

Transport and access to services

Headlines

Transport opportunities in the built environment can have a range of positive and negative effects on people, communities and places. Positive effects include opportunities for walking and cycling and access to employment, education, shops, social support networks, health services and the countryside. There are also negative effects such as pollution, traffic injuries, noise, stress and anxiety, danger, land loss and planning blight, and physical segregation of established communities.

Overall traffic levels in Kirklees have been stable since 1999, though overall traffic levels in and out of central Huddersfield have increased by 8% between 1999 and 2009. Nearly 2 in 3 journeys are made by private car while rail use is increasing and bus use decreasing. Over-reliance on the car impacts on air quality and noise, and can promote weight gain. Children living in deprived communities are much more likely to be casualties of a road accident. Lack of affordable and appropriate transport is a barrier to employment, healthcare and social, cultural and sporting activities.

Why is this issue important?

The transport system allows goods to be transported around the country and enables people to get to work, access healthcare, education and other facilities and visit friends and family. An effective and efficient transport system is essential to the economic prosperity of the area and includes bus and rail journeys, cycling, walking and car travel. It is estimated that 10% to 15% of car trips at peak times could be made by alternative, more sustainable types of transport, or replaced by the use of electronic communication¹.

One of the strategic objectives of the LDF Core Strategy is to “improve transport links within and between Kirklees towns and with neighbouring towns and cities, giving priority to public transport, to commercial traffic and cycling and walking”. This aims to realise the vision where “Kirklees residents have convenient and safe access to jobs, shops, services, education, good community facilities and open spaces”. Transport can also play a greater role in helping to tackle inequalities in income, education attainment and health¹.

People’s transport choices have a significant impact on the environment and can influence their own health in a variety of ways (see physical activity section)². Improving access to cycling and pedestrian routes and public transport can influence travel patterns and

improve health by challenging the “obesogenic” environment and increasingly sedentary lifestyles (see obesity section). Over-reliance on cars contributes to physical inactivity³.

Recorded patronage at North Trans-Pennine rail stations has increased 140% between 2002-03 and 2010-11. At Kirklees rail stations along the Penistone Line over the same period there was an increase of 124%. By contrast bus use continued to fall across West Yorkshire⁴.

Air quality is also a key impact of transport systems. Levels of transport related pollutants, which impact on health, led to the identification of two Air Quality Management Areas in Kirklees, one at the Bradley Road-Cooper Bridge area of the A62, and the other at Scout Hill on the A644⁵.

Access to transport

Transport and connectivity affect people's access to employment, healthcare, education, shopping, recreation and social networks. In 2008, 82% of residents reached employment within 30 minutes by public transport, similar to comparable Local Authorities in the region. For services, 72% of residents could reach a hospital within 30 minutes by public transport³. 1 in 3 (31%) people without a car have difficulties travelling to their local hospital compared to 1 in 5 (17%) who own a car⁵.

Other inequalities are caused by access to the transport system itself or to the level of service provided by the system. Transport facilities need to be accessible for key services at a reasonable cost, in a reasonable time and with reasonable ease and safety.

What significant factors are affecting this issue?

The local patterns of housing, employment, education and other services can either increase or decrease the need for people to travel, and the greater the distances involved the more likely people are to rely on motorised transport and have complicated, expensive and time consuming journeys.

Which groups are most affected by this issue?

Accidents

The impact of transport on health inequalities is most significant when looking at injuries sustained from road traffic collisions. The recent downward trend in road traffic casualties

continued through 2011. There were 1,461 casualties overall, the lowest ever recorded in the district. Casualties are reducing across all road users, except pedal cyclists where casualties increased by 19%. All killed and seriously injured (KSI) casualties were down by 14% in 2011. Car occupants make up 39% and pedestrians make up 29% of all casualties. KSI casualties amongst those over 60 years of age were up by 15% in 2011, whilst child KSI casualties were down by 15%⁶. Overall, children from the lowest social classes are five times more likely to die in road accidents than those from the highest social class. More than 1 in 4 child pedestrian casualties happen in the 10% most deprived wards⁷.

Access to work

Nationally, 2 in 5 job seekers said lack of transport was a barrier to getting a job. 1 in 4 said that the cost of transport is a problem and 1 in 4 young people had not applied for a particular job because of transport problems⁷.

Access to learning

Those aged 16-18 years spend around £400 per year on education related transport and nearly half of them have trouble with the cost. Of all 16-24 year olds, 6% turn down training or further education opportunities because of problems with transport⁸.

Historically 100% of primary pupils in Kirklees were within 15 minutes of school and 93% of secondary pupils were within 20 minutes of school using sustainable modes of transport. This is changing with expanded catchments and transfer of schools to academy status, resulting in higher numbers of children being driven to school and less walking and cycling. This is increasing parking and congestion issues around schools and busy urban centres and is creating further congestion hot spots at major junctions that school traffic cuts across⁹. In Kirklees, 1 in 3 (38%) primary/J&I pupils in Kirklees are driven to school and over half (53%) walk. Secondary schools average 1 in 4 (24%) pupils driven and 1 in 3 (37%) walking. Less than 1% of secondary pupils cycle as their normal mode of travel to school⁹.

Access to social, cultural and sporting activities

1 in 5 (18%) people without a car find seeing friends and family difficult because of transport problems, compared with 1 in 12 (8%) car owners. People without cars are also twice as likely to find it difficult to get to leisure centres and libraries⁷.

Where is this causing greatest concern?

Whilst there are inefficiencies across the transport network affecting various places across Kirklees, in the long-term it is areas where there is most pressure for new homes and jobs or areas that require regeneration which need improvements in transport infrastructure, particularly Dewsbury and Batley¹.

In addition, there will be a need to seek investment in and around Huddersfield town centre and some of the key corridors, which link up to key areas of employment, such as the A62, A644 and A638/A652.

Views of local people

Residents from all localities feel traffic issues are very important i.e. parking, speeding traffic, unreliable buses, with the key issue being too many cars and not enough road space.

The “Your Place, Your Say” survey revealed that less than 1 in 3 (31%) residents said they were “satisfied” and 1 in 5 (22%) were “very dissatisfied” with road and pavement maintenance. “Low levels of traffic” (35%) and “good public transport links” (24%) were listed as key areas people wanted to improve¹⁰.

What could commissioners and service planners consider?

- Partnership working to improve road safety including educational projects in areas where road user casualties live.
- Improved accessibility for children, young people, parents and older people is essential to address specific transport barriers.
- Embrace emerging popularity of “active travel” initiatives and take opportunity to attract funding in this area.
- Ensure Air Quality and Noise Action Plans are implemented.
- Promote the benefits of electronic communications and smarter working to reduce congestion at peak times.
- More education and publicity campaigns to help individuals understand the impact of their choices on themselves and others.
- Ensure sub-regional and local transport strategies coherently address and embed health and wellbeing objectives to reduce and mitigate the many negative effects of the transport system whilst harnessing the benefits for all sectors of the community.

- Develop more travel training schemes, for example to help people with a disability travel independently on public transport.
- To have a vision for walking and cycling.
- Well planned regeneration and developments are essential to achieving long-term transport priorities and delivering efficient transport links, safer roads and effective walking and cycling facilities.

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