Gloucestershire’s Local Transport Plan 2015-2031

Connecting Places Strategy

CPS 2 – Forest of Dean

A resilient transport network that enables sustainable economic growth by providing door to door travel choices
Connecting Places Strategy
CPS 2 – Forest of Dean

This strategy acts as guidance for anybody requiring information regarding the county council’s priorities for transport within Coleford, Cinderford, Newent and Lydney and surrounding areas.

The document sets out the aspirations for the Forest of Dean Connecting Places Strategy area up to 2031.

Snapshot of stakeholder views

- Too much traffic diverts onto the B4215 from the A417 when there are network problems.
- Could the overuse of the A48 be offset by the better use of the parallel railway line?
- If you try to get into Gloucester from the west [Forest of Dean CPS] timing is key as it gets so congested.
- Freight comes through the Forest to avoid Severn Bridge tolls – maybe make the bridge toll-free at night.

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Category Transport Planning
Owner Gloucestershire County Council
Target Audience Anyone wanting to find out about the county council’s transport proposals for Coleford, Cinderford, Newent and Lydney and surrounding areas.
Area Summary

- The Forest of Dean area is a topographically diverse predominantly rural area
- Approximately 15% of county’s population live in the area
- Limited crossings of the River Severn result in pinch points on the A40 in Gloucester and the A48 in Chepstow
- AQMAs in Lydney and Chepstow
- The M4 / M48 Bridge Tolls impact freight movements in the area (A48)
- Chepstow and Monmouth have an impact on the area
- Flooding issues at A417 at Maisemore and A40 around Gloucester

Transport Links

- M50 motorway linking M5 with Monmouth
- A40 linking M5 with Ross-on-Wye
- A48 linking A40 to M48 in Chepstow
- 1 railway station (Lydney) – linking Gloucester to Cardiff
- National cycle routes - 42 & 423

Places

- Coleford
- Cinderford
- Newent
- Lydney
The Place

The Forest of Dean Connecting Places Strategy (CPS) area is located in the west of the county.

Its communities are spread across a large topographically diverse area including one of the last surviving ancient woodlands in the country. As with any predominantly rural area, travel patterns are dominated by the private vehicle. The CPS area encompasses the market towns of Lydney, Coleford, Cinderford and Newent which is approximately 15% of Gloucestershire’s total population. The area has a higher proportion of over 65s, compared to the county average.

On 23rd February 2012 the Forest of Dean District Council adopted its Core Strategy. The document sets the vision, spatial strategy and policies for development in the District for the period up to 2026. The main focus of development during the plan period is at Cinderford and Rusbridge urban extension, Lydney, Coleford, Newent and smaller villages. Cinderford is also identified for a major regeneration project which includes a Gloucestershire College campus and other residential, leisure and commercial developments. Improved transport access is fundamental to enabling this development.

The vision for the Forest of Dean is one of supporting a thriving sustainable community within a high quality environment providing a range of employment opportunities to reduce commuting and other journeys.

The creation of a Growth Zone, as promoted in the SEP, is to ensure the availability of quality employment land in proximity to the M5 motorway is attractive to businesses by ensuring excellent connectivity throughout Gloucestershire and the rest of the UK.

The SEP plans for delivery of this employment land around the M5 are supported by a number of transport related proposals across the county which will enable the growth to be achieved through release of this employment land. Specific solutions along the M5 corridor relating to employment land adjacent to the following junctions are:

- A40 Regeneration areas: Cinderford Northern Quarter and Lydney – Cinderford Northern Quarter Spine Road, was awarded £3.8m Growth deal funding, tackles localised deprivation while delivering wider economic and social benefits including a new college
- Lydney offers potential for increased employment land and the Transport Strategy for Lydney has secured £1m of Growth Deal funding

Increasing the speed and accessibility of broadband is crucial for overcoming geographic barriers to economic growth and ensuring Gloucestershire can compete in the 21st century knowledge based economy.

For a decade or more, slow broadband speeds and inconsistent coverage have been a frustration for many residents and businesses in Gloucestershire particularly in rural areas.

As a result of the Fastershire Broadband Infrastructure Project, 88% of premises should be provided with Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband, providing download speeds of over 30mbps in the eligible areas. Additionally, every home and business in the eligible area will have access to the government’s Universal Service Commitment of a minimum of 2mbps.

Improvements in broadband technology will change the way services are delivered and for some individuals this may reduce the need or distance they travel.

The Forest of Dean CPS area is bounded by the M50 to the north, River Severn to the south, the City of Gloucester to the east and the River Wye to the west. Key routes converge at Highnam where the A40 and A48 meet to provide access across the River Severn.
This known congestion point was improved with national pinch point funding in 2014.

Congestion within Lydney has resulted in an Air Quality Management Zone (AQMA) being declared within the town centre.

Many residents of the district are drawn to other competing retail destinations outside the Forest of Dean including; Ross-on-Wye, Cricklade Causeway, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Cardiff.

Highway access to Wales and Bristol is via the M48 at Chepstow in Monmouthshire. There is an issue of vehicles diverting to avoid the westbound Severn crossing bridge tolls which places extra demand on the A48. An outcome of this extra traffic within Chepstow is the declaration of AQMA in the town and journey time uncertainty.

Monmouthshire County Council and the Welsh Assembly are seeking funding for a Chepstow bypass which would improve access from the A48. Any scheme to improve journey time reliability and accessibility to the Forest of Dean CPS is to be encouraged.

GCC will liaise closely with the Welsh Assembly and Monmouthshire Council to support proposals for the development of the Chepstow Outer Bypass.

In addition GCC will consider lobbying the Department of Transport to reduce the toll fees on the Severn Crossings in line with other river crossings, and to introduce two way traffic tolls using modern technology to reduce the impact of the crossings on the local highway network.

50% of work trips originating in the area are to destinations beyond the CPS, with 75% of these travelling to other parts of the county via the A40 at Highnam and the remainder to Herefordshire, Wales or Bristol.

An hourly bus service provides access between the Market Towns and Gloucester. There is one rail station in the Forest CPS, located in the town of Lydney. Direct trains access Cardiff and Newport in the west and Gloucester and Cheltenham in the east.

Almost half of work trips in the area are less than 5km, highlighting the opportunities to increase active travel, but the rural character of the strategy area means there are limited opportunity to provide dedicated cycle routes. There is significant potential to provide leisure routes in association with tourist trails such as the Gloucestershire Way, Wye Valley Walk and those within the Forest of Dean.
The Issues

- Limited access across the River Severn
- A40 heavily congested during peak periods and when Severn Bridge is closed
- Enforcement of highway speed limits
- A48 road safety concerns
- Condition of highway network
- The need for joined up freight routing strategy with neighbouring authorities
- Flooding issues on the A417 at Maisemore and A40 to the west of Gloucester
- Poor rail station facilities and inconveniently located rail station
- Lack of direct rail link to Bristol
- Many of the roads lack footpaths
- Limited public transport access into Gloucester/Cheltenham
- Off peak bus services are very limited
Gloucestershire’s vision for transport is to deliver:

‘A resilient transport network that enables sustainable economic growth by providing door to door travel choices’

To address the issues raised during our conversation with local stakeholders and support the delivery of the outcomes identified in the LTP Overarching Strategy, a range of scheme priorities have been identified. The scheme appraisal process used to inform these priorities is based on the same process promoted through the European Union project Boosting Urban Mobility Plans (BUMP).

Every scheme identified has been included on the basis of need and compliance with delivering the LTP outcomes and does not reflect a commitment by the county council for funding.

They will provide the basis for future funding bids, as opportunities arise, and discussions with third parties where funding may be provided such as by transport operators, providers and developers.

The priorities identified for this CPS have been divided between capital and revenue schemes and separated into two delivery phases.

The priorities identified should not be considered a definitive list as it will be subject to periodic reviews as new evidence emerges through the District led Local Planning process.

- Short-term capital priorities 2015 to 2021
- Long-term capital priorities 2021 to 2031
- Revenue priorities 2015 to 2031

The delivery phases are indicative only and schemes may be delivered in a different phase to that suggested here.
Short-term capital priorities (2015 to 2021)

**Highways**
- A40 Over Roundabout improvement (phase 2), Gloucester
- Cinderford Northern Quarter Spine Road
- Bream Road junction improvement (phase 1), Lydney
- Capital maintenance programme
- Highway safety improvement programme
- 20 mph zones

**Rail**
- Lydney railway station enhancements

**Bus**
- Local Park and Ride facilities

**Cycle**
- Access improvements to Lydney railway station
- Access improvements for Lydney Town centre
- Cycle infrastructure improvements

The identification of priorities does not reflect a commitment by the county council for funding.
Long-term capital priorities (2021 to 2031)

**Highways**
- Highway improvement A4151/A4136 corridor improvements, Cinderford
- Highway improvement A417 replacement of existing highway with elevated section, Maisemore
- Highway improvement Newerne Link Road, Lydney
- Junction improvement A4151 / A4136 junction, Cinderford
- Junction improvement A48 Highfield Road / Bypass, Lydney
- Junction improvement B4226/B4227 bridge (including new highway), Cinderford
- Junction improvement Bream Road junction (phase 2), Lydney
- Junction improvement for Highfield Hill including traffic calming, Lydney
- 20 mph zones
- Capital maintenance programme
- Highway safety improvement programme

**Bus**
- Bus stop and bus advantage improvements for Gloucester to Lydney / Coleford / Cinderford corridors
- Local Park and Ride facilities
- Strategic Park and Ride scheme for West of Severn, Gloucester

**Cycle**
- Access improvements between Lydney and Parkend, Lydney
- Cycle infrastructure improvements (countywide)

The identification of priorities does not reflect a commitment by the county council for funding.
Revenue projects priorities
(2015 to 2031)

Highways
- Maintenance programme
- Highway safety programme
- Freight Gateway management system
- On street parking management schemes
- Highway Safety promotions
- Civil Parking and bus lane enforcement
- Deployment of non enforceable average speed cameras (subject to operation by Road Safety Partnership)
- Feasibility Study to consider the re-designation of the existing eastbound bus lane on the A40 between Highnam to Over to a multi-occupancy (2+people) lane
- Freight information feasibility strategy including the role of Vehicle Messaging Systems and future lay-by information provision
- The development of advisory guidance on Construction Management Plans

Rail
- Railway Station Travel Plans and investment strategies

Bus
- Ongoing bus stop improvement programme
- Continued roll out of multi operator bus Smartcard ticket
- Local Park and Ride feasibility study

Thinktravel
- Ongoing support for Thinktravel branding
- Bikeability training in schools
- Ongoing installation of electric cars and bikes charging points
- Personalised Travel Plans for new developments
- Personalised Travel Plans for key corridors
- Workplace Travel Plans

The identification of priorities does not reflect a commitment by the county council for funding.
The Outcomes

The priorities outlined in this strategy will assist in delivering the LTP objectives by:

**Support sustainable economic growth**
- Improved highway access and network to the Central Severn Vale area and Bristol
- Improved transport network resilience to extreme weather events

**Enable community connectivity**
- A reliable public transport network which provides a genuine range of travel choices using bus and rail
- More employment and education opportunities within the Forest CPS reducing the need to travel outside the CPS area

**Conserve the environment**
- With delivery partners providing improved broadband connectivity to increase awareness of Thinktravel initiatives, travel information and service delivery

**Improve community health and well being**
- More people cycling and walking across all age groups for shorter distance trips and leisure
- The delivery of passenger transport in partnership with local communities to enable a quality of service which maintains community’s’ quality of life

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**Bus passes aren’t valid in Wales which makes accessing health care in Monmouthshire very difficult**
For more information on local transport within Gloucestershire visit:

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ltp3
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