

Chapter 5

Transport

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

The following Corporate Objectives are relevant to the delivery of the planning objectives related to transport explained in this chapter of the Local Plan:

- **To work towards a safer more caring community;**
- **To promote a green and sustainable environment;**
- **To encourage a thriving local community;**
- **To improve the quality of life for people in the district; and**
- **To maintain and enhance the local heritage and culture**

PLANNING OBJECTIVES

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|------------|---|
| T1 | To reduce the need to travel, particularly by car and to develop sustainable transport alternatives. |
| T2 | The full consideration of environmental safeguards and the need for sustainable development in transport development proposals. |
| T3 | To improve accessibility to services, rather than mobility. |
| T4 | To improve the existing highway network to facilitate the movement of goods and people. |
| T5 | To retain a good bus network including its extension into developing areas and the introduction of innovative services where appropriate, e.g. in rural areas. |
| T6 | To retain and improve all aspects of rail services. |
| T7 | To improve transport interchange facilities. |
| T8 | To implement traffic management schemes, including traffic calming, to ease vehicle flow and deal with environmental issues and highway congestion. |
| T9 | To provide and control adequate off-street parking to alleviate highway congestion. |
| T10 | To support the development of London Southend Airport as a regional air transport and aircraft maintenance facility. |
| T11 | To promote walking and cycling as the preferred modes of travel wherever possible by the creation of safe routes. |

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STRUCTURE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 The Replacement Essex & Southend-on-Sea Structure Plan (RSP), as adopted in April 2001, has four transport objectives:
- To establish clear investment priorities for the provision of transport infrastructure, measures and support;
 - To provide a framework for the sustainable and safe movement of people and freight;
 - To provide for an integrated transportation system; and
 - To widen travel choice.
- 5.2 These have been cascaded and can be found in the *District Transport Strategy*.¹ This was produced in response to a request from the County Council to prepare a statement explaining how the District Council proposed to support the Essex Local Transport Plan. The vision statement within the *District Transport Strategy* is:

"The transport strategy seeks to achieve a more sustainable future, a better environment, a more efficient transport system, economic prosperity, improved quality of life and greater equality."

- 5.3 Policy T2 of the RSP identifies priorities for investment. In this it states:

"Transport investment will be prioritised to support the regeneration of the designated Priority Areas for Economic Regeneration and other objectives of Policy CS3, as follows:

- 1. The highest priority for such investment will be afforded to the extended Thames Gateway (Southend-on-Sea, London Southend Airport, Castle Point and Basildon New Town), to improve local accessibility and develop sustainable integrated transport strategies under the package approach, as identified on the Key Diagram as the Priority Area for Transportation Investment."**

The Package approach is contained within the Essex Local Transport Plan², which forms part of the Essex submission to government for transport funding. Following the completion of improvements to the A130, there are no major schemes proposed within the district.

ESSEX LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

- 5.4 Essex County Council, in consultation with the various district and borough councils, produced this document in July 2000. The aims of this plan are:

¹ District Transport Strategy - Rochford District Council (2000)

² Essex Local Transport Plan - The Essex Approach to Transport - Essex County Council (2000)

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- To protect and enhance the built and natural **ENVIRONMENT**;
- To improve **SAFETY** for all travellers;
- To contribute to an efficient **ECONOMY**, and to support sustainable economic growth in appropriate locations;
- To promote **ACCESSIBILITY** to everyday facilities for all, especially those without a car;
- To promote the **INTEGRATION** of all forms of transport and land use planning, leading to a better, more efficient transport system; and
- To seek and encourage investment in transport and make **EFFICIENT** use of the resources available.

The plan is consistent with the Southend-on-Sea Local Transport Plan, which being a neighbouring authority has significant impacts for the district.

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

- 5.5 Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 13 sets out the Government's policies on transport issues. In particular the guidance sets out the following as its objectives:

"... to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level to:

- **Promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight;**
- **promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling, and**
- **reduce the need to travel, especially by car."**

- 5.6 The PPG states that our quality of life depends on transport and easy access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services; we need a safe, efficient and integrated transport system to support a strong and prosperous economy. However, the way we travel and the continued growth in road traffic is damaging our towns, harming our countryside and contributing to global warming.

THE POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.7 In response to this, the Government set out its policy for the future of transport in July 1998 with the White Paper *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone*³. Government policy is to extend choice in transport and secure mobility in a way that supports sustainable development. The New Deal for Transport aims to deliver an integrated transport policy. This means integration:

- within and between different types of transport;
- with policies for the environment;

³ *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone* - Department for Transport - (1998)

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- with land use planning; and
- with policies for education, health and wealth creation.

- 5.8 The Transport Act 2000 provides a statutory basis for a number of measures in the White Paper. In addition the Government has published *Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan*⁴. This is based on a partnership between the public and private sectors to provide a modern integrated high quality transport system.
- 5.9 Land use planning has a key role in delivering the Government's integrated transport strategy. By shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, planning can help to reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking, and cycling. Consistent application of these planning policies will help to reduce some of the need for car journeys (by reducing the physical separation of key land uses) and enable people to make sustainable transport choices.
- 5.10 These policies are part of the Government's overall approach to addressing the needs of motorists, other road and public transport users, and business by reducing congestion and pollution and achieving better access to development and facilities. They will also help to promote sustainable distribution. In this way, planning policies can increase the effectiveness of other transport policies and help maximise the contribution of transport to improving our quality of life.

THE LOCAL CONTEXT

- 5.11 The District of Rochford is situated largely within the peninsula between the Rivers Thames and Crouch, and is bounded to the east by the North Sea. The district has land boundaries with Basildon, Castle Point, Chelmsford and Southend-on-Sea Borough and District Councils. It has a marine boundary with Maldon District Council.
- 5.12 The lowest crossing point of the River Crouch is at Battlesbridge on the A130 at the western end of the District, but to cross the Thames it is necessary to travel westwards some 20 miles to the Dartford Crossing, at Purfleet in Thurrock. Severe congestion has been experienced at the tunnel for many years, particularly since the M25 London Orbital Motorway was completed in 1988, of which it forms an integral part.
- 5.13 Before the completion of the M25, it was necessary to travel at least through the outskirts of London to get to many other parts of the country. It is now possible to by-pass the capital and journey times to and from the district have greatly improved. The M25 operates for much of the day over capacity and plans to tackle escalating congestion are yet to be finalised. The government commissioned a multi-modal study⁵ to examine the options and in summary, the study's summary recommendation is:

⁴ *Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan* - Department for Transport (2000)

⁵ Orbit Study (Executive Summary) - KBR (2002)

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"The combination of road widening and area-wide road user charging, along with improvements to the public transport system, offers a real prospect of a sustainable strategic road system in the Orbit study area. Without area-wide road user charging, the relief afforded by the new road capacity would be eroded over time, prompting the need for some further action at some time in the not too distant future."

- 5.14 The previous local plan indicated that there were many road proposals that could affect the district, citing Lower Thames crossings and toll roads to supplement the A127. In the time between the completion of the First Review and the current local plan, government policy has shifted a number of times. Currently there is funding to tackle particular transport trouble spots and a number of multi-modal studies have been commissioned. There are no proposals from the government to tackle transport issues within, or significantly affecting, the district.
- 5.15 However, the district lies within the Thames Gateway and development may come forward from government to tackle regeneration and congestion issues. A report into traffic management in South Essex has been commissioned by the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership.
- 5.16 In view of its geographical location and the poor nature of the roads, through traffic in the District has generally been limited in the past, perhaps with the exception of that using the A130. The A130 provides a north-south route on the western edge of the District between Canvey Island, the County Town of Chelmsford and beyond to Cambridge. Significant congestion still occurs at peak hours at the junctions of the A130 / A127 and A130 / A13.
- 5.17 In recent years the route has been improved in two sections. Completed early in 2002, the first section runs from Rettendon Turnpike to the A12 / A130 junction. The second section was completed in early 2003 and runs between the A13 / A130 junction and Rettendon Turnpike. These improvements are designed to improve north/south accessibility across the County and to help congestion and improve journey times.
- 5.18 A major new route was constructed into the district in the 1990s, which enables traffic to avoid Rochford. A new route was constructed linking the A127 and the existing B1013. This new link has replaced part of the B1013 and runs west of Rochford and has considerably eased the traffic congestion that occurred prior to its construction.
- 5.19 There are no safeguarded routes within the district for further transport infrastructure provision. In the late 1980's, Essex County Council considered the potential for the construction of a new relief road to run from Southend, east of Rochford and Ashingdon, north of Hockley and Rayleigh to join with the Rettendon Turnpike. That option was examined, but it was concluded that it was not a viable proposal.

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- 5.20 The Council has always opposed the principle of such a relief road, but more recently there have been calls for the issue to be re-examined. Rochford Council does not support these proposals, given the environmental impact the scheme would have on the district.
- 5.21 Indeed neither the current Essex Local Transport Plan nor the Replacement Structure Plan contain proposals that support such a policy. The 1995 Local Plan also considered these issues and concluded that there was merit in supporting the principle of a local bypass for Rochford and Ashingdon, running from Brays Lane to Southend. No route was safeguarded for such a proposal and the current local plan does not make any provision to safeguard an identifiable route. However, the Council is supportive of proposals to create a limited bypass enabling traffic to avoid Rochford town centre to the benefit of the district's residents.
- 5.22 The fact remains, however, that most traffic entering the District from elsewhere leaves on the same or a similar route in the reverse direction, and many parts of the road network are unsuitable for carrying the volume of traffic that uses them. In effect, the network is not fit for purpose. Congestion impacts upon the successful operation of existing businesses and reduces the likelihood that of new business start-ups. Therefore, it is important that work continues to examine options for improving the situation.
- 5.23 There is considerable commuter rail traffic to London, whilst increasing numbers of residents in the District work in the nearer employment centres of Southend and Basildon, for whom the car is the main mode of transport. London Southend Airport is a significant employer and transport generator and represents the only through travel facility in the district. Freight, maintenance and private flying activities make up the bulk of the aviation use of the site, whilst passenger numbers have declined since the late 1960s.
- 5.24 The Council is not a highway authority and relinquished its agency powers to the County Council in 1983. A good relationship exists with the County Highways Authority and the Council has a good record of achievement through ongoing liaison, discussion and consultation on matters of interest to the district.

TRANSPORT POLICIES

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

- 5.25 The Replacement Structure Plan has a clear policy (T1) in relation to sustainable transport. This reflects the aims and intentions of national policy, as shown in PPG13. The local planning authority supports sustainable transport and the following policy embodies this approach:

POLICY TP1

The local planning authority will develop and implement a sustainable approach to transport planning based on managing the demand for travel and distribution, which is integrated with land use planning, and which aims to:-

- 1. Reduce the need to travel;**
- 2. Reduce the growth in the length, duration and number of motorised journeys;**
- 3. Encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact; and**
- 4. Reduce reliance on the private car and road haulage.**

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

TRAFFIC CALMING

- 5.26 The Government has been commending "traffic calming" schemes as a means of ameliorating the effect of excessive volumes and speed of traffic in environmentally sensitive areas, and the Council fully supports this concept in appropriate cases. The Council considers that there should be a continuing programme of traffic management measures implemented wherever necessary throughout the district when problem sites are identified from time to time in conjunction with the County Surveyor.
- 5.27 A programme to examine the potential to designate 'home zones' with parts of the district under the provisions of the Transport Act 2000 has been agreed in collaboration with Essex County Council as the Highways Authority. The first area to be considered is [area to be inserted following negotiation]. The local planning authority will determine proposals for development against the following two policies (TP2 & TP3) relating to traffic management:

POLICY TP2

In appropriate circumstances, traffic management measures will be used throughout the district to:-

- 1. Improve the environment within historic areas, town centres, other shopping centres, residential areas, villages and rural areas;**
- 2. Improve road safety**
- 3. Improve the capacity of existing roads;**
- 4. Improve conditions for passenger transport, cyclists, pedestrians, the mobility impaired and horse riders; and**
- 5. Manage traffic demand.**

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POLICY TP3

New development will not be permitted unless the road layout is appropriate to the locality and incorporates measures to achieve safe traffic speeds and secure a pleasant and safe environment.

HEAVY LORRY ROUTES

- 5.28 A number of problems exist throughout the District arising from heavy goods vehicles using roads which are quite unsuitable to take them. The situation was considered in conjunction with the County Council and a hierarchy of *preferred* routes was devised linking the major traffic generators with the main road network, i.e. the *Designated* routes. The only roads within Rochford District which are considered suitable for heavy lorry traffic are the A127 Southend Arterial Road and the A130 Canvey Island to Cambridge Road and these have been defined as the *Designated Routes*.
- 5.29 The preferred routes are generally unsuited for heavy lorries but are the best available. The Council will seek to ensure that no development takes place that will generate heavy lorry traffic outside existing or proposed industrial estates or similarly allocated areas.

POLICY TP4

The Council will refuse applications for development likely to generate heavy vehicle movements that are on sites outside existing or proposed industrial estates or that would give rise to adverse environmental impacts.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

RAIL

- 5.30 The Southend Victoria to London Liverpool Street line passes through the District, with stations at Rochford, Hockley and Rayleigh and the area is a significant rail commuter generator, with the journey time to London under one hour across the District.
- 5.31 Since the last review of the local plan, British Rail has been privatised and improvements have continued to be made to services on the line. Representations still need to be made periodically, however, regarding cancellations and delays, poor passenger communications, timetable changes, lack of cleanliness of stations and rolling stock and low station manning levels. The Council will continue to press for improvements to the service generally and discuss *ad hoc* problems as they arise by continuing liaison.

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Bus

- 5.32 A comprehensive bus network is operated throughout the District by Arriva and Thamesway, as well as smaller companies. Routes continue to be rationalised, however, due to reducing low ridership and many of the rural routes are operated under contract to Essex County Council on social grounds. In recent years more innovative forms of transport have been introduced, such as shared taxis. A Taxi Voucher Scheme is available for those with limited mobility and in receipt of benefit.
- 5.33 Delays to buses on the B1013 have declined following the construction of the new link road, however problems remain serious at peak times in Rochford and Rayleigh town centres. There is a need to investigate further traffic management measures to assist in resolving this issue. The Council has supported the provision of development services to new housing estates and will continue to do so.
- 5.34 The continuing effects of deregulation on bus services need continual close monitoring. In conjunction with Essex County Council, the District is seeking to ensure that a good bus service continues to be provided, particularly to rural areas. The following policy details the local planning authority's approach to development and public transport:

POLICY TP5

In consultation with Essex County Council, the transport agencies and operators, a safe, reliable and convenient network of passenger transport services will be promoted to meet the reasonable needs of the community and to provide an attractive alternative to car usage particularly for travel to, and within, urban areas. Particular priorities will include:-

- 1. Measures to improve the attractiveness of passenger transport services including schemes for bus priority, appropriate park and ride (both road and rail), improvements to passenger transport co-ordination and interchanges, and the development of improved facilities and services for passengers, including quality bus partnerships;**
- 2. Improvements to the existing rail network including track infrastructure and passenger facilities at railway stations, and where appropriate the development of improved services, new routes and railway stations. Active support will be given to proposed improvements to the rail network that will help reduce demand for travel by car or lorry within the district;**
- 3. The identification, in conjunction with Essex County Council, of an appropriate level of bus and rail service provision; such services will be promoted in conjunction with transport operators through a range of financial measures;**
- 4. The promotion of transport mode integration through such measures as improved interchanges, integration of services, through-ticketing and comprehensive travel information.**
- 5. Where former or potential public transport corridors or sites are identified as part of a sustainable transport strategy, the local planning authority will protect these from development that would prejudice that transport role, through the planning process.**

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OTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORT

WALKING & CYCLING

- 5.35 It is considered that these forms of transport should have an increasingly important role as pollution free, environmentally acceptable and healthy forms of transport, both for utility and recreation purposes. High traffic levels militate against comfortable and safe use of roads by walkers and cyclists and separate or segregated networks are obviously desirable, although expensive. The County Council is increasingly making provision for walkers and cyclists in new road schemes. The following policy details the local planning authority's approach to development affecting walking and cycling:

POLICY TP6

Cycling and walking will be promoted as an alternative to using the car especially for shorter distance trips by:-

- 1. The provision of a safe and convenient network of cycle and pedestrian routes linking homes, workplaces, community facilities and transport interchanges and also the provision of secure cycle parking at centres of attraction;**
- 2. Using traffic management measures to improve conditions for pedestrians, the mobility impaired and cyclists;**
- 3. Ensuring that new development and transport schemes make appropriate provision for pedestrians, the mobility impaired and cyclists;**
- 4. Encouraging passenger transport companies to accommodate cycles on trains and buses and encouraging the provision of good access and secure cycle parking facilities at public transport interchanges.**

The local planning authority will work with the highway authority to ensure appropriate opportunities are provided throughout the plan period.

PROVISION FOR HORSE RIDING

- 5.36 The overall lack of bridleways and the disjointed nature of the existing network, coupled to the high number of horse owners, means that many riders spend a considerable time riding along the many heavily trafficked routes within the District.
- 5.37 This situation is obviously unsatisfactory and causes danger to both drivers and riders alike. In order to try to improve the position, the District Council will support the creation by the Highways Authority, where practicable, of new bridleways and grass verges to assist in making provision for horse riding. Horse riding facility provision is dealt with in more detail in Leisure and Tourism policy LT16 and its explanatory text.

POLICY TP7

The Council will promote the creation of new bridle paths in the district in order to form a comprehensive network of routes segregated from traffic in the interests of rider safety.

SAFEGUARDING OF CYCLING, WALKING AND HORSERIDING ROUTES

- 5.38 To ensure that sustainable transport development can take place and that best use of the existing network can be made, the local planning authority will seek to ensure that no development takes place that leads to a loss or significant adverse effect on cycling, walking or horseriding routes. The local planning authority's approach will be:

POLICY TP8

Planning permission will not be granted for development affecting existing cycling, walking and horseriding routes unless the proposals include either the maintenance or diversion of the route, to one which is no less attractive, safe and convenient for public use.

ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH IMPAIRED MOBILITY

- 5.39 One of the aims of PPG13 is to ensure that greater accessibility is afforded to all. This means that developers need to take particular care in assessing how their proposals will be accessible to those with mobility impairments. The local planning authority will judge proposals against the following policy in this respect:

POLICY TP9

Development to which the public would reasonably expect to have access will only be permitted if provision is made in the design for safe and convenient access by pedestrians and people with impaired mobility.

CAR PARKING

PUBLIC CAR PARKS

- 5.40 The Council operates a charging policy in its public car parks and is thus able to monitor usage and adequacy of the facilities from ticket sales. Such analysis reveals peaks of usage on Fridays, Saturdays and Market Days. The Council does not expect to fund further public car parking provision.

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POLICY TP10

The Council will monitor the use of its public car parks to ascertain whether adequate spaces are available, will ensure that the optimum use is made of them and will take steps to alter provision as necessary.

CAR PARKING STANDARDS

- 5.41 Growth in motor traffic, particularly the ownership and use of private cars, has led to greatly increased levels of congestion and pollution. As a result there has been a shift in national transport policy and planning towards a more sustainable approach. Local authorities are expected to promote this by encouraging alternative forms of transport to the car, mainly public transport, walking and cycling.
- 5.42 Local planning authorities are also expected to encourage greater accessibility rather than mobility. This can be achieved by locating new development close to public transport links and nodes. Whilst huge differences may not be apparent in the short term, the cumulative impact of such development can have significant savings in the use of motor vehicles and particularly, the car.
- 5.43 Whereas previous parking guidance advocated a minimum benchmark for the number of spaces permitted, the new government standards suggest a maximum limit on the number of spaces to be provided. Adopting the principle of maximum parking standards is a means of promoting sustainable development. Details of the local planning authority's parking levels can be found in LPSPG1 and LPSPG2.

POLICY TP11

In considering applications for new development the Council will expect the provision of car parking spaces in accordance with the maximum standards set out in LPSPG1 and LPSPG2 and contained in individual policies as may be amended from time to time. In addition, adequate space for loading and unloading and turning of vehicles will be required within the application site.

SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES

LONDON SOUTHEND AIRPORT

- 5.44 Although owned by Southend Borough Council, the majority of the operational area and buildings of Southend Airport lie within the district. The number of passengers and tonnage of freight passing through the Airport reached a peak in the middle and late sixties at 692,000 passengers and 64,000 tonnes of freight. Passenger numbers and freight carriage has declined since that time, the former significantly.
- 5.45 The number of aircraft movements has remained fairly high however with the decrease in commercial traffic being offset by increases in general aviation, business and light aircraft activity. Despite improvements to the terminal and

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increased marketing, the Airport has suffered severely from the effects of the recession and the Gulf War in the early 1990s.

- 5.46 A new instrument landing system and new management have improved the operating efficiency of the airport. A new terminal and railway station has recently been granted planning permission, to enable up to 300,000 passengers per annum to be handled. However, the Civil Aviation Authority has identified safety issues with regard to the relationship between built development and the runway and construction of the terminal and station will be dependent on a resolution being found to these matters.
- 5.47 The only possible solution identified by the airport operator is the demolition of the Grade 1 listed St Lawrence Church and the extension of the runway across Eastwoodbury Lane to allow the repositioning of the thresholds. The land for the runway extension and the church, both lie within Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's area.
- 5.45 Rochford District Council recognises the value and importance of Southend Airport to South East Essex. It is a major source of employment and the Council fully supports the attempts to maximise its potential, both in terms of passenger and freight traffic, to the benefit of businesses and the travelling public alike.

POLICY TP12

The Council will support the operation of London Southend Airport as a regional air transport and aircraft maintenance facility and the full realisation of its potential by increases in passenger and freight traffic and the provision of appropriate airport related development.

- 5.46 With developments in engine technology and the requirement to phase out noisy engines, an increase in the number of jet aircraft using the Airport could possibly take place without undue detriment to residential areas. The Council's desire to ensure further use of the Airport is, however, tempered by the need for careful attention to the avoidance of undue disturbance by aircraft noise, particularly at night. Therefore, in accordance with the recommendations of PPG24 (Planning and Noise), with regard to the siting of development and insulation of buildings, the following policy will apply:

POLICY TP13

In dealing with applications for development in areas likely to be affected by noise from London Southend Airport, consideration will be given to imposing conditions requiring adequate sound insulation to buildings and in extreme cases permission may be refused.

READING LIST AND USEFUL LINKS

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5.47 In preparing the policies and proposals in this chapter of the local plan account has been taken of the advice and guidance in a wide range of documents and publications. A list of these is provided below together with details of links to organisations that provide useful information about employment development on the web.

DOCUMENTS

PPG13 (Transport)

Department for Transport - *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone* (1998)

Department for Transport - *Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan* (2000)

Essex County Council - *Essex Local Transport Plan* (2000)

Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (2001)

RDC - *District Transport Strategy* (2000)

WEBSITES

Department for Transport - <http://dft.gov.uk>

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister - <http://www.odpm.gov.uk>

Royal Town Planning Institute - <http://rtpi.org.uk>