ports and airports in generating economic activity will be sustained through the safeguarding of land required to develop their operational role or related activities, improvements to access and the favourable consideration of proposals which enhance their viability.

Policy T27: Public passenger transport

In order to minimise growth in road traffic, long distance and commuter passenger flows should be handled by rail and road public transport services wherever possible. The transfer of traffic to and between these modes will be encouraged by supporting proposals for improved services, infrastructure and passenger facilities and for suitably located interchange arrangements.

Policy T28: Freight

Large flows of bulk commodities, including waste materials, and all dangerous materials should be transported by rail and water wherever possible in order to reduce the growth in heavy goods haulage by road and to reduce the possibility of serious damage to the environment. Steps to facilitate this should include:

1. the location of new development generating such movements on sites where this traffic can be handled by rail or port related freight services, and
2. the favourable consideration of proposals for interchange facilities between road and rail or ports and for the rail or water freight servicing of existing industry.

5.9 Ports and airports in Cumbria have a significant and potentially greater role to play within the local economy. This can also play a part in supporting sustainable transport. The development of short sea shipping linked to the rail network for freight, the development of ferry links to Ireland and cruise stops, and the permanent establishment of scheduled air services via Carlisle airport is supported. Land will be needed for port and airport related functions. Additional development, which may help ensure their long-term viability, will also be supported. Improved road access on the approaches to the ports of Barrow-in-Furness and Workington, and improved access between Carlisle airport and its market area will be encouraged. **Policy T26.**

5.10 Bus, rail and ferry services make a vital contribution to social and economic life. These forms of transport and their integration will be supported.

5.11 The West Coast Main Railway Line is recognised as being of strategic importance, providing links to England and Scotland. The Cumbrian Coast Line, the Furness Line and the Carlisle to Settle Line also provide important freight and passenger services and scope for increased tourism to assist regeneration. Improvement of the Windermere Branch Line is a major scheme of strategic importance to the National Park.

5.12 The impact of traffic in terms of speed, noise, fumes and hazards to other road users, can be considerable, particularly in the National Park. The development of well located strategic and local interchanges, including park and ride facilities, will assist in reducing traffic impacts by integrating different forms of transport. This will allow ease of transition from one form of transport to another, making journeys by non car modes more attractive. **Policy T27.**



Cumbrian Coastline - Photo by Cumbria County Council

5.13 The use of railways and ports for freight, including minerals and waste can bring substantial benefits to the environment and to traffic conditions on local roads and can reduce the cost of road maintenance. Such schemes will be strongly supported. New industrial development, which generates bulk traffic should be located on sites which can be served by rail. Provision of improved facilities for the transfer of freight between rail and road will also help support rail services and reduce the growth of heavy goods vehicle traffic. **Policy T28.**

5.14 To widen transport choice the Structure Plan will protect routes and land from development where this is required to implement suitable schemes. This will include safeguarding land in Local Development Frameworks for public transport interchanges, the re-opening of rail stations and the reinstatement of disused railway lines and canals or their use for walkers, cyclists and equestrians. The development of rail freight facilities will also be safeguarded in consultation with the Strategic Rail Authority. **Policy T29.**

Integrating New Development

5.15 Transport Assessments are used to ensure due consideration is given to the accessibility of sites proposed for development by all modes of transport. Pending the publication of good practice advice on the content and preparation of Transport Assessments by the Department for Transport and the incorporation of any revision to the Institute of Highways and Transportation guidelines the criteria in the policy should be used. The scope of the Transport Assessment will relate to the scale and implications of the development proposed and the appropriate Highway Authority should be consulted at an early stage. Where a number of applications are being considered at the same time their cumulative impact on the local network could require each application to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment. The Assessment must include consideration of access both to and within the site and measures to improve such access. Where appropriate, the Assessment should include the likely modal split, any mitigation measures and a Travel Plan. Mitigation measures will be funded in full by the developer. **Policy T30.**

Policy T29: Safeguarding future transport schemes

Transport schemes, including lines of routes, set out in Schedule 2 will be safeguarded from development. Disused railway lines and canals should be protected from development where there is potential for future reuse as viable transport routes.

Policy T30: Transport Assessments

Transport assessments will be required for development proposals in accord with national guidance. In the interim proposals which either individually or cumulatively meet the following scale of development will require a transport assessment:

1. residential development in excess of 100 units, or
2. employment uses in excess of 5,000 sqm gross floorspace, or
3. other developments in excess of 1,000 sqm gross floorspace, or
4. hotel developments in excess of 100 bedrooms, or
5. caravan or similar holiday sites in excess of 100 units, or
6. any development that either generates in excess of 100 heavy goods vehicles per day or 100 vehicle movements in any hour, or
7. any development that materially adds to local congestion, or
8. any development that may impact on the trunk road network.

Policy T31: Travel Plans

Travel plans will be required for proposals for:

1. retail and indoor leisure facilities in excess of 1000 sqm gross floorspace,
2. office, employment, education and health services development in excess of 2500 sqm gross floorspace,
3. new and expanded school facilities,
4. development that would otherwise generate local traffic problems as identified through a transport assessment or an evaluation of a proposal.

Policy T32: Car parking standards

The maximum levels of car parking permitted for new development is set out below:

Maximum Parking Standards*	
A1 shops	
Food Retail	1 space per 14m ²
Non-Food Retail	1 space per 20m ²
A2 Financial and professional services	
Financial and professional services	1 space per 30m ²
A3 Food and drink	
Restaurants	1 space per 5m ²
B1 Business	
Stand alone offices	1 space per 30m ²
Business parks	1 space per 35m ²
B2 General industry	
General industry	1 space per 45m ²
B8 Storage and distribution	
Storage and distribution	1 space per 45m ²

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5.16 Travel Plans can increase the use of public transport, walking and cycling and seek to reduce car journeys. They can address issues such as road safety, personal security and mechanisms for more efficient delivery and freight movements. Travel Plans can also help to reduce traffic growth. They will assist in meeting targets for reducing traffic growth, which have been set for Kendal, Carlisle and the Lake District. Developers should hold early discussions with the relevant planning and highway authorities to scope the requirements of a Travel Plan. Producing a Travel Plan will not mean that development that is otherwise unacceptable will be permitted. It is considered that school travel plans are particularly important for pupils, teachers and parents and any new school development will require such a plan to be prepared for the whole school.

Policy T31.

5.17 The availability of parking influences the means of transport and destinations people choose for journeys. Policy T9 of the Regional Spatial Strategy requires local authorities to develop maximum parking standards for destinations in accord with specified ceilings. The guidance states that there should be consistency and coordination of parking standards across neighbouring authorities. This is particularly important in Cumbria where there are competing retail and service centres, which require a common competitive environment. The policy is therefore included to ensure this consistent approach throughout Cumbria. Overall the level of parking for a town centre should reflect the scale of the centre and the nature of its catchment. The maximum levels have been designed to be part of a package to promote sustainable transport choices, maintain the vitality of town centres and reduce land take. Areas where it may be appropriate for less spaces may be defined in Local Development Frameworks subject to there being no adverse impact on road safety and traffic management. The county council publishes more detailed guidance in "Parking Guidelines in Cumbria" including minimum standards for cycling and disabled parking. It also refers to housing in town centres and standards within residential areas. **Policy T32.**



Car sharing in Carlisle - Photo by Cumbria County Council

Telecommunications

5.18 Modern telecommunications are an essential part of everyday life and make a substantial contribution to the economy. New technologies need to be supported wherever possible. In Cumbria, studies¹² suggest that improved access to ICT could significantly improve community services, education and training and opportunities for small businesses. It can also increase the potential for home working and reduce the need to travel. However, some of the infrastructure required to meet an expanding network of communications (eg. telecommunications masts) can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of all landscapes. The need for this type of development will therefore be balanced against safeguarding the environmental interests.

5.19 Telecommunications masts need to be located where they minimise the impact on Cumbria’s landscapes, particularly in designated areas. Telecommunication operators should avoid mast installations within designated areas unless alternative sites cannot be found. Masts and associated new equipment are directed to areas that have the least visual impact. Advances in technology are bringing the opportunity to ‘roam’ between networks, making repetition of masts infrastructure unnecessary. Mast sharing and the sensitive design of equipment will be encouraged.

Policy T33.

Telephone mast near Bassenthwaite Lake -
Photo by Cumbria County Council



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C1 Hotels and hostels

Hotels	1 space per bedroom including staff
D1 Non-residential institutions	
Medical or health facilities	1 space per 2 staff + 4 per consulting room
Higher and further education	1 space per 2 staff
D2 Assembly and leisure	
Cinema and conference facilities etc	1 space per 5 seats
Leisure and sport facilities	1 space per 22m ²
Stadia	1 space per 15 seats

* Gross floorspace unless specified

Policy T33: Telecommunications

Proposals for the erection of telecommunication masts and improved telecommunications systems will be permitted only where a proven need for the particular facility demonstrably outweighs its visual or other adverse impacts, including the cumulative impacts of a number of such facilities, and where it is carefully sited and designed so as to reduce such impacts to a minimum.