



An introduction to local authorities

The Government depends on local authorities to deliver some of its key transport objectives. Central and local government share policy priorities to improve access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need; improve public transport, including safety; and reduce congestion and pollution.

Better local transport can make a major contribution to more sustainable communities, local economic development and the local environment. Local authorities are central to integrating local transport with other policies and services in their areas. The Department works with local authorities to demonstrate the benefits and to enable more journeys to be made in a more sustainable and healthy way - including journeys to school and on foot or by bike.

Outside London, county and all purpose councils have now produced their second local transport plans for 2006 to 2011, setting out their policies and programmes. These plans take account of the broader context of Regional Transport Strategies. DfT's guidance on local transport plans emphasised the increasing importance of accessibility planning and action on air quality.

Local authorities are responsible for most roads, including traffic management and the promotion of road safety. Key achievements of the Â£8 billion invested in the first five year plans include reversing the previous deterioration of the road network and sustained reductions in deaths and serious injuries on the network and sustained reductions in deaths and serious injuries on the network.

Buses are the most commonly used form of local public transport. Local authorities operate concessionary travel schemes and support socially necessary bus services.

Local authorities deliver major road and public transport improvements - such as better facilities and more priority for bus passengers, new bypasses and road widening projects. The Department seeks advice from regional bodies about the priorities in which it should invest.

Local authorities can also apply for the Transport Innovation Fund to support projects which would reduce congestion by developing road user charging or which would contribute to improving national productivity.

In London most local transport decisions are made by the Major or London borough councils.

For related documents, pages and internet links, see the column on the right.