

Norfolk
Coast



Project

Norfolk Coast AONB Community Conference Report 24th October 2000



**The Norfolk Coast
Landscape**



Norfolk Coast Partnership

The Norfolk Coast Partnership was set up in 1991 (as the Norfolk Coast Project) to promote the sustainable use of the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and to:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area
- To facilitate and enhance the public enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the area.
- To provide sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the areas natural beauty.

We receive funding from the Countryside Agency, Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.

We work in close partnership with many organisations and individuals who have an interest in the area. This umbrella role is vital to enabling the Partnership to solve issues facing the area in an effective and balanced way.

Aim of the 2001 Conference

To raise awareness of the many traffic and transport issues in the Norfolk Coast AONB and the Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy. To provide information, create understanding and promote thought about rural transport through a national, regional, local and individual perspective.

Why transport?

Norfolk Coast Partnership work in the early 1990s identified the “peace and tranquillity” of the Norfolk Coast as one of the main attractions of living and visiting the area. The Norfolk Coast Partnership is aware that transport and traffic issues are high on many local agendas.

Audience

The audience is invited from local, regional and national interest groups and individuals, Norfolk Coast Partnership, Councillors and local authority officers, local parishes, conservation and countryside management agencies.

TRANSPORT

- Going somewhere?

4th Annual Norfolk Coast AONB Community Conference

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The National Perspective

Colin Speakman - Transport for Leisure

Colin Speakman is Managing Director of Transport for Leisure, a small specialist consultancy that deals with a wide range of projects relating to sustainable transport in the countryside – walking, cycling, public transport. It also deals with the related issues of visible management, especially in protected landscapes. Since 1987, Transport for Leisure has operated a recreational transport advisory service for the Countryside Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales. Colin is also a writer of many books, mainly about the outdoors, and the joint secretary of the Yorkshire Dales Society

My company was actually involved in the Norfolk Coast AONB about eight years ago. I had a small input into your excellent transport strategy, so it's lovely to find so many good things happening. In 1993 we found it very difficult to get around by public transport – the one bus out of Wells to Norwich left at nine o'clock and got into Norwich at half past ten with about twenty people having to stand. It was the only bus you had! Now you've got an hourly bus service – so things do improve!

I will try to put transport into context and I'm not going to embarrass anybody tonight by asking how many people came by car but I'd be intrigued to find out if anybody actually came here on a bicycle or walked or indeed on the bus – I suspect very few.

Well, what is the problem? Something like 80-85% of people in areas like Norfolk have access to a car, So is it really just a tiny problem of a small

minority which sooner or later will go away when everybody has a car and children are born with a left clutch pedal instead of a foot?

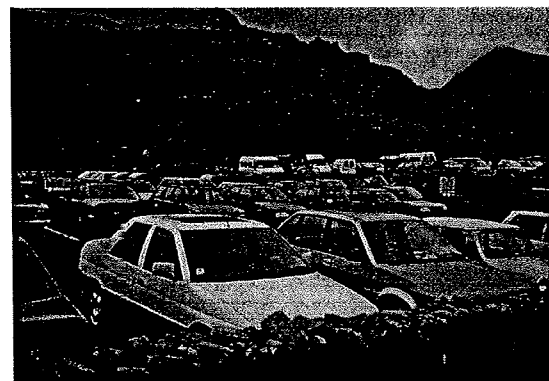
It is a problem, and there are two prime reasons I want to talk about tonight:

- the environment
- the issue of social inclusion.

One effect the car has on the environment is the visual impact of the car in special

landscapes. A beautiful village such as Castleton in the heart of the Peak District on a fine day is really a kind of linear car park. Even where you do have car parks, the car park itself can be an intrusion on the landscape. This is the heart of Snowdonia; what an impact that masses of cars makes on an otherwise unspoilt landscape! In a way, the finer, the more beautiful, the remoter the landscape, the greater the impact.

So there is the visual impact that our cars have on the landscape. But there are other affects too such as air pollution. If you drove here to Holt from Norwich your car would have put out something like 16 kg of the key greenhouse gas – carbon dioxide – as well as quite a bit of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide (acic rain), volatile



hydrocarbons that cause cancer – all finding their way into the atmosphere. Again you may not think it's a problem but through the impact of global warming – we've seen this incredibly warm October –it's lovely in some respects, but what about the rain that may follow? Our transport, is the fastest-rising cause of this kind of pollution in Britain.



There's also the problem of the impact traffic has on other people's enjoyment of the countryside. Would you ride a bicycle or even walk along the busy A6, in the heart of the Peak District? Norfolk, is one of the leading areas in the UK in the

concept of Quiet Lanes, trying to reclaim the roads for walkers and cyclists and horse-riders as well as cars. Bravo to all that you're doing here in Norfolk on your Quiet Lanes project and please continue the excellent work!

One thing I can't show on a slide is the fourth problem, noise pollution, which can carry up to a couple of kilometres from even a minor road. The loss of the peace and tranquillity of the Norfolk Coast is easily achieved. Wherever there's a major road, wherever there's traffic, you lose that special quality of the landscape through a barrier of noise.

Finally, congestion. This is a bank holiday in the Peak District when the traffic actually gridlocked for about a quarter of an hour. The awful news is that, according to the Countryside Agency we can expect that if current trends continue traffic growth will be something like 250%, i.e. two and a half times as much traffic, particularly in rural areas and protected landscapes like the Norfolk Coast. This means that Bank Holiday conditions will not only be just occasional, they'll be almost daily. The kind of problems we see on certain occasions and certain places in the countryside will become the normal pattern, creating problems for local people as well as visitors.



The second major problem affects those people who don't have the use of the car. About 25% of the UK population (we're waiting for the 2001 census to confirm this) don't have a car in their household. You may still have a car in your household but – if you're a teenager or an older person, and possibly female, because less women have driving licences than men you may not have access to that car. The reduction in the rail network in the 1960s and then in the 1980s the loss of the bus network to these people is serious.

This is Tintern Station in the Wye Valley, which used to have a local railway line. It's now a country park with a car park – ironically you can't get there very easily if you don't have a car whereas it used to be part of a good local rail service.



In fact, we have created a new class of transport poor.

However the good news is that over the last two or three years the trends have been dramatically reversed. The Government has put a great deal of new money into rural bus services, particularly through the Rural Bus Grant, All over Britain there are new bus services, sometimes very good quality services appearing -Norfolk County Council is a case in point. Many routes that had one or two buses a day now have hourly or even half-hourly services.

However there are still huge gaps in provision and certainly I suspect it would be very difficult to get out of Holt in the evenings or Sundays. This is exactly the time people need transport if they're going to make their leisure journeys.

I think the real problem now isn't so much the physical fact that there isn't any transport, it's what I would call the psychological barriers. Even when you get a decent bus service many people simply will not use them. They regard it as if – to quote the immortal phrase of a certain Prime Minister –you're 26 and still travelling on a bus, you've failed! Well, I've failed, because I don't own a car! People regard their cars as status symbols and their whole lifestyle is built round the motor car.

Now, many of you here may be in that position, you could not live the kind of life you live –without the car. Why not, you have the choice –In a way it almost becomes a situation where your life depends on it. What would happen if it wasn't there?

The medical profession is now looking at our transport habits in a very different way. Many doctors are now saying that the second most serious threat to human health after cigarettes is the car. Many degenerative conditions – heart disease, strokes, osteoporosis, and cancers – are actually linked to lack of effective exercise coinciding with the rise in car ownership. Children are no longer walking or cycling to school, mainly because their parents are terrified of the traffic. People are using their car for even short journeys, cycling is regarded as too dangerous, and we're becoming a worryingly inactive population, so much so that doctors are predicting a rapid growth of these awful diseases unless we change our lifestyles.

So, what can be done both for our personal health and for the environment, to change things? Obviously we can, in various ways, encourage people to get out and exercise themselves, walking in particular – there's a Walking for Health campaign being promoted by the British Heart Foundation and the Countryside Agency – but also it's a question of changing attitudes.

We need for example, to look at the travel facilities available in the countryside, such as easy, safe access people need to have to bus stops with well lit shelters. Bus priority schemes in towns and villages and things like Quality Bus partnerships partly address this by providing new infrastructure to complement new high-quality bus services. Improvements at bus stations, making them safer, better places to use, improving publicity and promotion in various ways all help. People almost need to be persuaded back to using public transport, walking and cycling. One of the exciting things is developing the idea of the need to reclaim the road network and may mean closing roads in one or two parts of Britain. It may involve setting up national parks Quiet Lanes and Green Ways or other similar schemes.

The interesting and important thing about all these measures that there is now a very important mechanism for achieving them through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) .One has to pay tribute to the thinking that's gone on in local authorities, national government, the Countryside Agency etc.—. I think one of the themes for this evening is that your local LTP is an immensely important document that you can influence. You can have a profound effect on the way transport is developed and the way the road systems are managed over the next decade. All kinds of things can be achieved through the LTP – better bus services, better infrastructure, quiet roads, various partnerships, the community rail partnerships. I actually got here today on the Bittern Line from Norwich, which has excellent publicity and promotional material.

It's also a question of changing the way people drive and use their cars. Pioneering work has been done in areas like Hampshire where they are changing the way traffic is managed in the countryside. Fairly simple stuff done in the 70s and 80s such as lowering speed limits, putting in rumble strips and chicanes and erecting signs with a variety of messages such as Speed Kills – Kill your Speed has had a big impact on thinking.

One of the most exciting recent schemes is in the Sussex Downs AONB, where we've been working on a 'tourism without traffic' project for the last year or so. This is all about persuading people to come to East Sussex on the excellent bus and rail network and to leave their cars behind. They can use the Cuckmere Rambler, which, interestingly enough, is a community transport service, which also provides an excellent tourist service at weekends, picking up walkers from the local railway station. The whole thrust of this project is to persuade people either to come entirely without their cars and have a wonderful car-free break, a release from stress of driving and all the rest of it, or, if they must come by car, leave it in a well-screened car park. There is a car park with solar powered ticket machines and the money generated is used to support traffic management and better bus services. So, in other words, the 'pale green' option persuaded people, even those who feel they've got to use their cars most of the time, to leave the car when they arrive and enjoy a whole variety of different things. I'm sure that's something that has tremendous relevance for what could happen on the Norfolk Coast.

We need to make a real effort to persuade people to understand and value the benefit, for example, of walking linear routes. Walking one way along the coastal footpath for example and being able to use the bus back. The problem is, people can't understand the timetable. The Peak District National Park help

you by showing you a map where the buses go, where the paths are, and a little timetable at the top which tells you: 'Buses leave this stop at ...'. This is much easier to understand.

North York Moors National Park actually have someone on duty when the Moors bus arrives from the cities, who tells you which connecting bus to catch, and suggests various walks and things you can do which makes it easier. We have to give people confidence, because people have lost confidence in public transport. Telling people in simple ways.

It's really all about achieving cultural change, giving messages that people can recognise. It's a car-free, carefree way you travel by train into the countryside - says a poster Peak District. Just as they do here on the Bittern Line by selling the railway journey as an experience in itself. It's about

- Selling rail journeys and bus journeys as a super way of getting out and exploring the countryside.
- Designing linear walks that tie in with the train services or the bus services, special bus links, so that it becomes an easy to use, properly put-together service.

Interestingly, these schemes are now attracting people out of their cars as well as supplying services to people that don't have cars. So quality services can really work.

Another example is in the Bavarian Forest National Park in southern Germany where a superb gas-powered integrated bus network also carries bicycles. You arrive in your car and as you put your money in the car park ticket machine you're presented with a bus timetable and all kinds of information and even a competition to get visitors to suggest new ideas for getting around without a car, to be mobile – 'mobil ohne auto'. (Travel without the car)

My theme is that whilst, thanks to much more generous Government support for rural transport, we're getting the country buses back, and some excellent innovative schemes from Local Transport Plan, maybe the real battleground for the next ten years is changing peoples' hearts and minds.

How do we get the message across not only to other people out there, but to ourselves? Perhaps one of the key questions to think about is our own travel habits and the way we use the car. We don't have to give up the car, but perhaps reorganise our own lifestyles to become less car-dependent. This will not only improve the environment but also improve your health. And if we do so, we will be much more likely to influence and persuade them to travel in more environmentally sustainable ways.

The Local Perspective

Ian Shepherd - Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)

Ian Shepherd is chairman of the local branch of the Norfolk Society and a member of the CPRE for over ten years. Ian has only recently stepped down after five years as county chairman of the Norfolk Society but maintains his role as chairman of the North Norfolk branch. He is also involved at the regional level of CPRE and at a national level as a member of their policy committee.

Perhaps we're not too different from the rest of the country here in Norfolk, but we do have some special factors. There is a great deal of pressure and interest from visitors to the Norfolk Coast. There are also organised business interests, and the interests of the local rural economy - they may not always be the same - they both have a great effect on the transport of the area. Perhaps what's happened over recent years in the food supply industry is a good example of that.

There are many transport impacts and we are aware there are downsides in terms of transport as well as benefits. As individuals we all feel the pressure of traffic in our villages and our countryside. Perhaps we all feel a loss of tranquillity in the countryside compared with what we had many years ago. There is an impact on the landscape through signing or new highways infrastructure - an impact on nature conservation, and again the rural local economy. There's potentially a 'suck-out' effect on the economy of the area with improvements in transport as well as, I hope, a 'suck-in' effect.

I'd like to make some links between what will be happening regionally, nationally, and the impact on Norfolk over the next few years. I think that transport, in common with many other planning issues, is a series of individual questions to be resolved, schemes and proposals. It is easy to lose sight of the cumulative impact of these. Each looked at individually may not at first appear significant but collectively there may be a significant effect over a period of time.

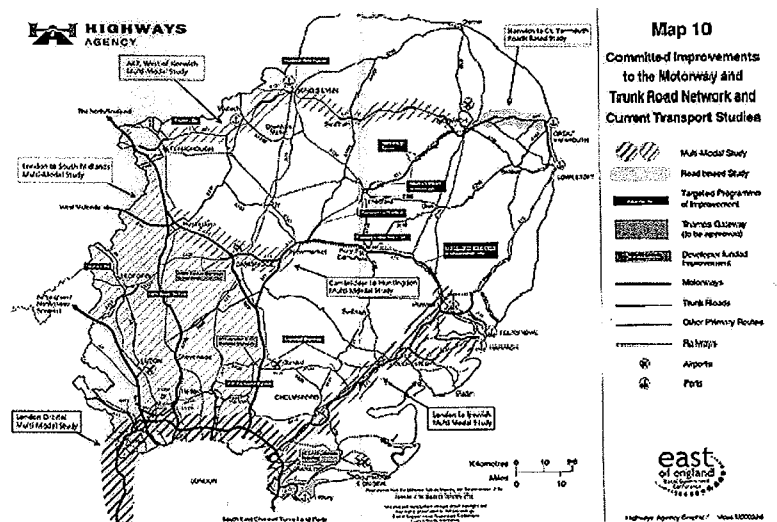
This is drawn from the draft regional transport strategy, which has just been out to consultation, and will form an East of England six-county transport strategy in a couple of years' time.

First of all, as you know, the A11 dualling will be

CPRE - Managing traffic in the countryside.

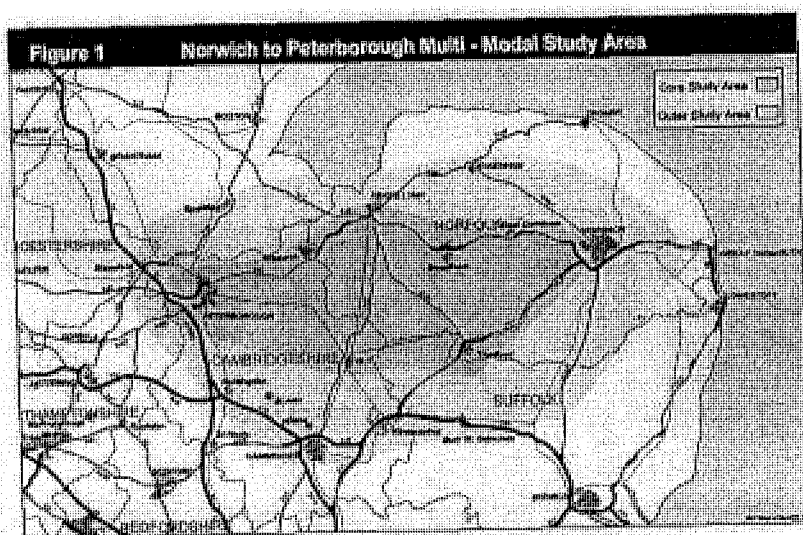
Highlights that:

- since 1997 traffic levels have risen twice as fast on rural as on urban roads.
- current predictions are for future traffic levels and congestion to rise faster in rural than urban areas.
- safety on rural roads lags behind that in towns and cities.
- rising traffic levels and speeding are one of the most significant changes to rural life to have occurred in the last decade.
- an area of tranquil countryside almost the size of Wales has been lost in the last 30 years with rising traffic levels and new road building a major factor.



completed to Norwich in three sections over the next five years. There are a lot of other transport-related studies going on as well: the A12 down in the London area round about the M25; a bit nearer home the Cambridge/Huntingdon multi-modal study. The steering group for that study has just recommended there that we go from two lanes to three lanes on the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon. That will affect not only Cambridge as a hot spot economically but business along the route down to the ports at Felixstowe and Harwich.

Nearer to home again, those who read the EDP will see with some shrieks of horror and dismay that the steering group reported on the road study from Norwich to Yarmouth and have recommended dualling in one section but not the Acle Straight. They also introduced suggestions for a package of improvements for safety at crossroads as well as better train and better bus communications between Norwich and Yarmouth.



Another multi-modal study is starting now looking at the A47 from the A1 Peterborough to Norwich, and I think there is a lot of pressure for that road to be made dual carriageway or at least improvements to be made along the whole length. There's inevitably going to be a considerable amount of road building, which is going to have an impact on Norfolk and the amount of traffic coming into Norfolk.

At county level we have a number of area strategies: there'll be one for Norwich, one for the Norfolk Coast area, one for the Broads and so on, and one for the rural areas. What's happening locally in transport also makes a difference, so you're linked to what's happening in the region as well with regard to improvements. The new administration at County Hall is reviving the idea, for example, of a northern distributor route around the north of Norwich, which will give much easier access to the north-east of Norfolk, so reducing the buffering effect of Norwich to this area of coast

If you look at this total of what may happen over the next five to ten years, you're going to see greatly increasing traffic levels in Norfolk. All these things will cumulatively add up and you will find perhaps that in ten years' time you may have a population of 20 to 25 million under two hours' drive from Norfolk and the Norfolk Coast and put it under much more traffic pressure. I think we need not necessarily try and stop all these schemes but we need to think of what the impacts might be and start planning for it now.

One danger may be that we will become a kind of day-trip land, because so many people can get here within two hours. That will have not only an impact on the landscape but on the local economy, because day-trippers spend less per head than longer stayers do. Those interested in rural issues like second homes might find that the pressure's not going

to lessen off., it's probably going to increase. I mentioned the suck-out effects as well as drawing business in, so this may be another thing that people may want to think about.

So these are the issues which we should think about in a national and regional context and what the sum effect may be over a period of time.

At a recent conference the national CPRE spokesman highlighted some things he felt were happening in the countryside and the impact on rural areas - I think we'll see greater than national average figures on the Norfolk Coast because of the effects I've mentioned. It's a very attractive area and road 'improvements' will considerably shorten the travel time for very large numbers of people. The safety record is worse on rural roads than urban roads and the average speed is slower. Increases in traffic levels will have an impact on these aspects of transport.

In a recent Women's Institute survey on the changing village, the third most mentioned factor was people's perception of an increase in traffic, and particularly concerns for speeding and heavy traffic.

One aspect of particular importance to the Norfolk Society and CPRE as a whole is signing and highways infrastructure in the countryside. This can radically change the look of the landscape very quickly, and it happens all over the country. The Government is consulting at present on regulations for signing and there is a case of rural proofing. They should not necessarily advocate the same things used in the urban situation. Can we do better or do different in the countryside?

The Government has actually walked away from trying to reduce traffic levels, trying to halt the growth. It's a very difficult political hot potato, but people ought to try and be brave enough to try some new methods. Possibly by introducing incentives. It will be up to individual counties to try and do something - they're not going to get a lot of national support at present.

CPRE and the Norfolk Society have been very keen from the outset on quiet lanes, and I personally believe it's a tremendously important initiative. It does call for a change of attitudes, but if we're going to actually see some relief from inevitably increasing traffic levels in the countryside, quiet lanes must be high up on the list of the things we try and make effective.

It may be in Norfolk we should be looking for better connections between market towns, the centre for activity in the rural hinterland. Our organisation is not particularly enthused by road building. OK, you do it, but you don't do it all over the place or too much and that includes dualling as well as new roads. Planning, of course it is very important to try to minimise the transport movements arising from any new developments.

Speed limits are perhaps a hot issue, but I think there's a case for saying that in country lanes, unclassified roads and C roads, you have 40mph not 60mph limits. In villages, I think the County Council - I may be corrected here - takes the view that you shouldn't go

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| <p style="text-align: center;">TRANSPORT AND QUALITY OF LIFE. <u>Transport and Access: Wants/Needs.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resident: personal mobility/access for employment, learning, services, leisure.• Visitor: day trip - time to travel to the area. longer term - ease of moving around, and relatively low traffic density.• Business: variable, but strong emphasis on road network. <p><u>Transport Impacts.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals and communities.• Tranquillity.• Landscapes and wider countryside.• Sites of nature conservation.• Rural, local economy. |
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for blanket 30mph, it depends on the circumstances. There are other views I know get letters from those who say speed limits are a waste of time and it's all down to driver education and driving the appropriate limits. I would argue again there's a case for 30mph as standard in villages. You should see the sign as you enter the village, you do 30mph and there are no repeater signs. We're trying to minimise the signage.

People travelling extremely fast produce a greater noise impact. They also introduce a physical fear and intimidation. People are reluctant to cycle and walk because they're aware that some people might be travelling very fast. There may not be enough police to enforce the speed limits, but it's more of a long-term cultural thing. You try and work to persuade people to reduce their speed where appropriate because overall it is a sensible thing to do.

What can you do as an individual? We're all aware that we use a car a lot, almost have to in rural areas. How can we organise ourselves and think through what we do in our everyday business to minimise the use? Bill Young, our long-term colleague in CPRE and a district councillor highlighted a good example of this. When he got people coming to him saying 'they' ought to do something about so-and-so, his response used to be: 'Well, you are part of the "they".'

Thank you.

WHAT TO DO?

Resident as an Individual.

- How much can you focus around a journey, i.e. no. of tasks.
- Shopping - heavy stuff on a "car day"; otherwise walk/cycle
- Support and use Quiet Lanes, for leisure and services.
- Support and use Safe Routes to schools.
- Buy local produce.

Resident as a Lobbyist.

- Improved public transport, e.g. market towns to hinterland.
- Incentives to get out of the car.
- Shorten the food chain, pressurise major supermarkets.
- Tourism - look for "stayers", especially overseas.
- Retention local services - "rural proofing".
- Promoting the access and use of ICT.

Question and Answer session:

Question: There hasn't been any discussion yet about freight traffic - it's felt that freight traffic can have a serious effect on the fabric of villages.

Colin Speakman: Obviously one great failure at the moment is rail freight, and the whole Railtrack business. We were promised a few years ago that the railways would take more of our freight. Probably the answer is something that's already happening in Norfolk. A really good road hierarchy system where you decide which roads are suitable for which kind of traffic and you carry out various measures, including control of the speed and the size of traffic on most minor roads. A local authority has tremendous powers to control the size and the weight and speed of traffic. They're not always used but you do have huge problems over things like farm delivery and the tendency for ever-larger delivery vans. Now ideally we could almost do with a system of trans-shipment. Where local deliveries in certain sensitive areas like the AONB have to be on certain-sized vehicles and if they're too large they have to be put onto a smaller vehicle for local delivery. This is a national problem and, I know one that is getting increasingly worse.

Ian Shepherd: I think route hierarchy is the best we've got at the moment, but it still leaves you with the problem of access. I think in rural areas, and not least in Norfolk, a lot of it is due to the centralisation of the agri-foods business. Farmers actually selling in bulk to supermarkets who process many miles away and then ship it back again. I would like to think that it's not beyond the wit of us all collectively to try move to a much closer primary processing of food products near to where it's produced. Cut out some of this distribution and then you could perhaps get back to smaller vehicles. I think we will still have supermarkets but perhaps get them to change of the way they run the food chain. It's a long-term thing again.

Question: How does Ian reconcile his point about safety with his point about not building new roads, because so many of our roads in the rural areas go back to 1900 if not before and have now taken their toll from increased traffic levels and are increasingly dangerous. Surely they do require modernisation?

Ian Shepherd: You could argue that, I think, on a number of the main roads, the A routes, trunk routes and where there's dualling going on now. I think in terms of the safety thing, it really comes down to individual drivers. I think in terms of country lanes I'm very much against improvements, which can actually make things more dangerous because people go faster. It's better to perhaps use some of the natural traffic calming you've got built into many country roads than try and make alterations. Speed and careless driving are the biggest factors in traffic accidents. Speed is a particular sort of inappropriate driving as it leads to more serious injuries and inhibits walkers and cyclists by introducing a fear factor. Could we change the culture of speed that has developed in Britain over the last twenty or thirty years? I find it quite frightening, the number of adverts you see on television which

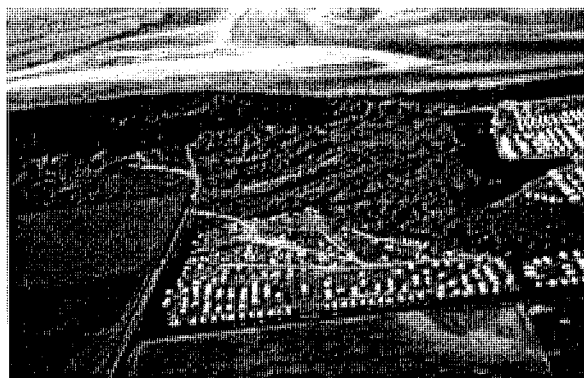
are promoting almost irresponsible driving. They always use backgrounds of beautiful open countryside to have a mad car chase. It's such a huge problem, because we've got a generation of people who will boast how little time it took to get from Edgefield to Holt. I think people seem to feel that these days every road must be straight and wide and when they get to a bend they go straight across it into a field or hit somebody coming the other way. So are we going to go straighten out every road in the countryside? They'll probably just go faster and still have accidents. I think a lot of it does come down to changing thirty or forty years of car culture; we can't do without the car in rural areas, but we have to be more sensitive to the downsides and more careful.

The Norfolk Coast Partnership

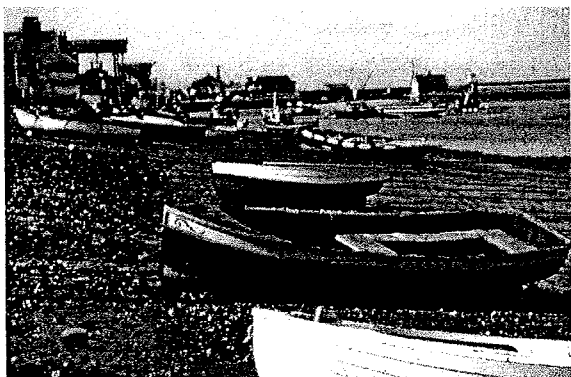
Tim Venes - Norfolk Coast AONB Officer

The Norfolk Coast Project was set up in 1991 to promote sustainable management of the Norfolk Coast AONB. It was a partnership between the then Countryside Commission and local councils with a remit to sustain landscape quality. The AONB is primarily a landscape designation. It was also to sustain the wildlife interest of the area - what we now call 'biodiversity' and about promoting sustainable public enjoyment. Yes, we want people to enjoy the area, but we don't want them to enjoy it in ways that are going to destroy its very special qualities. Finally it was also to promote sustainable social and economic development. We don't expect the area to stay the same - to be preserved in aspic - but we want development that maintains the character of the area and to be sustainable in its own right.

One of the strong motivations for setting up the project, was a perception that during the 1980s visitor pressures were having an effect on the special character of the area. It had been, as you know, a popular holiday area for many years before the Norfolk Coast Project was set up, before it became an AONB. Developments like this at Pinewoods had been attracting people for quite a long time. So there were some areas which already had quite large numbers of visitors. There were other areas, such as at Morston, which had been relatively quiet but were beginning to be affected by increasing numbers of visitors. Not just the number of visitors but how they got there - generally in their cars. So there were very real concerns. There were, and there still are, other pressures, so it obviously is not just an area that's only subject to pressure from visitors and traffic.

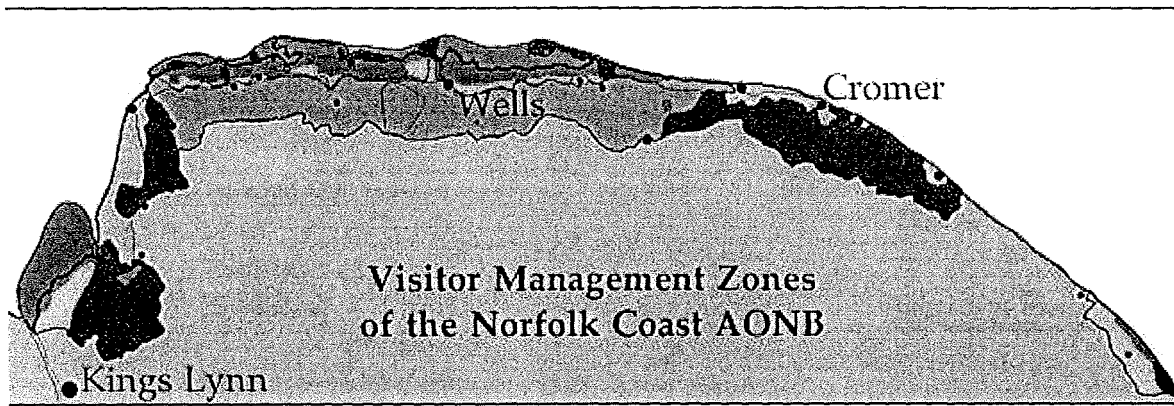


One of the pressures is the decline in traditional industries. For example, Wells used to be a busy port with a thriving fishing industry, but now tourism is much more important. Of course agricultural change has affected all rural areas and the landscape of rural areas, and the Norfolk Coast AONB is no exception to that.



When the Project was founded in 1991 a lot of early consultation and survey work was done with partners and local communities that demonstrated that the effects of visitors were a real concern. That included the effects of the increase in traffic associated with visitors. So visitor management

was seen as a priority issue, and the Visitor Management Strategy for the Norfolk Coast was published in 1995 after wide consultation. It was a partnership strategy and wasn't something that the Norfolk Coast Project staff working in Wells produced out of their own heads. It was produced through a lot of consultation and the policies and actions in that strategy were for a wide range of organisations and interests.

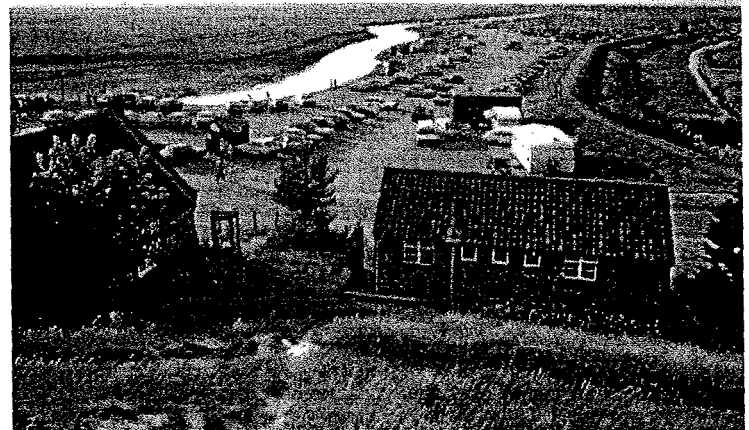


Probably the best-known feature of that strategy was the zoning map,

which tried to zone the AONB in terms of different sensitivities to visitor pressures. It also contains sections on a number of different issues relating to visitors. You can see that there are Local Communities and Local Economy, Landscape and Archaeology, Habitats and Wildlife, Pollution, Information and Interpretation and Recreation. Back in 1995 Traffic and Transport was already an important section within the strategy.

Within the Traffic and Transport section there were policies on improving public transport. That gave rise to the Coastliner bus service, as it was then - now called the CoastHopper from this year - before the arrival of any transport strategy.

Another area of concern was car parking, especially north of the Coast Road. This is parking on the quay at Blakeney, as I'm sure many of you will recognise.



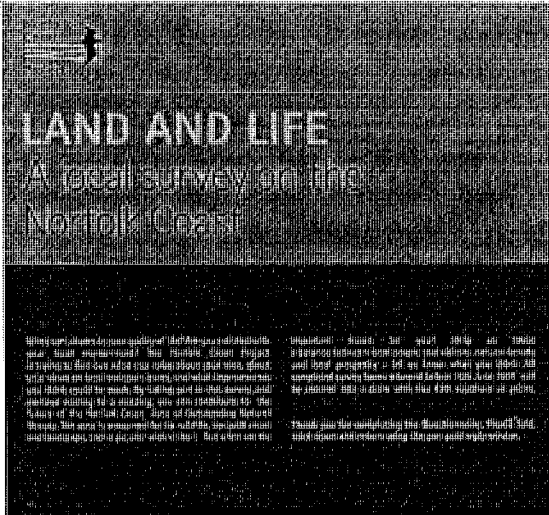
There were also policies covering highway management, particularly the engineering response to increases in traffic, increases in signage to try and direct the traffic more effectively, highway furniture - the kerbing, bollards and so on. Policies on infrastructure, how verges were managed (putting kerbs on rural verges and changing the character of those roads). All these are knock-on effects of the engineering response to increased traffic.

There was also a recreation section, which looked at trying to promote other forms of transport for visitors using the area, for example cycling. That gave rise to the development of the Norfolk Coast Cycleway, straight from the Visitor Management Strategy.

Once again that was before the Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy came into being so there was quite a bit of progress made on doing something about increasing levels of traffic and the effects of traffic from quite early on in the Visitor Management Strategy. Probably the most important policy in this section of the Visitor Management Strategy was to develop and implement a traffic management and transportation study to achieve sensitive management of visitor traffic. It was recognised as an important issue, and one that needed quite a bit more thought, even at that stage.

Sometimes the policies you write in strategies actually happen! In this case it did and particularly with the help of support from Ingrid Floering Blackman, we got Norfolk County

Council to agree to the development of a transport strategy. We put up the money because we felt it was important that the County Council, as the Highway Authority, was the body to develop and implement this strategy, and not the Norfolk Coast Partnership.



The strategy was actually developed in parallel with the Norfolk Coast AONB Management Strategy. Working with Gavin Smith at Norfolk County Council, we developed an AONB Management Strategy looking at landscape and the wider issues in the AONB in parallel with a Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy. We did this through something we called the 'Land and Life Initiative'. It was based on questionnaires which were distributed throughout the AONB in 1997 - not very detailed questionnaires, but they started giving us an idea about what people

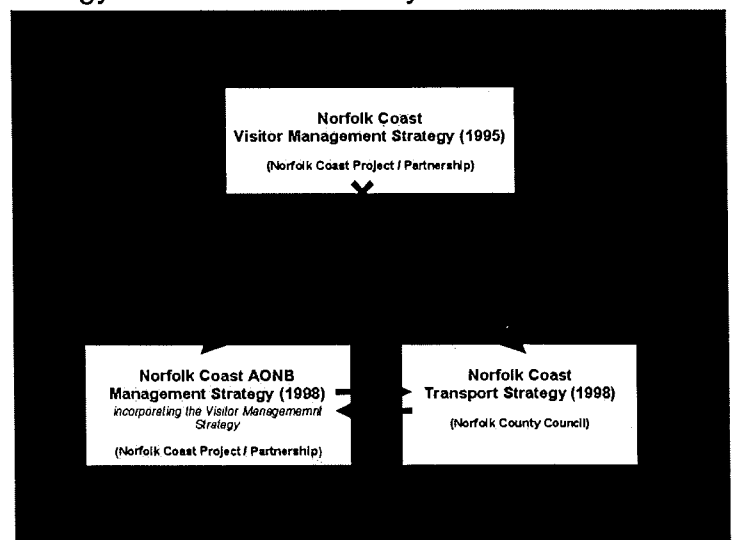
thought about issues. The return date for these was June 1997 - we got one back this month, about two weeks ago actually, from Leicestershire! So people are still interested. Unfortunately we couldn't incorporate that into the study, but it's nice to know people out there still care!

There were also workshops and public meetings and we drew on previous work to feed into the process. It was obvious throughout the process that traffic and transport was still an important issue. We got more responses on those than on more general issues relating to landscape and other things for the AONB.

The Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy built on and expanded ideas and policies from the Visitor Management Strategy, particularly including more consideration of residents' needs. The policy in the Visitor Management Strategy said 'a study to address visitor traffic issues'. The Transport Strategy goes further than that as it looks more at social inclusion and residents' needs rather than just visitors. It is a more holistic strategy than what was envisaged in the Visitor Management Strategy.

The AONB staff were obviously closely involved in the development, and we still are, but I'll repeat that the Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy is the Norfolk County Council's strategy, as the Highway Authority. It was adopted by Norfolk County Council as their policy after development and is managed by them, with involvement of other partners including us, the AONB staff and the District Councils.

I hope a simple diagram may help to clarify the relationship between the different strategies, because I know there's some confusion. We're very good at producing strategies round here but it's sometimes difficult to understand the relationship between them.



There's the Norfolk Coast Visitor Management Strategy at the top; that was the first thing to be developed. Looking down to the bottom left, that AONB Management Strategy which I worked on when I arrived was actually developed around and incorporated the Visitor Management Strategy, and that was endorsed by a very wide range of organisations, but it's not a statutory plan in any way.

The Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy on the bottom right arose from and built on the Traffic and Transport section of the Visitor Management Strategy, but it goes quite a lot further, and it's a Norfolk County Council policy document, an adopted policy.

Those two strategies at the bottom - the Management Strategy for the AONB and the Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy - are still closely linked, but they're independent documents. They're consistent, we hope, because they're both dealing with the AONB but they do have separate development and review mechanisms now. The AONB Management Plan is to be reviewed as part of the recent legislation contained in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. The local authority now has a statutory obligation to produce and implement an AONB management plan. The Transport Strategy will be reviewed over the next couple of years.

The Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Anna Graves - Project Engineer - Norfolk County Council

Anna has worked for Norfolk County Council for twelve years now and her career path has taken her through traffic surveys and modelling (that's traffic modelling, by the way!), traffic management and, more recently, through the development of rural traffic demand management strategies. She leads a team whose focus is to develop feasibility studies and assess strategic transportation projects, both urban and rural, and she's currently on secondment to a project managing a cross-cutting review into services in market towns. She has a BSc Hons in Applied Geography and an MSc in Transportation Planning and Engineering from Leeds University.

My presentation is going to complement a lot of what you've heard and it's also going to question some of the things that perhaps Colin and Ian have said with some facts about the AONB in Norfolk. I want to reiterate something that Tim said that this is a partnership approach, a partnership strategy, but it is something that the County Council leads on.



Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Norfolk County Council

Anna Graves



Management of the strategy: is by a steering group comprising all the partners that we outlined earlier, the district councils, the Countryside Agency, senior officers from the County Council. There is a project team, to co-ordinate and the implement the different schemes. A number of the project team are here.

Jill Fisher - Local Transport Plan and funding opportunities. Rob Marshall - quiet lanes and also funding initiatives. Paul Sellick - speed management on the coast and car parking. Chris Kutesko - European funding officer.

There are some key themes: it's about balance, about realism, and about trying to balance competing needs.

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Money

- Local Transport Plan (LTP)
 - sets out the plan for transportation development over a 5 year period
 - NCTS is 1 of 6 area strategies within this plan
 - 2000/2001 £381,000 allocated to NCTS
- Other sources
 - European/Grants

Traffic is not just about cars, it's about lorries, people walking, people cycling - it's all ways of travelling, not just cars

... and aeroplanes, and railways, and ships - it's about everything. Residents also mean people who have lived here all their lives and people who have only lived here six months - 'residents' includes everybody, and all sections, whether young or old.

Why is traffic and transport such a popular issue? My theory is that it's something that affects us every day of our lives. Unlike social services or perhaps education services that the County Council provide, transport and how you travel affects you every single day. Everybody, in some way or other, is a traffic engineer. They all have formed their own views and they all have their own individual solutions developed.

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Aims and Objectives

"to identify a realistic and sustainable approach to the future management of the traffic in the Norfolk Coast AONB which benefits the environment and local residents and meets the needs of tourism and other businesses."



Great Yarmouth

The Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy is just one of six area strategies within the Local Transport Plan. In the current financial year 2000-2001 there is £381,000 allocated to schemes in the Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy, and can I just say that this figure is higher than any previous year and is a significant advantage to that strategy.

The strategy has its basis in environmental protection and balancing needs. If an individual scheme was to compete with another scheme in the rest of the county, it probably wouldn't draw down any funding. When trying to programme a scheme and trying to allocate funding to it, we look at things such as accidents, volume of traffic, infrastructure damage, inadequacies, future growth and demand, and local community concerns. Yes, community concerns has been a very important issue for the strategy, but the other elements, other parts of the county, would compete very much higher than in the area that we're talking about within the AONB. However because we have an integrated strategy, we've also been very successful in drawing down funding from other agencies, not just through our LTP process, significantly through the Countryside Agency for our quiet lanes, but more recently from Europe. We've done large parking surveys and feasibility work up on the coast, in part -50% - funded from the EU. So having the strategy, with targets and a management structure, has benefited the area.

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

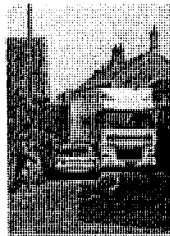
Perceptions:

A common view

"there is an increasing amount of traffic along the coast and too many lorries."

Facts

- > 1% growth in all traffic between 1997 and 2000
- > Visitor numbers have remained constant
- > 1-2% of traffic along coast road are lorries



Lorry travelling through village

Somebody's already said there's too many lorries on the A149 and there's increasing amounts of traffic. The facts are for the A149 there has been a 1% growth between 1997 and 2000. You may think that that is high, but if you compare it to other 'A' roads in the county that have seen increases of over 8%, that is not a significant increase.

Visitor numbers to the AONB have remained constant, the numbers of lorries going along the A149 is between 1% to 2% of the traffic. Other 'A'

roads within the county can carry in excess of 18% of their traffic being heavy lorries. It's more likely that the lorries on the A149 are delivering to local pubs or serving local agriculture.

During the average day on the A149, you've got about 2000 vehicles travelling in a 24-hour period. For an 'A' road, again, that is very low. If you think about the A1151 through Wroxham, that takes 20,000 vehicles. What I'm saying is that within the context of schemes competing for funding, on purely traffic grounds the schemes in the AONB would find it difficult to compete.

Another perception: cycling is not encouraged or provided for within the AONB. There are 356 miles of cycleway within the strategy area that are signed and promoted. It's not directly on the A149 coast road but mainly on inland routes. Cycle hire outlet numbers are growing and cycle parking locations for secure parking is also growing.

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Perceptions:

A common view

"cycling is under provided and not encouraged within the AONB as a realistic alternative,"

Facts

- > 356 miles of cycleway within strategy area
- > Parking for cycling has been enhanced at numerous locations



Rural cycling



Typical cycle park

The facts are that along the coast there is an hourly service in both directions during the peak periods. In the off-peak season you have a two-hourly service. The CoastHopper is the spine of the public transport service. Between 1999 and 2001 patronage has more than doubled - it's gone from 1500 to nearly 4000 in a day

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Perceptions:

A common view
"there are no buses"



Coasthopper bus travelling along A149

Facts

- > Hourly service in both directions (peak)
- > 2 hourly service in both directions (off-peak)
- > Patronage increased from 1587(1999) to 3767(2001)

The European work not only looked at parking but also did quite a lot of bus survey work during the summer. People who actually sat on the bus thought it was a convenient service, and it was reliable and it was friendly. What the surveys did show is that very few people knew about the service. So this again comes back to the issue of having suitable data and being able to use it the development of schemes is very important.

What that slide is supposed to be showing you is of some cars harassing cyclists through Burnham Market when I happened to be watching.

We have done quite a lot of speed management work along the coast, not based on accident criteria or traffic flows but based on environmental protection. Titchwell has got a 40mph speed limit, which we did not reduce. We have tried to make compliance with the 40mph better. So if you look at the August 1999 figure, they're well over the

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Perceptions:

A common view
"The speed of traffic through the villages is unacceptable and continues to get worse."



speed limit; if you look at the August 2001 figure, they're coming more in line with the speed limit. At Holme, we reduced the speed limit from 40 to 30. We still haven't got compliance with the 30 limit but it is below the 40 and has reduced. At Morston, we enhanced the 30 in that we put some gateways up, made the speed limit more obvious, and we had a 30mph compliance; we've actually reduced it slightly. These are the facts. This is for 85% of the traffic that's travelling through.

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Speed Measurements

| | | Aug 1999 | Aug 2001 |
|----------------------|------|----------|----------|
| Titchwell 40mph | East | 45.2 | 38.9 |
| | West | 45.9 | 42.4 |
| Holme 40 to 30mph | East | 39.7 | 32.7 |
| | West | 44.6 | 39.3 |
| Morston 30mph | East | 29.4 | 27.3 |
| | West | 29.4 | 28.0 |

All speeds in mile per hour for 85% of traffic

This is for the A149 between

Hunstanton and Cromer where damage-only accidents aren't recorded. These figures are where people have been injured seriously, slightly or, in the worst case, fatally. There are no accident cluster sites along this section of road. There are 65 cluster sites within the county and one of those sites has had nearly 30 accidents in the last three years. An accident cluster site is where you get more than five personal injury accidents in a three-year period. So we can see that in terms of accidents and accident issues and patterns of accidents, the A149 fortunately lags behind the rest of the county.

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Accidents

| | '96 | '97 | '98 | '99 | '00 | '01 |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Slight | 16 | 20 | 20 | 27 | 15 | 15 |
| Serious | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Fatal | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

('01 up to 31/8/01)

There are 17 policies within the Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy and within each of those policies we have either carried out some feasibility work, some consultation work, or we've actually implemented on the ground.

The first one, the Norfolk Coast Cycleway was already being developed before the strategy was in place, but more work has been carried out. It's been relaunched, there are new leaflets, new maps and an extension from Cromer to Gt. Yarmouth. There are also Loops and Links, which connect into the main cycleway network and pull in places of interest and tourist routes.

We are the only county where Quiet Lanes has been up and running for nearly a year. The Kent scheme has only just been completed. The local scheme wouldn't have

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Implementation to Date

Norfolk Coast Cycleway
Loops and Links (circular routes)

Quiet Lanes



happened without the Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy. There's a lot of ongoing work in terms of monitoring, speed reduction changes, volume changes and community perceptions.

We've looked at all the villages along the length of the A149 and, in consultation, have set up a series of proposals, whether to enhance the existing speed limit by trying to make it work better through the introduction of either flashing signs or gateways. In some cases we have reduced the speed limits from

40mph to 30mph where we think we will get compliance with those speed limits and police support. In other cases, such as in Cley, we are going to be introducing a 20mph limit similar to the one in Stiffkey. Our next phase of the speed management work would be to look at the inter-village sections, their speed limits and speed management.

I'm just going to make a plea for road signs. Road signs are there to give all users, drivers and others, information. They're there for road safety purposes. They are there to warn drivers of hazards, and others, and they are also there to give you orders, i.e. you should be driving at 30 or less. They have a very clear function in giving this information out. I think as a highway authority we are working very hard to reduce the size and the impact of this signing and clutter. We do work within national regulations and as the Highway Authority we have to abide by these. That doesn't mean that we can't challenge the way that we sign and, believe me, we do enter into a lot of heated discussion with DLTR as to how we can change the signing. The Quiet Lanes sign is an example of that - I think five or so years ago we would never have got that type of signing through.

We have carried out a signs audit between Hunstanton and Cromer. We now have a record of every single sign along the A149. There are quite a lot. If you introduce a speed limit, which we're about to do in Holkham, they're going to be getting an increase of around 10 to 15 signs, which will counterbalance the 20 signs we've just removed from Holme by reducing their speed limit. I think we need to do some work here in terms of speed limit signing and repeater signs.

Over the last year we've amassed a huge amount of information about parking. This year we're about to look at Burnham Market and Blakeney. Parking is the key to any transport strategy and it's probably the most difficult thing to sort out.

There are an estimated 15,000 designated car parking spaces within the Hunstanton to Cromer route. On the August Bank Holiday 2000, which was a sunny day, only half of the 15,000 spaces were actually used. So the AONB has still got a huge capacity to absorb a parked car and increasing traffic and visitors.

What that survey work did show is that a number of locations are particularly over-subscribed, particularly Wells and Burnham Market. There are a huge number of different operators and any parking solution is going to need a very strong partnership approach. This needs more work, and we're currently trying to sort out a way of how we can take this forward.

The CoastHopper bus service has recently been relaunched. It is one of the few subsidised services in the county. One of the targets is to make it commercially viable. There are a number of ways that the Public Transport Unit are trying to achieve this and one way is to expand the timetable to accommodate the journey to work trip. We highlighted from our summer work that very few people know about the service. They have the perception that it just appears every once in a while. That isn't the fact. So we need to look at information at bus stops, but also information generally.

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Implementation to Date

Public Transport improvements



Rural Bus Stop



Coasthopper bus turnaround facility

We are working towards full accessibility on the public transport system. The bus stops are now disabled access-friendly. Unfortunately the buses aren't at the moment but by 2015 we're hoping the two things will combine together. We are also working towards integration with car parking. At one of the largest car park areas at Hunstanton on the cliff-top you can park your car there and get on the bus and travel along the rest of the

coast area by bus. Not many people are doing that because they don't know it's there. There's always room for improvement. It is a highly regarded service by those who use it, and one of the public transport people said to me: 'Use it or lose it! It won't get subsidised for ever.'

Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy

Future Developments

- > Target setting/updating of the strategy
- > Continued development of schemes.
 - > Quiet Lanes
 - > Speed Management
 - > Coasthopper
 - > Parking
 (subject to continue funding through LTP programme)
- > Other Sources of funding : European and national pots.

Future developments: we are working on the strategy in terms of setting some clear targets and updating the strategy. Over a period of time, any policy becomes perhaps a little tired or out of date; for instance, quiet lanes within the strategy talks about giving priority to

non-car users. Well, that isn't how quiet lanes has developed, so the strategy is somewhat out of date. Of course there's the continued development on schemes - quiet lanes, speed management - and the continued development of the public transport, but this is all subject to funding. It's all subject to what happens to the Local Transport Plan, but also to how successful we are in drawing down funding from either Europe or other national pots. We can't do anything without the money.

Question and Answer Session 2

Tim Venes - Anna Graves presentations

Robert Stevens – National Farmers Union: I walked past the bus at Weybourne with queues of potential users who do not know when the next bus will be coming? The timetable to tell you is out of date.

AG: Unfortunately it changed a few days ago.

TV: We will note that and take it back to the Passenger Transport Unit. I think we all realise that if we're going to encourage people to use the bus they've got to have a good experience with it. It's got to be convenient, it's got to run on time, it's got to do what they want, and having timetables out of date doesn't fulfil those criteria. If we take the trouble to get somebody to try a bus for the first time and it doesn't work then they're not going to try it again.

CS: Lancashire County Council are pioneering a marvellous new bus stop system, powered by wind or solar power, that will tell you when the next bus is due and if that bus is running late it will automatically say that the bus is going to be five or ten minutes late. The scheme is on trial in the Lake District this month. It's very cheap to and if the scheme works it would be great to have it in the LTP.

TV: What's the approximate cost of that, Colin?

CS: Well, it still isn't worked out how much cheaper it will be, but it's tens of thousands rather than hundreds. It's the kind of thing that's affordable within the LTP.

Dennis Strange - Blakeney: I was very interested in the figures you gave for the traffic increase as 1%. May I suggest that the big increase is the difference between summer and winter? You will find, I think, that the summer increase is considerably greater than 1%. The second question I would like to mention is that you're using Blakeney as one of the parking areas you're investigating. May I suggest that you consult closely with the parish council on this as we can probably save you a lot of wasted time bringing you up to date on our views? For example, one of the biggest problems is what's the point in having signs saying 20 minutes when no one's ever there to enforce it? We put notices on the cars concerned and all the individual does is stay there for hours and throw away the piece of paper, causing additional litter.

AG: In answer to your first question – you're spot on that the difference between a November day and an August day is huge on the A149 and in August there is a 24-hour flow of around 6000 vehicles. Still low, but it's more than double in the summer. It's been dropping over the last few summers. Actually being able to visually assess traffic volume is very difficult, just as it's very difficult to visually assess the speed of a vehicle. It hasn't dropped very much, but it's been teetering around the 4900/5600 figure since 1989. We're getting into quite a lot of detail here, but the saturation flow on the A149 is a lot higher. When we were developing the Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy we were predicting that 2001 would actually oversaturate the Coast Road and it's nowhere near that.

Regarding community consultation one of the things the County Council has developed a lot over the last recent history is community consultation. I believe that Blakeney Parish Council will be contacted, and we're hopefully holding a working group within Blakeney for you to outline the things that you've been saying to us, so that we don't have to spend lots of money on survey work.

Bernard Crowe - Parish Representative on Norfolk Coast Partnership: May I ask a general question about your policy on the determination of the levels of parking fees generally throughout the Norfolk Coast. How are you looking at this from the county point of view, how you are liaising with districts, how you are liaising with those who have an interest in running and owning car parks themselves?

AG: Setting parking charges in the car parks along the coast is up to the operator of that car park and I think around 36% of them are district-run. They set the level of parking charge. Other car parks are run by parish councils, private operators, trusts or English Nature. What we have tried to take forward is how we can actually get all those different partners, all those different organisations, to work together to develop a common parking strategy. We've got the information but we haven't yet found a way forward on how we're going to tackle parking.

Jill Fisher: I think it's a notoriously difficult issue. There is obviously no desire to do anything which will have a detrimental impact on the local economy, but at the same time if what you're looking at is the way we try to manage car parking demand there has to be some stick-and-carrot approach. At the moment it's an issue which has been raised through the Transport Strategy but not something which has been taken forward in any other way at the moment.

AG: For us to actually take any of these policies forward and develop them as schemes needs money, and at the moment there is very limited allocation to look at the parking on the coast.

Jim Long – NCP Parish Representative: Could Anna tell us what progress has been made in the policy aim to divert traffic from the A149 to the A148? Are there any figures available on that?

AG: Previously someone mentioned route hierarchy, routing of traffic onto main roads. The County Council has a route hierarchy and within that the A148 is one of its principal routes you would expect traffic to be on. The A149, although it's an A road, is the only one where we are going to try and discourage traffic travelling along. The route hierarchy between Hunstanton and Cromer has been applied along half of it, on the Cromer to Wells section, and the other half hasn't. One of the ideas with the route hierarchy, and it's one of the first and second policies in the document, is to actually use the B roads and the A148 to feed up to the coast rather than having the traffic travelling along that. We have got data on what's happening to the B roads and data on the A148.

Charlie Harrison - North Norfolk Hotel and Guest House Association: I'd like to commend you for the quiet lanes and cycle routes, but is it possible to have the poster for the quiet lanes in bigger format to put in reception areas as well as the smaller ones?

AG: We've got lots of posters for quiet lanes and we've been trying to give them away! Jim Ramshaw was on our implementation group and he has some posters that you are welcome to use.

Local parish council member: It would make a lot of sense if the coastal bus service went down as far as Great Yarmouth and picked up tourists from that area and possibly round to King's Lynn as well to pick up people from that area. Also it's a pity the services aren't frequent, say half-hourly; a lot of people won't drop their car use because people nowadays have become used to instant transportation and getting there quickly without hanging around. Also on the London buses you've got the route on the side of the bus with the frequency which the bus runs. This would seem to be a logical way of publicising this route. The other thing is that it ought to keep going through a greater part of the year with reasonable frequency, because tourists do come, particularly round the Yarmouth area, through the later part of the season.

AG: We'll take those as observations and take them back to the Passenger Transport Unit.

Paul Burall - West Norfolk Borough Councillor: Sometimes it seems that road safety is counter-intuitive – I know there was a study last year that showed that blind junctions are actually the safest. I just wanted to extend that; there's a very tiny lane opposite me, which is quite well used by cars and by horses and for walking on as well. Its safest time is when the verges are actually quite high before they're cut for the first time. I wonder if in lanes like that it's actually better to let the verges grow and not cut them back because the fact that visibility is obstructed does certainly slow the cars down.

AG: It was our brain wave that we were going to let the verges grow. Visually you have the perception that the lane was getting narrower and wasn't suitable for high speed. This was our great idea for reducing maintenance budgets etc. When we actually went to the community consultation stages, what we thought was a great idea got thrown back at us. With these roads being so narrow, if you're walking along there with a child or whatever you need somewhere as a refuge because even if a car stops you need to get out of the way. If you're on a horse you can only canter on soft surfaces so they don't actually exercise the horse on the road, they want to be able to get onto the verge, and to do that they need to be able to see where there's broken glass, where the drainage grips are, so they didn't want the verges leaving to grow. Yes, it was a great idea, but not one that anybody likes, unfortunately!

FORUM SESSION

Colin Speakman - Introduction.

This is your opportunity to influence the debate, and it's about moving the issues forward. The low traffic growth reported in Norfolk could be viewed as a sign of success! The reason could be of course, all the visitors are catching the CoastHopper bus, they're all cycling, they're all walking the trails, they're all on the quiet roads, and surely if we're actually getting a reduction in traffic on certain main roads this must mean that the strategy is beginning to work and we're seeing results. Let's hope so.

What can we do as individuals, as voluntary organisations, as parish councils, to make a difference? I'd very much like to urge people to look forward to see how we can get it right for the future.

Parish councils have now got £10,000 to spend over the next three years through new money via the Countryside Agency and through the Government, and we should be thinking about how we could find ways of using that money. Two or three parishes can join together to put a big bid in for something exciting, whether it's a taxi scheme or real-time information or a late service for youngsters getting back from the pub or whatever.

Now the Transport Strategy, excellent as it is, is already history. It's already three years old. We should be already thinking about the next edition, building on the success we've already achieved. Part of this session is about just that – what new ideas do we want to see in this document, in the Management Plan, in the Local Transport Plan, in all these other documents? What ideas do we want to get the Norfolk Local Transport Partnership to be looking at?

It's also a chance to look at priorities, to see what we need in terms of further work with traffic, more help for local communities, or things we can do to make sure the visitors don't destroy the area.

Isn't it sad that we're so weighted this evening towards the older generation? Where are the young people? We're not engaging as we should do, and must do, with the younger generation. To what extent young people are missing out on lack of transport opportunity? What it means to them to live in a small village and not have a late bus back from the pub or the club or the cinema for example. What is it going to be like living in Norfolk over the next 20, 30 or 40 years, when sadly quite a few of us sitting here will not be around? It's their future.

The following transcript contains submissions from the floor where the name of the questioner was not audible on the conference tape recording. We apologise for the omission of individual names in such cases.

Henry Cordeaux - North Norfolk District Council: I recently went down to Somerset and traffic calming is everywhere. Do you think there's an advantage in having a blanket cover in the AONB of, say, 40mph, without repeater signs?

Anna Graves: One of the policies in the Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy was to investigate a speed management zone between Hunstanton and Cromer. When we looked at it and did some preliminary consultation within the department and with other organisations – it was felt a more incremental approach was a better and more realistic way forward. Get people who live in the villages to stick to their existing speed limit, get them then to stick to a lower speed limit and then get them to stick to possible lower speed limits between the villages. It's all about the people who live there. They know the road, they know where the potholes are and they know where the bends are. Visitors don't tend to speed. The policy's still there, it hasn't been written out of the strategy document, and work on it is currently underway.

Floor: I was recently down in Liskeard, Cornwall and was trying to use a local free bus. The sustainable tourism officer had persuaded the local caravan sites and local attractions to pool together and run it. It's in their interest to advertise the service. I wondered if this is something that we might look at here. We also have a wonderful train service from Sheringham to Cromer, but if you miss a train at Cromer the bus goes at the same time!

Don Venvell - NNDC: There was no reference in any of the presentations to the work of voluntary associations, which I think, is very important, particularly in the area of social inclusion. I know it's the AONB conference and I do realise the presentations were on that particular area, but in the North Walsham area, which is outside it, we have the Area Community Transport Association. We have a whole range of arrangements there such as a dial-a-ride system and dial-a-medi-ride system, which works through the villages and brings people into the market town. It saves on transport, it unites people, keeps the costs at a reasonable level, and we've now introduced Friday night and Saturday night services. Now, it seems to me that that kind of development centred on the market towns and small towns along the coast could be very helpful. The county council has supported it and I do think that's a very important way forward. I'm particularly concerned with the issue of access to medical services for elderly people, or anyone living in rural villages.

Colin Speakman - I mentioned the Cuckmere Rambler bus but I didn't make the point that it is a Community Transport service. It operates during the day, including one or two late evening services during the week, but at weekends it changes itself to a visitors' bus. The bus collects people from Berwick Station, takes them into the AONB for walking or cycling or just sight-seeing. They can have a pint of Harveys at the local pub with the bus carrying local people as well as visitors. They're finding that they're getting a different clientele beginning to use the bus. Initially it was the elderly people who hadn't got cars, no driving licence, if you like, the disadvantaged. Increasingly they're picking up middle-aged, middle-class people with a Volvo parked in the garage, who no longer enjoy driving into Brighton or Eastbourne to do their shopping, and they think it's marvellous!

Anna Graves: Community transport is on our full list of a whole range of ways that public transport is being addressed. There are walking and cycling studies currently under way in North Walsham, market towns that feed into the AONB; there is work going on trying to develop the coast path, the green links etc.

Rob Marshall - NCC: Green links is really trying to link the communities along the A149 by modes other than the car. Travelling this way between the communities is fraught with difficulty and most people won't try it. Green Links was an initial idea to investigate ways of perhaps widening the verge or look to place access behind the hedge or using other rights of way to facilitate access between communities and or local attractions

Colin Speakman: Under the Rural White Paper, the Government is promising to review Section 19-Section 22 rules. At the moment if a community transport service charges a fare, you can't pay the driver. If it's a free bus for a group then you can pay the driver. A village bus could provide a service where a commercial service would not be viable. £10,000 from a parish could go a long way towards providing such services if you're using voluntary drivers, but of course at the moment legally you can't charge fares.

Steve Wilde - Blakeney parish magazine: We're interested in event-driven transport. Scheduled bus services are not always the answer. Is it possible to focus transport around events? For example if there's a firework display and everyone's trying to find out how to get there. In other words, to provide a service for people who express an interest in attending a particular event and organising transport for it. Then either through lift-sharing or through taxi firms planning a route to pick up several people – really trying to pull together transport provision in that way. I've got teenage children and I quite often arrange with the parents to bring other children home or vice versa. The advantage in a small community, of course, is that people do tend to know each other, there's an element of trust. I would appreciate feedback on the information the website provides and whether the transport service is useful. Glaven Valley address: www.glavenvalley.co.uk

Panel - You might like to contact Liz Joyce at Norfolk County Council because she is looking at this kind of project. With respect to Mr Venvell's comment earlier, I think now is the best time and opportunity we've had in terms of Rural Transport Partnership funding for local communities and its there to be taken advantage of.

Colin Speakman - The fastest growing aspect of modern life is the exponential growth of home computing, something like 20% a year, and particularly it's affecting the young people – young people are able to use and facilitate and handle this kind of information. It might just be worth mentioning the project I've been working on in the Forest of Bowland through the Rural Bus Challenge Fund. The county council there have just put a bid in to get a fleet of four minibuses which will be based in communities and linked to a computer network and with a part-time facilitator in the villages to do the kind of job you're describing. There will be somebody there to match people's travel needs, particularly around local events. Not just the minibuses but taxis, conventional services, lifts or whatever's going, and it's almost like a new kind of industry in rural areas – the transport co-ordinator not stuck at County Hall but actually in the community, so they know exactly what's going on.

Steve Rowland - RSPB and Titchwell resident: Speaking as a Titchwell resident where you can buy a pair of binoculars but you can't buy a pint of milk. If you want to go to the pub in the evening, if you want to walk or cycle to the shop to buy a newspaper, a loaf of bread or a pint of milk you have to travel along the straighter part of the A149 where it's dangerous. We have a lot of visitors leaving the reserve at night when it's dark and there's an accident waiting to happen. I'd like to know what is the progress on the green links initiative, the vision of a network of footpaths and cycle trails, particularly if they're not

just making the roads a bit wider. It's really exciting, it's going to be really useful to get people to do the shorter journeys, to the hotels, the attractions, by bicycle or by foot. How is it progressing and what are the stumbling blocks?

Anna Graves: The stumbling block is money. There is no money for us to develop the green links. It's something we want to do and something that Robert and the people dealing with funding at County Hall are trying to develop further through the Countryside Agency – that's one way forward.

Rob Marshall: Tim Jarvis and I are about to see a representative of the Countryside Agency and this is one of the projects we hope that they'll help us with. I know the RSPB have been very positive about this and have actually put your money where your mouths are. You've said that you will actually chip in to the pot because we do need a study to see what we can and can't do on an individual and strategic level.

Colin Speakman: The Countryside Agency's transport teams may be looking for ways of getting their budget spent, so you have a good chance if you can put a good case to the right officer.

Floor –What is happening with the refurbishment of Norwich and Cromer bus stations?

Anna Graves: In terms of Cromer I think it has been put back and forms part of the regeneration project. It's been recognised that it needs doing and work is going to be done on it. So Cromer hopefully will be sorted.

Jill Fisher: It's universally recognised that we've got a problem at Norwich bus station. It is an issue; there's not an easy solution to it. The planning application is being considered by the City Council and I suspect the situation will run for a bit longer.

Colin Speakman: Could I ask, is there funding in the LTP for it?

Jill Fisher: We have a limited funding, but not for a replacement bus station of several million pounds. We have no funding for that scale of improvement at all.

Rob Young - Planning Officer NNDC: I've recently been involved in organising community transport surveys in some of the market towns in the district, and some of the key concerns, particularly in Wells and Holt, which are within the AONB, were traffic congestion within the towns and insufficient car parking. It's going to be politically unpalatable to seek to reduce car parking in some of these areas and in other areas along the coast. Whilst not all the car parks are full all the time, the perception is that this is the case. I think we shouldn't get to the stage where we're closing down car parks, making them into cycle parks or changing them into bus projects. I think there's been a fear of promoting the coast to visitors because of the impact, and whilst here today we're talking about the AONB, the number of cars nationally is going to continue to rise. We've got to be realistic and expect them to rise locally, but what we should be worrying about is the impact of that increase and maybe promoting alternative forms of transport, alternative things for people to do when they get here as the way forward.

Anna Graves: In terms of parking, Wells was definitely identified as one of the hot-spots for parking – over-subscribed, people circulating round trying to find a parking space. I'd probably agree with you that in a location such as Wells the idea of actually reducing that

parking supply is pie in the sky. It could be that Wells is one of the locations where you could expand parking if you're getting rid of it somewhere else. We're talking hypothetically here, because we haven't developed a parking strategy or a way forward. In terms of promotion of other modes, that is part of the strategy and is done. There's always more that can be done, but we do promote the cycleway – that's in national literature. The Coasthopper is promoted but not as widely promoted, as it should be. Promotion is there, but there is a balance that Tim and I constantly talk about. It is in terms of promoting the area, encouraging more people to arrive, as long as they arrive and travel when they come here in a sustainable way, and striking that balance that is very difficult. Currently in the recent surveys people travel along the coast as day-trippers, actually hopping between the car parks.

Colin Speakman: In the Bavarian Forest National Park when you arrive at the park boundary you see a big sign that says 'National Park' and before you know it you've driven into this large car park. Where you put your money in to get your car park ticket there's a huge map showing all the bus routes, and there are bus timetables, and where the loo is at the bus stop. In a way, they're almost directing people towards a bus, and I think we should do much more in terms of integration. I suspect that not one person in a hundred who parks in the Blakeney car park is aware of the CoastHopper bus.

Anna Graves: The difference with some of the national parks and the Norfolk Coast AONB is that there are hundreds of ways of getting into our AONB on the road network whereas some of the national parks have few entry roads in where it is easier to control. In the Norfolk Coast AONB you can get in from all sorts of B, C, U class roads, all over a 50-mile stretch.

Floor: What kind of effort is being made to publicise quiet lanes outside Norfolk. If you're suddenly faced with a post and a sign, what does it mean? If the sign was included in the Highway Code you would know exactly what a quiet lane is. I used a quiet lane recently and I had to leap for my life when a car came roaring down the lane at 30 or 40 miles an hour. It doesn't seem to be working.

Anna Graves: Are quiet lanes working? It depends on whom you ask. In terms of the signs and the national promotion, it is a pilot scheme. It's a demonstration. That part of Norfolk is being used to see how the concept of quiet lanes could work. On the very early stages of the community consultation one of the key concerns was that because we'd been picked out as being special, unique, and were having this experiment, we'd get hordes of people flooding in to use the quiet lanes from as far away as Hertfordshire. We talked about the promotion of quiet lanes and it has not been promoted outside of the county. We've done some sign monitoring with a set of tourists who haven't been subjected to all the community consultation work to actually see how they interpreted the sign and what they thought it meant. Some of them did have an unsafe interpretation of the sign. Colin is working in the Forest of Boland on developing a quiet lanes network. He probably doesn't know that that sign doesn't work to people who aren't subjected to the community consultation. So I think there's an issue here for the Countryside Agency to actually pull together the experience that's happening. Generally if you know what quiet lanes is about, the sign is interpreted correctly. In terms of it becoming part of the Highway Code, that is something that would be developed from the pilot. It is an authorised traffic sign, not a waymark or any of these sort of things you might hear. It has the same status as a speed limit sign, so it would become part of the Highway Code if the concept is approved.

Ian Shepherd: The County Council have done a lot of very careful consultation which has been very valuable. You have to think of where you want to go a longer term and to be patient, because it often does involve changes of attitude that doesn't come quickly. You could run it for a short time, say it's not working, and give up, do something else, but you have to stick with it. If you know where you want to go long-term you can perhaps think what steps to take to get there, and perhaps we're in that situation with quiet lanes.

Colin Speakman: I must say how invaluable the experience of Norfolk is proving to us in the North of England. There's lots we're learning and hopefully there may be some experience that we can bring back to Norfolk in due course, so please carry on the good work.

Kevin Hart – Kelling Heath Holiday Park: We have to accept that no matter how much we promote bus services, you're not going to stop cars travelling within the AONB. We haven't had any mention at all tonight of alternative fuels and cleaner fuels for the environment. What can be done to encourage people in the AONB to use alternative fuels – LPG, bio-diesel, etc?

Jill Fisher: Until you get enough alternative fuel depots and, with electric cars, areas where you can plug it and you reach a threshold where it becomes people aren't going to do it. The only places where, for example, bus companies are using alternative fuels is in city centres where there's been an encouragement to do so by restrictions on other vehicles. So it's harder to see how you might apply that in a rural area.

Floor: Shouldn't we in the AONB be encouraging people to sell LPG at filling stations?

Colin Speakman: I had an experience travelling last year in Hungary and Slovakia, countries, which are much poorer than us. I was with a friend whose vehicle is powered by LPG. There was a network in rural Slovakia of LPG stations that allowed us to manage perfectly. The good news is that it costs about half that of diesel, so there's a huge saving. I fear that it may be the petrol companies that are holding it back. Could it be that we could work with one or two of the big manufacturers, like Calor, and have a pioneering scheme in Norfolk? If Norfolk County Council alone persuaded their employees to use it, that would generate enough business. It produces something like half the omissions and on a standard car, about half the cost.

Floor: I'd like to go back to the parking and the bus issue. Would it not be possible, in car parks associated with a bus stop, where your parking ticket can be deducted from the bus fare, so that you can park your car there and get that money back if you use the bus.

Colin Speakman: That already happens in the North York Moors National Park. Does it happen anywhere else?

Jill Fisher: Well, it happens in park and ride.

Colin Speakman: I think the problem is that the District Councils or whoever manages the car parks and the County Council pays for the bus. It's getting two heads together to co-operate and make it work.

Anna Graves: It's not an insurmountable problem.

Paul Esrich - Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB: I think I'm right in saying that the new Countryside and Rights of Way Act makes an amendment to the Road Traffic Act to allow highways authorities to introduce traffic regulation orders for the purpose of conserving natural beauty. Have the council thought about ways in which this could be used in the AONB?

Colin Speakman: Just to update, that's the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 that has now been extended slightly by the CROW Act to give you more powers. I think it was always valid within AONBs but it's now valid outside AONBs. I think it's been widened in one or two other ways as well. This controls a huge range of things, from parking to speed management ... and quiet lanes can be brought into this.

Anna Graves: We've always been able to put environmental weight restrictions on areas to control lorry movements through the Road Traffic Act. In terms of quiet lanes, there's a consultation document out at the moment from the Department of Transport asking authorities what orders do they want to make quiet lanes and home zones work. We're currently responding to that and I believe the Countryside Agency have also been consulted. They're asking us things like do we want revised ways of putting speed limit orders and others that would basically – certainly in the quiet lanes concept – be about environmental protection.

Bruce Barrell NNDC: So far we've been looking very much at terrestrial transport, but I wonder whether anybody's got any statistics on increases in air transport over the AONB, particularly with regard to recreational flying.

Colin Speakman: Thinking in terms of the impacts of noise and pollutants as well.

Jill Fisher: I can endeavour to find out about presumably mainly private flights?

Floor: I have an airstrip behind me that's licensed for one plane but there does seem to be a considerable amount of additional flying, particularly coastal pleasure flights.

Jill Fisher: Certainly nationally there has been a big growth in that market. I'm not sure quite what the County Council could do about that; it's not regulated in that sense.

Floor: There are regulations, especially over conservation areas. It's one of the issues that's coming up in the Wash Special Area of Conservation European Marine Site.

Neil Featherstone: There has been an increase in low flying over the bird reserves and there is increased legislation through the CROW Act. The vast number of incidents that are investigated are at the request of the local wardens by the police. The majority of them boil down to lack of good mapping. I understand it is relatively easy to show designated bird reserves on aeronautical maps.

Floor: There's a flying association which has some control over its members ... the AONB should look at this subject in more detail and it is something that we need to take on board in future management strategies of the AONB.

Tim Venes: As Neil said, it is being considered. It's not being considered within the Transport Strategy because it's primarily an issue of disturbing wildlife. We're not looking at the moment at its effect on tranquillity in the AONB generally because that's quite a

difficult thing to do, there's no legislation covering it and I'm not quite sure where we go on that.

Floor: Perhaps you could get a voluntary agreement if you wanted to.

Floor: Sheringham has a microlite facility granted planning permission by NNDC probably a couple of years ago and granted on a provisional basis for a year subject to renewal on how it worked out. Surely it would be possible for the District Council to say that there should be no flying over the AONB as part of the planning conditions? I don't know whether that's likely to work but it's the sort of thing that could be stated.

Rob Young - NNDC Planning Officer: I doubt it would be enforceable but worth a try!

Colin Speakman: We have raised the broader question of aviation. The CPRE are currently heavily being involved in this and the impact in particular of domestic aviation. The 7% a year growth of air travel is likely to be the biggest single transport nuisance of the next 10 or 15 years.

Ian Shepherd: It's certainly been a major concern on environmental grounds in terms of the amount of aircraft and I think it's something that's extremely irritating. Maybe the planning system can do something about where it authorises microlites to take off and what airfields they may use. It is extremely annoying from a tranquillity point of view where you feel there's less and less space we can go and get away from it. Even if you sorted out the road problem you've got something still flying over the top of it. On a personal note, like many other places there's a lot of military noise. I wonder why they have to do all their manoeuvres here and not go just a dozen miles out to sea. I know this perhaps won't have too much sympathy with national security but they make a hell of a bloody racket!

Floor: This afternoon planes were flying over my house, turning around in the sky, and the birds were still feeding, we had moorhens walking about and they didn't seem to hear anything. Are we the ones that are complaining for our benefit rather than the birds'?

Ian Shepherd: Well, I'm arguing on human grounds. I think all of us have some need for some peace and quiet. I'm not being antisocial, but if we want to get away from things and get out as far as you can on the marshes, there's no sign of any other person or any cars. Suddenly you get something coming from the air

Colin Speakman: I suspect we're getting into one of those very difficult areas. I know when we argue this in the Yorkshire Dales somebody always turns round and says: 'Thank God they're on our side!'

Floor: Going back to the promotion of alternatives to the car I would like to make a plea really not to treat all visitors the same. There are different challenges according to the different visitors and I think the greatest challenge will be in terms of day visitors, which I think are likely to increase in the future. That will be for a number of reasons, in terms of [the fact that] those decisions will be more spontaneous so there'll be less opportunity to get information to them in advance, and they're also going to be more sensitive to any increase in time. I think we should make the most of opportunities to influence staying visitors but also to look at those places where visitors are going at the moment. Maybe they're not using the buses but we should try and get the message to them for when they come next. We could also to use those who are enjoying the service at the moment as ambassadors.

Colin Speakman: That's a very good point. I mean, not all visitors behave the same way. Day visitors who are going to be more time-constrained. Staying visitors – who after all, in tourism terms they're the ones you want, because they spend five times as much money in your local economy. If we can convert some of the day visitors to staying visitors we've got a better chance of getting them onto sustainable transport and walking, cycling etc. Several people seemed to have mentioned already is the whole question of sustainable tourism, actually encouraging people to come to the Norfolk coast because it's a special place where you spend longer and have a richer and fuller experience, and you can't do that by driving through. Maybe the whole question of sustainability, economic benefit and sustainable transport tie very closely together.

Rick Morrish: Talking on a wider basis, Ian is the only one who mentioned anything about trying to localise production and I'm sure he's right in his assertion that the local food chain creates a lot of traffic that it didn't used to. What do planners think is most important – trying to relocalise services as a catalyst to reducing traffic or putting public transport infrastructure in place first?

Ian Shepherd: There's a whole mix of problems and different solutions. I think if there are going to be changes in the food chain it's going to be from a more aware public opinion. A personal view again – there's 80% of people do their shopping in supermarkets and you're not going to change that. What you may change is the fact of people saying, look, I'm buying my produce from you but I think you can do better and different – put some pressure back on the supermarket. I think it's not necessarily a matter of going back to where you were 30 or 40 years ago. I think potentially they've got the technology in terms of information technology and process technology to give more flexible than you have in the past. You can go from large-scale centralisation using that technology back more to smaller-scale decentralisation. I think that may cut down on the massive amount of food miles we currently generate as a nation. Also this would put more jobs in local areas and tie the food processing steps closer to where the stuff is produced.

Tim Venes: There's nothing about this in the Transport Strategy but we do cover it in other strategies for the AONB. This year we have produced a local products guide in common with other protected areas and that's a start in trying to promote the idea.

Floor: Lots of footpaths were lost that should have been on the map, and I am suggesting that maybe getting some of those ancient paths back would in fact improve the opportunities for walking and thereby achieve many of the kind of things we're talking about today.

Anna Graves: Through the quiet lanes project consultation, I did the traditional thing of looking at the roads network – I don't know what a bridleway is, I don't know what a public right of way is – I looked at the highway network. When we did the community consultation it is very obvious that people use a couple of hundred metres of the road, they then cut across on a public right of way, they then come back on the road. They're actually using both the networks simultaneously as a cohesive transport network. As a highway authority we certainly have learned that with our public rights of way section working on traffic schemes now, i.e. the quiet lanes scheme.

Tim Lidstone-Scott - National Trail Officer: I work with the rights of way team at County Hall and under the new CROW Act they have a new team for rights of way improvement plans. I know that the team at County Hall actively look at, not just recreation but transport for visitors and residents. It's something that will become more and more important.

Jill Fisher: One of the projects that's in the Local Transport Plan is to look at walking and cycling networks in the market towns and we have a programme to try and develop better, more integrated walking networks there. It's obviously going to take time.

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