

Public Health and Local Transport Plans

Presented by:- Ian Tearle – Head of Public Policy, Devon Public Health Network.

Key Issues Highlighted: -

1. Safety - Reducing Road Traffic Accidents and Air Pollution

Road traffic accidents often result in death and serious injury to drivers, passengers, cyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists.

To improve our safety record we should aim to:

- Promote more walking/ cycling (as long as it is in areas where it is safe to do so).
- Encourage the motorist to drive more slowly.
- Improve safety awareness amongst pedestrians and cyclists.

2. Air Pollution

Air pollution is linked to acute and chronic illness e.g. respiratory disease, cancer and heart disease.

To reduce these illness statistics we must: -

- Persuade people to use alternatives to cars.
- Tackle the developing culture of inactivity / sedentary lifestyle.

3. Promoting Active Travel and Transport

Obesity has become a major health issue in the last few years linked with illness such as heart disease and diabetes. In England 13% of men and 16% of women are obese. Active travel (walking and cycling) is now accepted as an essential component of treating and preventing obesity.

4. Increasing Access

Reduced access to transport increases inequalities and limits social educational and employment opportunities. Limiting access to areas such as employment, education and services all have an impact on health. This impact of social isolation is felt strongest amongst the elderly, disabled, women, rural households and poor households. (Families that have less education and higher rates of unemployment are less likely to have access to a car, therefore there is a high dependence on public transport). Cheap, convenient and efficient public transport promotes social inclusion and accessibility to healthcare education and sports facilities.

Recommendations For The Next DLTP (2006-2011)

1 Safety - Reducing Road Traffic Accidents and Air Pollution

- Education - primarily by encouraging safer driving.
- Speed Reduction – Speed cameras are used throughout Devon.
- Environmental Modification – e.g. ‘Ironing out bends’.
- Actively encouraging a reduction in car usage.

2 Air Pollution

- Improving the public realm, making it a safe pleasant environment to walk/cycle.
- Focusing on appropriate targets - looking at promoting public transport in leisure time, not during working hours.
- Concentrating on reducing disincentives to alternative transport – Safety, cost and unpleasant environments.

3 Promoting Active Travel and Transport

- Promoting active travel such as walking and cycling.
- Improving the public realm – making environments safer/ more pleasant thus encouraging more activity.
- Encouraging active travel to schools.

4 Increasing Access

- Frequent and inexpensive reliable rural transport.
- An integrated approach to transport.

DEVON LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN – 2006-2011

- Reorganisation of existing local services to reduce the need for travel.
- Better utilisation of current forms of transport.

Handouts

The following handouts were circulated by Ian Tearle: -

- **Public Health and Local Transport Plans**
- **Progress on Public Health Targets of Local Transport Plans in the South West for 2002- 3**

Panel Discussion: -

- Disabled access must be a priority. Many of the current access barriers on/- surrounding railways can be solved with a relatively small spends. Very simple solutions can be carried out at local levels yielding effective results (e.g. ramp provision at railway stations).
- Service provision is needed close to the people who require it.
- Locate services together e.g. chemist close to the doctors.
- A priority for the next Devon Local Transport Plan is to create a more integrated transport and service system.
- We need a cultural change in how people view exercise and transport.