A transport framework for a sustainable Lake District
A TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK FOR A SUSTAINABLE LAKE DISTRICT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Transport Framework covers the Lake District National Park and concerns movement within the Park boundary and access to the Park. The Framework fits within the policy context of the emerging Local Development Framework and the current and emerging Cumbria Local Transport Plans (LTP). These plans contain the relevant strategic and local policies.

1.2 The Framework sets out the priorities for transport improvements in support of the Vision for the Lake District. It reflects the Local Development Framework’s approach of considering the Lake District as a whole as well as comprising five distinctive areas.

1.3 The key outcomes supported by the Transport Framework are:-

- **A prosperous economy:** Ensure good access to and within the Park to support the range of small to medium sized enterprises in the Park.

- **World Class Visitor Experiences:** Proactively manage the visitor experience. Make high quality transport central to the experience of a visit to the Park. Maximise high quality integration between transport modes.

- **Vibrant Communities:** Ensure good and affordable access for local people. Promote active travel modes.

- **A Spectacular Landscape:** Safeguard and enhance the special heritage, ecology and landscape of the Park from the negative impacts of transport.

An implicit strand in these is the need to reduce carbon emissions. In addition, two further outcomes are:

- **Collaboration and leadership:** Facilitate collaboration partners working together with a common goal. Make the Park a leader in low carbon transport and travel.

- **Sharing objectives:** High level of agreement on the objectives of the transport framework.

1.4 The overall aim is to reduce the need to travel in the first place and to develop transport systems that have less of an impact on the environment. This can be achieved by encouraging services and goods to be available locally, enabling new development to reduce the need to travel, by making alternatives to personal travel
attractive, promoting a shift from cars to public transport to cycling and walking and reducing emissions through clean engine and fuel technologies.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Framework has been developed from a joint initiative by the National Park Authority, Cumbria Tourism and the County Council, with support from the North West Development Agency.

2.2 The development of the Framework has involved three phases. For Phase 1 consultants were appointed to identify and robustly quantify transport problems and opportunities in the LDNP and to identify successful transport interventions from elsewhere that might contribute to mitigating these. These are set out in Appendix 1. Phase 2 furthered the development of the Framework, including the visioning of the five distinctive areas of the National Park. Phase 3 involves the identification of projects and initiatives that can be developed, prioritised and delivered in the short to medium term. These are focussed on the transport needs of the local communities and the development of the tourist economy and are set out in section 4.

2.3 To enable the vision for the National Park of a low carbon tourism economy and world centre for active recreation as well as retaining and enhancing a world class landscape to be realised there are a number of transport issues to be addressed. This will be through a range of measures including spatial and development planning, provision of services and tourism products as well as direct transport network developments.

2.4 This Framework provides the agreed approach to the transport activities to be taken forward over the next Local Transport Plan period [2011-2016] in accord with the above vision.

2.5 The overall objectives for travel in the Lake District are:-

- To enable local people to have good and affordable access to jobs and services.

- To achieve a quality transport system that matches the world class environment on offer. This will require substantial investment in the infrastructure and services provided.

- To add value to people’s experiences of the National Park.

- To enable people to visit and enjoy the special qualities of the National Park in ways that meet their needs whilst enhancing their visit and minimising their impact on the local environment.
3 **THE FRAMEWORK**

3.1 The Transport Framework consists of the following core principles:–

- A transport network based on fewer cars, more pedestrians, cyclists and greater use of lake borne and rail transport.

- Reduced traffic and movement between the distinct areas of the Park identified in the Local Development Framework.

- Priority for pedestrians in all towns and villages.

- The encouragement of cycling on the rural network from transport hubs.

- The development of passenger transport services along key routes between transport hubs with adequate car parking supported by sustainable travel opportunities.

3.2 The Framework addresses a number of levels which responds to the spatial differentiation between areas of the park proposed as part of the LDF.

- Level 1 – accessing the Lake District, identifying the strategic access points and corridors into the National Park by all modes including cars, coaches and buses, and trains

- Level 2 – connecting key transport hubs – the connection between the key towns, destinations, residential areas – both inside and just outside the National Park

- Level 3 – getting around the towns and villages – improving the ability to move around within towns and villages themselves

- Level 4 – accessing the countryside - travelling into the more remote parts of the Lake District, the valleys, fells and the lakes.

4 **PRIORITY PROGRAMMES**

4.1 The following five programmes have been identified as the current priorities. As the Framework looks towards 2025 further programmes will be identified in the future.

**Transport Hubs Development Programme (programme 1)**

4.2 The majority of visits to the National Park will continue to be made by car, but the focus for travel within and across the Park will be on sustainable transport modes.
Key strategic sites for car parks will be identified. These will be developed to ensure that their scale fits with their location, that parking capacity is adequate, that the choice of modes (walking routes, cycling, buses and boats) is appropriate to the place, and that interchange is as easy and seamless as possible. The development of a coherent and agreed parking strategy between operators within the Park will provide a basis for developing walking and cycling routes within local service centres and the countryside.

Traffic Management Programme (programme 2)

4.3 Traffic routes between the distinct spatial areas of the Park as identified in the Local Development Framework will be managed to reduce their attractiveness as strategic routes. Car journeys from one area to another will be directed to the Strategic Route Network around the park. Some smaller lower category roads where traffic levels and parking are a problem or where opportunities exist for initiatives will be identified and access will be developed which redresses the balance from cars to walking and cycling supported by passenger transport services.

4.4 Consideration will be given to lower area wide speed limits down to 40mph with the exception of strategic routes. 20mph will also be considered in areas within local service centres where active travel will be given priority. Measures to reduce vehicle speed will be implemented where required to give priority to vulnerable road users.

Cycling and Horse Riding Network Development Programme (programme 3)

4.5 A range of cycle and horse riding routes will be developed from the transport hubs ranging in character from family friendly through recreational to adventure challenge routes. These will be developed from the Cumbria Right of Way Improvement Programme.

A Passenger Transport Improvement Programme (programme 4)

4.6 Key bus stops in towns, villages, attractions and countryside access points will be identified and provided with good quality modern passenger waiting, boarding and information facilities. This will also be developed for lake borne services; public transport fare offers and ticketing will be developed that encourage use by families, walkers and cyclists. The development of the existing smart card technology will significantly transform the usability of the public transport system. The presentation, marketing and information support behind the transport system will be developed to maximise its attractiveness to all. Transport services will be developed and integrated to encourage end-to-end journeys.

Low Carbon Vehicle Programme (programme 5)

4.7 Working towards further Low Carbon Lake District will involve promoting development and marketing of alternatively fuelled vehicle (fleets, for visitors, boats, buses and cycle); and the development of infrastructure for alternative fuelling technologies.
5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 All aspects of transport relating to the Lake District will be discussed and coordinated through the Lake District Transport Group comprising officers of the CCC, NPA and NWDA supported from time to time by Cumbria Tourism and District Councils. The group will report to the Partnership for the Lake District.

5.2 In order to develop the programmes the following priority tasks have been identified:

- Development and implementation of a Lake District National Park parking strategy (programme 1),
- Exploration of a valley access management plan (programme 2)
- Improvement of the strategic cycle network, particularly aimed towards the family market (programme 3)
- Promotion and marketing of transport and travel in the National Park (programme 4)
- Continued development and implementation of the NoWcard and possible pilot in a Distinctive Area or settlement (programme 4)
- Development of opportunities to use “alternatively” fuelled vehicles (cars, buses and boats) with the supporting infrastructure (programme 5).

5.3 There is a wide range of potential projects which could be taken forward to implement the programme (see appendix 2) and their value will be assessed as part of the tasks identified above.

5.4 Programme 3 of the transport framework covers development of the cycling and horse riding network. There are currently 5 projects within the programme. The current position on these is as follows:-

- Thirlmere Cycle Route
- Coast to Coast MTB Route
- Grasmere to Thirlmere via Dunmail Raise
- Ambleside (Waterhead) to Bowness Cycleway
- Coniston to Foxfield Recreational Trail

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Appendix 1

SUMMARY OF THE PROBLEMS OR ‘CHALLENGES’

Key Conclusions (Steer Davis Gleave Phase One: Evidence and Analysis)

While the travel to work behaviour of people living within the Lake District is generally sustainable in that a high proportion work from home and walk to work, the travel behaviour of visitors is very car oriented. Future population growth (and primarily within the older age groups) may create even more pressures in the future with increasing car use.

Visitors are a crucial part of the local economy - they are a major contributor to the local economy, with visitor numbers, income from visitors and related employment all still growing. They appear to be very committed to the Lake District as a specific destination - high numbers are repeat and very frequent visitors and three quarters say that they intend to return within the next two years. This is a key strength.

Although several routes in the heart of the Lake District experience widely fluctuating (seasonal) traffic flows, there is little evidence of a lot of standing congestion. Instead it appears that factors such as the volume of traffic at specific times and on the narrow roads characteristic of the area, combined with slow moving traffic, causes a great degree of frustration for other drivers, even when actual congestion is low. It may be that traffic levels create a nuisance and are an inconvenience (certainly to residents who modify their behaviour at peak visitors times), rather than an economic barrier as such. There is no doubt however, that current traffic levels are considered to be a problem by most stakeholders.

Despite this being a rural area with some challenging terrain, there does appear to be a relatively good public transport network in place which includes a wide variety of services - scheduled bus (including open top in summer), demand responsive bus, taxibus, rail, steam rail, ferry and car ferry. The network is enhanced during the summer but a good number of services operate all year round. The network is also very stable over time which provides a solid foundation and is important for this area with such a high number of repeat visitors.

However, although there is a good mix of public transport services in place, many bus services are operated by old vehicles, the cash fares which apply are very complex and variable, and some interchanges between services are poor. Although public transport services do cater for visitors accessing the hills, there are wider issues limiting such use such as length of stay time, flexibility, and service reliability (both real and perceived). The visibility of bus service promotion is limited. Vehicle branding for routes, such as dedicated external design of the 555 “Lakeslink” buses, is the exception rather then the rule. Publicising bus services through associated activities, such as through publicity for accommodation providers or attractions, is also not common.

Rail services have a more limited role as the existing rail lines are located only around the fringes to the Park, with the exception of the Lakes Line reaching as far as Windermere. Also, recent and future timetable changes are likely to result in fewer through trains into the Lake District, which may not be attractive to potential passengers. Travelling times by rail do not compare favourably to travel times by car, for journeys to the Lake District.

Provision for cyclists appears to be low generally, both in terms of infrastructure and in terms of the opportunities provided to integrate with other travel modes, although there have been some improvements in specific areas.

Visitors experience very different approaches to car parking management across the Lake District. There is no central, comprehensive source of information on car parking, signing is generally poor, pricing is high and inconsistent, the usual payment regime is Pay and Display, and there is a lack of visitor facilities in
many car parks (including local information). As a result, car parks do not particularly encourage long stay visits.

Access by sustainable modes is not actively promoted by many providers of visitor attractions.

Different types of visitors, and different visitor segments, display very different characteristics in relation to travel. These differences need to be properly understood when developing solutions to encourage less car based travel.

It is clear that transport (and in particular public transport) needs to be made part of the wider visitor experience if it is to become attractive and appealing to visitors.

Travel planning – for workplaces, for leisure/tourist destinations and for areas – will have an important role to play in helping to encourage sustainable travel choices for a wide range of trips. Greater encouragement by the highways authority and the National Park Authority in encouraging the development of voluntary travel plans (and related efforts by the LDNPA to secure travel plans through the planning process), and a higher profile for the implementation of travel plans and smarter choices initiatives more generally, will be a key factor in this.
APPENDIX 2

Potential Park Wide Transport Projects to support the Transport Framework for a Sustainable Lake District

This appendix sets out the numerous projects that could be developed. Relevant projects will be assessed as part of the process of developing the priority programmes.

1 Parking
   - Develop common branding
   - Consensus management to encourage longer stay and less onward travel
   - Quantify existing non-regulated capacity (and location) in addition to regulated
   - Explore sequential area based parking strategies to use spare (informal) capacity; link space-time – i.e. explore weekend visitor use of employment parking
   - Link hubs physically to sustainable access networks
   - Car parking signage on highway to be visitor orientated.
   - Improvements to facilities
   - Pay on exit
   - Cashless payments
   - Coach parking

2 Marketing
   - Strategic and unified marketing of getting to and around the Lake District
   - Develop travel brand and related sub-brands
   - Messaging and methods targeted to user types
   - Ongoing individualised marketing/personal travel-planning service for residents and visitors.
   - Develop itinerary marketing
   - Promotion of the single web site for travel information.

3 Itineraries
   - Develop themed itineraries for each distinctive area
   - Themes e.g. walking, food, buildings, culture “A day out in... “, families
   - Ensure theme types consistently applied across the area.
   - Mode of transport is (largely) invisible
   - Continuous cycle networks catering for different markets & user types.

4 Bespoke access management plans
   - Comprehensive site-based approach to traffic management and access.
   - May include road closure (valleys or high passes) - to “open” the road to non-car users and uses.
   - May include restrictions of certain traffic or access types (HGVs, non-resident private cars) with conditions (access to tourist accommodation, disabled etc.)
   - May be time-bound (seasonal, weekend, “first Sunday in the month” etc)
Travel Planning

- Workplace and schools (continue to develop)
- Ongoing individualised marketing/personalised journey planning for residents and visitors
- Destinations travel planning (e.g. for attractions)
- Origin travel planning (“from here…”, continue and extend community travel planning)

Lake District Car Scheme

- Car share club/short term hire
- Low emission vehicles
- Presented as car club for residents (and visitors)

Cycling and Horse Riding Network

- Remote bike hire via credit card
- “Cycle the Lake District downhill” (bike uplift using high pass Rambler buses)
- Lake District Bike Link – Bike adapted bus linking cycling hubs (Grizedale, Staveley, Thirlmere, Whinlatter) and to entry points (Backbarrow, Windermere, Penrith, Workington)
- Bike rickshaws
- Thirlmere Route
- Windermere/Bowness Route
- Dunmail Raise link
- Coniston to Foxfield link

Integrated travel ticket – NoWcard

- To include all bus services & trains
- Extend to include other modes (taxi, bike hire, car club etc)
- Allow choice of cost/service e.g. wait 1 hour, take bus for £3 or call taxi for £15 (all charged through card)
- Incorporate discounts or deals through card
- Explore Deutsch-bahn card discount model for different types of user.

Hubs & Interchanges

Combination of the following as appropriate to location and scale

- Travel interchanges
  - Between modes (“cheek to cheek” integration)
  - Between services of single mode
  - Consider/incorporate parking (short/long stay)
  - Car club station
  - Demand Responsive Transport “call” station
  - Velib-type bike station (unstaffed cycle hire)

- Information
  - Staffed
  - Intelligent/smart/real time information
- “flat” information (timetables, phone numbers etc)

- Shelter and association
  - Bus shelter
  - Other shelter used as transport shelter
  - Association with business – pub, café etc (e.g. some way of alerting people waiting that the bus in the pub/café)
  - Associated with other non-transport information and facilities (community information point, cash machine etc)

10 Intelligent mobility points

- Remote (unstaffed) “mobilpunkte” type hubs. They may be based on the RIBS (Rural Intelligent Bus Stop – with real-time transport information) model, but may also include some form of demand-responsive call system, car club station, unstaffed bike hire by credit card point.

11 Single Information Portal

- Extending the Traveline model to be totally comprehensive (bus, train, taxi, bike hire, lift share etc) multi-format/platform (phone, web, SMS, face-to-face)
- Provides real time running information
- Linked to real time displays/SMS
- Integrated to hub information provision

12 Passenger Transport Service Quality

- Frequency – increase or insert other solution to enhance (e.g. taxi on NoWcard; develop shuttle idea on popular routes/at peak times (of week/year)
- Physical quality
- Late/early option; “last ride home”, latebus.com, last orders etc.
- Driver training
- Brand routes & develop consistent descriptions for type (e.g. Express i.e. X4), Rambler (circuitous but fixed route/timetable), Shuttle (out-back), Explorer (demand responsive).

13 Rural Wheels and Demand Responsive Transport

- Explore potential for extension of taxi-bus and DR models into more remote parts of the park
- Explore integration of flexible services with timetabled – to extend times (morning, late evening) and enhance frequency on demand

14 Miscellaneous

- Hitching: SMS secure hitch-hiking initiative; BMC/Ramblers marketing
- Van share/shared logistics for SMEs
- Sustainable energy and bike re-charge network
- Low carbon holidays pledge