A Sustainable Transport Framework for the Lake District National Park

Phase One: Evidence and Analysis

Executive Summary

January 2009

Overview

The Transport Framework is being developed in between The Lake District National Park Authority and Cumbria County Council on behalf of the Lake District National Park Partnership. The project comprises 3 phases

1. gathering and assessing evidence; outlining possible solutions to problems
2. a visioning phase to outline demands and constraints for travel to & within the Park
3. option generation and programming

The scope of the framework is cast broadly and confidently over decadal timescales. It is visionary in terms of the ultimate aim of helping to deliver a transport system for the Lake District that is truly sustainable, yet pragmatic to provide a framework identifying options for doing so. The framework should provide space and opportunity for progressive thinking so that the functions of the Lake District can develop into the future in ways that maintain and enhance the qualities of the protected landscape. It aims to align policy priorities of the partner organisations and help to deliver the Vision for the National Park.

This summary is of Phase 1.
The first phase has focussed on establishing an evidenced-based framework on which the subsequent phases are to be developed. This has involved

• Collation and analysis of a wide range of existing data and information relating to travel and transport in the Lake District including GIS analysis and data presentation
• Comprehensive stakeholder engagement through over 30 in-depth one to one interviews, and a one day stakeholder workshop
  Together, these have determined the ‘challenges’ (problems) of transport in the national park, as well as opportunities for solutions and constraints
• Case study research to look at places overseas which have experienced similar transport problems and issues to the Lake District National Park, the solutions that have been introduced, and the degree of success they have had.
• Synthesis of these to provide a framework in which to develop a transport system that will help to deliver a sustainable Lake District.
• Identifying seven front-running sets of solutions.

Steer Davies Gleave (consultants) were commissioned to carry out the work during 2008. It was funded by the Northwest Regional Development Agency and managed by a steering group comprising representatives from the Lake District National Park Authority, Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Tourism, the Northwest Development Agency and Cumbria Vision.

Phase 1 has largely focused on visitor travel, rather than travel by residents, business travel, or goods/freight travel. Subsequent phases will provide opportunities to integrate these other demands with the visitor-focused findings presented here.

This study comes at an important time for the Lake District. Its vision coupled with the Low Carbon Lakeland agenda resonates with shifts in the national policy context towards more integrated planning with a focus on transport’s contribution to wider economic, social and environmental outcomes. External factors, in particular the price of oil, but also the growing concern over climate change, look set to strongly influence both travel and tourism trends. Furthermore, with the development of the County’s third Local Transport Plan and the forthcoming Regional Strategy – RS2010 – there is a need for a clear vision of the future for transport in the Park.

**Approach**

Three main approaches were taken to build the evidence base.

**Data collation and analysis**

The available data relating to the following was collated, analysed and presented to describe the existing transport provision and identify transport issues and problems. The types of information included

- **Contextual data** – socio-demographic information and other census data
- **Public transport** – areas and routes served by different types public transport, information on quality of vehicles, timings and fares
- **Car parking** – numbers of spaces and attendant issues
- **Road traffic** – traffic levels, congestion
- **Cycling** – location of routes and services
- **Visitors and visitor travel.**

While some of these datasets are of high quality, this process exposed gaps and limits in various data areas and places. For instance, it is not known how many non-regulated parking spaces exist, nor how many vehicles enter and leave the Park. In some cases, these gaps may provide problems in future planning as an evidence base simply does not exist. The exercise will help to inform the priorities for future monitoring.
Stakeholder consultation
Two methods of stakeholder consultation were undertaken: in-depth interviews and a workshop.

Over 30 key stakeholders were interviewed for this study between March and May 2008. The aim of each interview was to establish the stakeholders’ opinions about key transport problems and issues, the cause of those problems, the impacts they have, evidence that relates to the problems, potential solutions, any barriers to the solutions and suggestions as to how they might be overcome. Most interviews were undertaken by telephone with a small number done in face to face meetings. Interviews were undertaken with representatives from a wide range of organisations – including transport providers, tourism, conservation/heritage and economic development organisations, attraction providers, hoteliers and key employers.

In addition, 34 stakeholders representing 23 different organisations took up invitations to attend a day-long workshop. The aims were to
- describe and discuss the work undertaken to date which identified the problems, issues and evidence
- debate the objectives for the Sustainable Transport Framework
- court opinions and debate potential transport solutions for the National Park
- identify any other relevant information for the Transport Framework
- start to develop consensus about the way forward.

Researching good practice elsewhere
A number of case studies from around the world were researched to identify best practice examples of how the issue of increasing traffic levels in popular tourist destinations are being addressed, and to see what lessons could be learnt and potentially applied to the Lake District context. A long list of examples was initially produced, from which four case studies were chosen for more detailed research. These were
- Zion National Park, Utah, USA – where car restraint and provision of alternative shuttle services has been successfully implemented to provide visitor access to a sensitive canyon area
- Acadia National Park, Maine, USA – where better use of parking provision and transport services has been achieved using intelligent information systems
- Sintra, Portugal – where a range of sustainable travel initiatives for visitors has been implemented, including the establishment of mobility centres to provide visitors with personal tourist and mobility advice
- Werfenweng, Austria – where visitors are encouraged to leave their cars at the hotel with the provision of a travel card for the (improved) public transport services.
3. Study outputs

The outputs of Phase one are presented in two reports.

**Report 1: Problem identification, data and evidence base**

Report 1 is a presentation of the problems and challenges for transport in the Lake District. It pulls together and presents the available data and evidence as a reference resource and provides the foundation on which the transport framework is developed in Report 2.

Some key characteristics of the Lake District are summarised to provide a useful context for understanding the data and information subsequently presented. These are complemented by a summary of the current policy context, existing transport provision, and an appreciation of the role of visitors in the Lake District.

The process of problem identification is described and presented in the following themes:
- Traffic levels and congestion
- Public transport services within the Lake District
- Public transport to the Lake District
- Provision for cyclists
- Car parking
- Visitors and visitor travel.

The concluding part of each chapter provides a summary of the problems relating to each of these themes. These sections are useful in providing a synthesis of what the evidence and opinions show, and sometimes identify differences between perceptions and evidence. For instance, the perception of traffic congestion is significantly greater than the evidence suggests, whereas the perception of bus fare levels on core routes seems to agree with the evidence. Acknowledging such issues will be important as subsequent phases of the project unfold.

These problems are then drawn together into a series of key conclusions, which are a key link between the evidence-based Report 1 and the framework development in Report 2.

Appended to Report 1 are a table summarising the data and evidence collated for this study, a list of the organisations with whom one to one interviews were undertaken, attendees of the stakeholder workshop and outlines of the good practice case studies.

**Report 2: Developing our aspirations for transport in the Lake District**

Report 2 draws on the evidence, problems and issues presented and identified in Report 1 to develop a framework in which local and regional transport solutions can be developed. The framework attempts to outline a wide range of options from which the solutions can be drawn, and also highlights some front running solutions. These are informed by the opportunities and constraints identified in Report 1.
The Framework is structured using a similar concept of ‘network layering’ and ‘nodes’ which is used in both the Eddington report and Towards a Sustainable Transport System, as illustrated below. The outcomes are presented as columns intersecting with the (transport) needs of connecting key places, accessing the landscape, getting around the towns, and accessing the Lake District (in rows). The range of possible options which relate to each of these layers makes up the framework itself.

An indication of the timescales for the implementation of each option is suggested by:
- options in green are short term (up to 5 years),
- options in amber are medium term (5-15 years) and
- options in red are long term options (15+ years).

It is not intended that the options included in the Framework table are seen as comprehensive (there will be more), essential, feasible or of equivalent importance. Many are complementary and indeed would be more effective if implemented as packages, and some are potentially contradictory as presented. Their inclusion here is to illustrate the breadth and nature of options that are a logical result of the evidence gathering and problem identification process of this work. It is the function of subsequent phases – focussing on visioning, option generation and programming – to determine how these options may contribute to the transport solutions for the Lake District.

However, Report 2 does identify a number of front-running solutions which are felt to be worthy of consideration, based on the options identified in the framework. It is considered that these are likely to have the greatest impact in addressing the problems identified, and which are likely to be relatively easy to implement. They do not preclude the development of solutions and initiative that emerge from the subsequent phases. They comprise:

1. A high profile parking project to drive a consensus for common branding, pricing and approach to car parking in the Park among all providers
2. A project concentrating on developing and promoting a sustainable travel pilot in the Bowness and Windemere area and waterfront
3. Marketing existing sustainable travel opportunities in the Lake District, focusing on accommodation providers and tourist attractions
4. Developing a sustainable travel ‘hub’ at Keswick
5. A marketing project - development of a Lake District ‘brand’, focused around keeping the lake district area the special place it is
6. Rolling out the Cross Lakes Experience model to other areas - Keswick/Derwentwater/Whinlatter Forest
7. Developing a Personal Travel Planning service for visitors (either pre-visit or during visit)

Principles underlying these solutions and details of what they would involve are outlined in the report.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall theme from 2030 vision</th>
<th>PROSPEROUS ECONOMY</th>
<th>WORLD CLASS VISITOR EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>VIBRANT COMMUNITIES</th>
<th>A SPECTACULAR LANDSCAPE</th>
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</table>
| Accessing the Lake district | Improve the Coastal line - Sunday service  
Introduce ‘Rail Miles’ incentive scheme | Better, coordinated, web-based information on accessing the Lakes  
Holidays with a strong sustainable theme  
Encourage accommodation providers to offer pick up services from rail stations | Help communities to grow and thrive; reduced reliance on cars where possible | Enhance and protect and make Park a leader in lowering carbon emissions |
| Connecting key places | Keeping roads free for local businesses  
Bus services to serve the economy (late/shift services)  
Ensure a public transport network that matches strategic network  
New light rail | Better public transport interchange  
Easy access real time public transport information  
Simplify ticketing options  
Lake District travel tourist card  
New ways of providing bus tickets to visitors  
Establish mobility centres in key locations | Good public transport in and out of the Lake District | Raise sustainable and low carbon themes in marketing the Lake District |
| Getting around the towns | Strategic Park & Ride sites  
Parking management which encourages visitors to stay for longer  
Better quality urban realm | Tourist attractions: offering discounts if visitors arrive on public transport, by bike  
Better quality urban realm  
Intelligent parking information  
Develop and market better transport links to attractions  
Exploit bus-walk opportunities | Parking that allows local business to thrive through proactive management  
Develop area (town) travel plans  
Better walking and cycling routes | Better cycle infrastructure - quiet lanes and segregated routes  
Point to point cycle hire schemes |
| Accessing the landscape | Ensure visitors pay a fair price to access the landscape that protects Monorail services | Manage car users decisions regarding parking and access  
Intelligent parking information  
Personal Travel Planning (PTP) for visitors  
Develop accommodation providers as sustainable travel marketing collateral  
Demand responsive transport services/shared taxis for visitors  
Roll out Cross Lakes Experience model | | Close specific roads at specific times  
Active management of narrow roads  
Introduce Sunday Cycle Routes on roads closed to through traffic  
Price key roads  
Cordon charge around the park |